

19th September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

As you know, there are many aspects that we are committed to trying to improve this year as we begin a 'fresh start' in September 2019. One of these is to have better communication with our parents. In the short time I have been at Budmouth, I have been really taken by how committed our parents are to the school. I know from experience elsewhere how important this is. I hope that the following information is of interest to you.

Forming a new Parents Forum

Now that we are part of the Aspirations Academies Trust, the role that was once carried out by the Local Governing Body and, more recently, the Interim Executive Board is now performed by the Aspirations Trust South Coast District Board. As this does not currently have any parental involvement, we want to create a new group that enables interested parents and community partners to become more engaged with what we do at Budmouth. We need and want your involvement!

This group would not have any of the financial/policy responsibility or accountability that sometimes puts people off from being involved as a governor. Instead, it would focus on the child's experience at school and issues that are important to them and you eg: the curriculum, school day, homework, pastoral support, learning support, extra-curricular opportunities, and ideas that you may have. To get things started we would like to hold a meeting on Tuesday 12th November at 6pm for anyone who might be interested in getting involved. Turning up does not commit you to anything but it would be a chance to share some ideas on what this group could do and how it could work. We have no fixed ideas and want it to come from you. We have a number of staff members (some parents as well) who are very keen to be involved. If you would like to attend, or are interested but can't make that date and time, please email office@budmouth-aspirations.org.

Sharing good news

A comment that has been shared with me since I joined Budmouth is that we need to do better with sharing good news stories publicly. We agree! I am delighted that Marcel Ciantar (Director of CEIL) has agreed to take on additional responsibility to help us to do that. He is going to be working with students, staff and parents to ensure that we find more ways to publicly recognise our amazing students. This will include a termly magazine run by students, better engagement with social media, ensuring our website reflects our success and closer working with the local media. Please, if you have any information about good news stories or the achievements of our students in or out of school that you think we should be sharing, let us know.

New Website

The new website has now gone live www.budmouth-aspirations.org. We are aware that there is still a lot to do in terms of updating the content, but it has been externally created and we think it will give us a better platform to share news and information about Budmouth. Last week, a photographer spent the day with us and we will use some of the great photos that were captured to make sure the site features our current students. Now it has been created we want to develop this website so it becomes more useful to parents, students and any other external visitors.

Parents App

Our Parent App has finally gone live. We have experienced teething problems in linking our school systems to its system, but we are hopeful these are being resolved. The App now enables you to see your child's timetable, their attendance data, homework they have been set and any achievement points they have earned. If you have any questions about the App or need some technical help getting it set-up, then do please contact Michelle Ashmore: ashmorem@budmouth.dorset.sch.uk. As we get more used to the App there are other modules of information that we can share e.g. school reports and behaviour events.

Parent Information Evenings

Over the coming weeks we are holding some evening events that we hope will be helpful to current and future parents.

- Year 7 Tutor Evening: Thursday 26th September 4-7.30pm.
- Year 12 Tutor: Consultation & Raising Achievement Evening – Thursday 26th September from 4-7.30pm.
- Open Days: Wednesday 2nd & Thursday 3rd October between 9.15-9.30am. Last tour will set off at 9.30am.
- Open Evenings: Wednesday 2nd & Thursday 3rd October starting at 6pm in Clare Hall.
- Year 11 Raising Achievement Evening: Thursday 10th October from 6pm.

And finally.....

It would not be a parent's letter without mentioning uniform! The new uniform and its enforcement has had what I call the 'Marmite Effect' with parents! We have received lots of positive feedback from parents saying how smart it looks and how pleased people are that it is being enforced by staff. We have also received feedback that the effect of staff enforcing the policy, in particular with the signing of the BFL cards, has caused some anxiety in our younger students. It is not our wish for students to be coming to school and not feeling comfortable in their surroundings and we do appreciate the effort the vast majority have made.

I am pleased that the students have come back, in almost all cases, with the right uniform and equipment they need for school. The positive change in pupil movement and conduct in lessons has markedly improved and students, staff and visitors have commented on this. However, I do recognise some of the concerns that have been raised. From Monday 23rd September, the cards that students carry will be used to primarily award positive points only. The negative side of the card will only be signed in more extreme cases or for persistent issues. We already have cards printed for the next three weeks, but if we are successful in our endeavours and the students continue in the same vein that they have started, then we would like to have a rewards-only card by Monday 14th October. As the number of students not in the right uniform, without equipment, being late or not working as they should is down to a very small number, our staff will work on this on a more individual basis and involve parents. We want the incentive to be doing everything right to get positive points. Once we have seen how many points have been earned in the first month, Mrs Warr, Vice Principal will be able to decide what rewards/prizes will be earned for different point tallies.

After two weeks the achievement points totals were as follows:

Shelley: 1516
Attenborough: 1236
Turing: 1152
Hawking: 1072

The points from our competitions will be added in at the end of each term. Congratulations to Turing who took the honours in the recent Tug of War event.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert