

22nd June 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. It is hard to believe that just over three months have passed since the national closure of schools on 23rd March and that there are now just 4 weeks left of the 2019/20 academic year.

Wider opening

It was lovely to welcome Year 10 back to school last week. It was an enormous relief to see students back in classrooms again and staff delivering the face-to-face sessions felt exactly the same way. Having 80 minute lessons are a challenge for students and teachers alike, but the feedback has been incredibly positive. As I write this letter, we also have Year 12 back in the classroom. The percentage of students taking up the offer has been 80% of Year 10 and just over 90% of Year 12.

One very important feature of our planning for these students returning safely is that they arrive 'on time' for their session and not early, or late. This is much appreciated as it helps us to maintain social distancing during movement times. Students must also bring in their own equipment as the guidelines prevent us from giving any out. It is worth them double checking before they leave home!

Summer School

You may have heard it reported that the government has been making some plans for 'summer school' to be available for students over the summer holidays. The Department for Education has developed the habit of making big announcements without discussing the ideas with school leaders first. I can say that we have no plans to open Budmouth as a 'summer school' in this way and even though everyone's work patterns have been different in recent months, I firmly believe that students and staff need a rest before the next academic year begins in September.

It seems as though these plans for 'summer school' may look to involve other community buildings e.g. village halls/football clubs and seek to use staff not currently contracted to schools. I will certainly forward any information about any local offers if they are set up. I think it will be quite a challenge to get the necessary DBS checks for staff and volunteers in such a short space of time.

Free School Meals

We had been expecting this scheme (vouchers from Edenred) to stop at the end of the term as free school meals are not normally funded over holiday periods and just two weeks ago we were advised this would be the case. However, it is good news that the government has had a change of heart and we will be able to order vouchers for the summer holidays as well. Even non Manchester United football fans were singing the praises of England striker Marcus Rashford last week as he took on this cause and helped give it a much needed spotlight.

Portesham Primary School

As of today we have some new temporary students on site. The Year 6 class from Portesham Primary School was not able to fit onto their site with the restrictions of social distancing. We have been pleased to be able to help out and offer two classrooms and some dedicated parking and playground space for them to use. All of these students will be joining Budmouth in Year 7 in September so they are getting ahead of the game. Welcome to Budmouth!

Transition

We have had to cancel the normal Year 6 Transition Day as well as the Information Evening for parents. However, this week our new Year 6 will receive a letter from Miss Guppy informing them which tutor group they have been placed in. Each tutor group also has a separate date for their own Transition Morning. We have already met them during some video meetings and we look forward to saying hello in person.

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Book Blog and Debate Club

Following an email invitation sent to all Year 7 and 8 students, this is just a reminder that the Book Blog is a great way of keeping in contact with weekly book-related news and activities e.g. free resources, box sets and films based on books, as well as book reviews. There are also links for students to learn a new skill. If your child would like to join the Book Blog, please ask them to email Mr Hill: ahill@budmouth-aspirations.org and a new invitation will be sent out to them.

The Debate Club is open to all students. The 'motion' for debate is posted on a Monday with students posting their opinions throughout the week. There are also links posted to debating podcasts and websites. If your child is interested in joining the Debate Club, please ask them to email Mr Hill: ahill@budmouth-aspirations.org.

Appointments

I am pleased to confirm that we have successfully appointed staff to the two vacancies on our Leadership Team for September 2020:

- Mrs Dooley (our SENDCo) is stepping up to become our new 'Director of Inclusion and SEND'.
- Miss Guppy will become a permanent Head of School. Miss Guppy has been having looking after Attenborough School whilst Miss Ives has been on maternity leave. Miss Ives will come back and lead Hawking School and Miss Guppy will stay with Attenborough School.
- Mrs Lawrence is having an exciting change of role from September having been one of our PSLs for 11 years. She was recently successful in being appointed to the new role of 'Student Support Centre Manager' and is busy making plans to move her team into new accommodation in Clare Tower. This has included me moving out of my office!
- Our 4 remaining Pastoral Support Leaders will now work within our 4 'Schools' and be side by side with the Head of School:
Mr Bartlett will join Miss Ives (Hawking School)
Mrs Kirby will join Mr Clark (Turing School)
Mrs Roberts will join Ms Carter (Shelley School)
Mrs Taylor will join Miss Guppy (Attenborough School).
- We have made our final teaching appointment for the next academic year and will welcome Daniel Smith to our History Department in September. Daniel is replacing Mrs Bell who is leaving us at the end of this term. Mrs Bell has taught at Budmouth for twenty years and I would like to thank her for everything she has done to support our students during that time.

Andrew Prowse

On behalf of everyone at Budmouth, I would like to offer our condolences to the family of Andrew Prowse who sadly passed away recently. Andrew was a passionate supporter of Budmouth and served as a Governor for 5 years. He was also a Trustee of the Sir Samuel Mico Trust who supports our students in so many ways. I never had the privilege to meet Andrew, but staff describe a caring and supportive man who was always keen to get involved with things that were happening including exhibitions, productions and Design Technology events. He is also remembered as being a very snappy dresser! Andrew has grandchildren at Budmouth and our thoughts and best wishes are sent to all of the family.

Next academic year

On Friday the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, confirmed the government's intention for all year groups to return to school in September. He promised that guidance would be published on how this will happen in the next two weeks. Given how close we are to the end of term it is obviously very important that we receive some clear guidance in a timely manner. It is not yet clear whether this will mean all year groups will be in full time on all days, or whether some form of rota system would need to be in operation. Clearly an awful lot hinges on the position of social distancing. I will share any information that we receive and how it will affect our provision as soon as we have it.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert