

June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well. What an unusual time it has been for everyone. I do hope that your child has been able to retain their enthusiasm for learning from home. I know the longer that this partial closure of schools continues, the harder it is for Year 5 students to remain motivated.

I know it might seem strange to be writing about choosing a secondary school at a time when some children have not been to primary school for 3 months! However, the early feedback from the Dorset Council School Admissions team is that there are unlikely to be any changes to the timeline for the admissions process. In light of that, I would like to share some information that you may find helpful.

Choosing a Secondary School

This year we were heavily oversubscribed for the new Year 7 cohort who will be starting Budmouth in September 2020. Our maximum admission number is 260 and, once again, we received many more applications than there were places. It is a very exciting time to be at Budmouth and before the academic year was cut short, we were enjoying our first year as a member of the Aspirations Academies Trust and developing new and exciting plans for our curriculum and pastoral structures.

Open Day Tours and Open Evening Information (Wednesday 30th September & Thursday 1st October)

At the moment we have left these dates in our calendar, although we will have to consider closer to the time whether they will be able to go ahead in the format planned. There is a long time between now and then and the situation with Covid-19 is ever changing. We intend to follow the same format as last year and hold **two different opportunities** for our prospective students and parents.

- 1) **Open Day Tours:** During the day, we would like to offer the chance for you to see us 'in action' during a tour that will last approximately 90 minutes. Senior members of staff will conduct the tours and if you would like to take part, please **meet at Clare Hall via the academy reception between 9.15 and 9.30am**. Please note that the last tour will set off at 9.30am.

After the tours, refreshments will be available in our Resources Centre if you would like to ask any questions. Some of our students will accompany the tours and we hope that your children might enjoy this experience and take the opportunity to ask questions. Please note that they would need permission from their primary school if they were to accompany you. We started the day tours last year as we thought it was a nice chance to see us in a more 'normal' setting. The feedback from those who joined us was very positive, so we have retained this.

- 2) **Open Evening:** Our 'traditional' **Open Evenings will start at 6pm** with a short presentation from me in Clare Hall. After that you are free to visit all areas of Budmouth and our staff and students will be on hand to talk to you and your children. There will also be the chance to try some 'hands on' activities in some areas. We hope that parents and children may want to take the opportunity to join both the daytime and evening events. The more information you have, the better!

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Due to the large numbers that attend these events we respectfully ask that you try (if possible) to attend on the day/evening that has been allocated for your child's school.

Wednesday 30th September: Bincombe Valley; Chickerell; Portesham; Radipole; Southill; St. Andrew's; St. John's and St. Nicholas & St. Laurence.

Thursday 1st October: Holy Trinity; St. Augustine's; Conifers; St. George's; Atlantic Academy; Wyke Regis and Beechcroft.

If you are unable to visit on your designated day or evening, please feel free to attend on the alternative date.

Ability Test Information

Some students are selected for entry to Budmouth on the basis of their academic ability. Please see our website for more information on the Ability Tests, together with the online application form. Students who are successful in the Ability Tests will be able to take up a place in one of our two special interest/high ability groups: 'STEM Futures' (additional Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths opportunities) or 'Culture and Expression' (multiple foreign language pathways with additional Expressive Arts). Alternatively, students who join us via the Ability Test can choose to follow the normal curriculum pathway. The options will be discussed with you during transition meetings that will take place in the summer term of 2021.

Should you wish your child to be considered for entry based on ability, you can either apply online by following the link on our website (see below) or by requesting a hard copy from Michelle Ashmore by ringing 01305 830581. Please note that the Ability Test Application Form should only be completed if you wish your child to sit the Ability Tests which take place on **Saturday 10th October, 2020**. There are no alternative dates. Your Ability Test Application Form must be received by the deadline of noon on Monday 5th October, 2020. Please only complete one Ability Test Application Form per child, either online or a paper copy.

Here is the link to the Ability Test application form: <https://www.budmouth-aspirations.org/ability-test/>. Also, here is a link to the Ability Test Information Sheet, which you may find helpful: <https://www.budmouth-aspirations.org/ability-test/>.

In late-October 2020, a letter will be sent to the address you have provided advising you of the outcome of your child's tests. Achieving a qualifying score does not guarantee that your child will be offered a place. Please note that no information is provided about an individual student score or place.

The Ability Test Application Form is not a replacement for the Dorset Council Application Form that you must complete to apply for a secondary school place. Here is the link to the Dorset Council Application Form to apply for a secondary school place: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/school-admissions>. This link will be available on their website between 1st September and 31st October 2020.

Places will be allocated by Dorset Council to the top thirty students who achieve a qualifying score in accordance with the published admissions criteria. Dorset Council will then send notification via email to parents/carers informing them of their child's allocated school on 1st March, 2021.

Students who do not gain a place via the Ability Test will still be considered for entrance by criteria outlined in our Admissions Policy. Here is a link to our Admissions Policy: <https://budmouth.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/03/Budmouth-Academy-Admissions-Policy-2020-2021.pdf>

If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to look on our website for more information or contact our Main Office on 01305 830500 who will put you in touch with the most relevant colleague for your enquiry e.g. Music, Arts, Sport, SEND, Ability Test, STEM Futures etc.

I look forward to meeting you in the future.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert