

**HEADTEACHER'S HALF-TERM (SPRING 2017)
LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

15 February 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians

Can you believe we are half way through the 2016 – 17 academic year! Where does the time go? I know that our key examination year groups of Years, 11, 12 and 13 are all reflecting on the shock of there being only 38 school days to the first exam when we return after half-term. We more than understand the anxiety this can create, but there is no avoiding the value and importance of trying the best they can in these national exams. I am proud of how much hard work, preparation and support is taking place across the school to encourage and help the students at this crucial time. Please do not hesitate to alert us to any concerns you may have, as you may be aware of important factors and issues that can add on even more pressure during the exam season.

It is not helping to be in transition from an established grading system of A to G at GCSE to the new 9 - 1. Our current Year 11 will receive a mix of letters and numbers in their results. We are also reporting on what are called the "basics" (just English and Maths), as well as "attainment 8" and "progress 8". Please do ask if this needs further explanation.

As we prepare the senior school students for the exam season, we have just launched the Options to lead to the 2019 exam results year. Year 9 have been briefed via excellent subject Roadshows and the Options' Evening which I hope encouraged a mix of ambition and aspiration via subjects that will be successful. It is important to select carefully as there is in fact too much choice and it is hard to make a final selection when so many subjects sound brilliant.

The usual busy and thriving life at BPS does continue as the "extras" are vital in contributing to our community ethos. Fundraising and charity events have been a huge focus with "Grow a Fiver" and the school fundraising table being booked up solid.

The School Council sub-group who lead the Student Voice on how to tackle and report bullying have planned a fantastic focus week with a non-uniform "wear a hat" day. Well done to everyone who works hard on behalf of others, as this really makes a difference.

Trips and visits continue to take place with the Duke of Edinburgh groups out on Dartmoor; Mountain biking and camping in the New Forest; visits to the Houses of Parliament and the ski-trip leaving during half-term.

The Year 11 students in Health & Social Care also organised the first "community coffee morning" for residents in our catchment to find out more about BPS! We are very aware that large groups of young people can be somewhat daunting and meeting each other is a great way to get over the stereotyping! Thank you for everyone who attended and supported this event, including our MP, Royston Smith.

I always like to take the opportunity in the "February half-term parent letter" to remind you of a range of policies, or alert you to current issues, or promote future events. So here goes

- A huge thanks to the "Friends of Bitterne Park School" for their fundraising and donations to the following departments:

▶ Student Welfare	£200.00
▶ Maths (Scientific calculators)	£180.49
▶ English (Animal Farm texts)	£ 95.00
▶ English (Visualisers)	£ 90.00
▶ Science (Visualisers)	£536.28
▶ Design & Technology (Drills)	£229.00
▶ P.E. (Mats)	£488.00

Total: £1,818.77

Fantastic! It's the little things that often count.

- Bicycle and road safety continues to concern us with members of the public still phoning us to alert us to the dangers some young people present to themselves and others. If your son/daughter rides into school, please remind them of safety issues.
- Attendance. We had a good year in 2015-16 and need to keep the momentum going. We have "upped the ante" as they say by deploying the BPS minibus every morning to head out and collect persistent non-attenders. This is making a difference!
- Mobile phones are being misused by a small minority of students. We will maintain our zero tolerance approach as we cannot allow them to disrupt learning or be used for inappropriate usage. As you the parents/guardians are the contracted owners of these phones, we would encourage you to be clear about how they are used and when to switch off and put them away.
- Our uniform consultation period is coming to a conclusion and feedback will be given early next half-term following the Governors' decision on their policy.
- Please check your son/daughter's planner and work books for the new "target stickers". We have increased our focus with all students on the progress flightpath. What Key Stage 2 data did you walk into BPS with? What do you need to catch up? Where do you need to get to? Minimum and aspirational achievement by Year 11 is clear. These targets for progress are based on national government set expectations and are not a BPS unreasonable challenge. Please can you support us in working together to achieve these and attend IAG events (next one is Friday 17 March) to also discuss how we balance the various demands our students have to cope with both in, and out, of school.
- Drug and Alcohol advice. Mr Cove, our Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding Lead, has led a series of very powerful assemblies outlining the dangers presented to young people who get involved in drug taking. If you have any concerns about this issue please get in touch as we need to work together to tackle and support these problems. The students reacted with shock and maturity to the hard message we gave and need to accept the risk is not worth it! Thank you for your support.
- Change to First Bus Service (No. 7, Midanbury/Townhill Park) route. From 26 February 2017, the route will run anti-clockwise. Please ask your children to be careful when crossing the busy local roads due to this change.

If you have been anywhere near the school recently you will be amazed at the rapid development of our new school build. Our new BPS is emerging and our thoughts and plans are already time consuming in relation to organising "the move". The actual date for the school to be open is still to be finalised. We do however need to spend time now on labelling, clearing, and/or throwing away unwanted school items. This is a huge operation involving all teaching and support staff. We have therefore booked in two early closure afternoons to start on this task. On **Tuesday 21 March** and **Thursday 27 April** school will shut at 12.25 p.m. Year 11 students will be able to stay in school for their lessons as normal. If this presents any difficulties please let us know.

This letter does need to have a few "**dates for your diary**", so here goes again....

Next few weeks:

Half-term:	Mon 20 Feb – Fri 24 Feb
Ski trip to France:	Fri 24 Feb – Sat 4 Mar
Year 10 Parents' Evening	Weds 8 Mar, 4.00 – 7.00 p.m.
Briefing to parents re International Exchange Programme, China	Thurs 16, 6.30 p.m., school hall
"The Big Interview" for Year 10	Fri 17 Mar
IAG day for Years 7, 8, 9, & 11:	Fri 17 Mar
School early closure re "move":	Tuesday 21 Mar (See page 2)
Red Nose Day (non-uniform)	Fri 24 Mar
INSET day:	Mon 27 Mar (school closed to students)
"Strictly Come Dancing" at BPS:	Tues 28 Mar (students' fundraising event)
Year 11 Parents' Evening	Weds 29 Mar
Easter holiday:	Mon 10 Apr – Fri 21 Apr
School early closure re "move":	Thursday 27 April (see page 2)
Year 11 Prom (Hilton, Ageas Bowl)	Thurs 29 June
Years 13/14 leavers' event	Tues 4 July
INSET day	Fri 7 July (school closed to students)
IAG day for all years	Weds 12 July
"The Big Interview" for Year 12	Weds 12 July
BPS Sixth Form end of term:	Thurs 13 Jul – normal end of school day
New Year 12 induction event:	Fri 14 July

Sixth Form College open for coursework students : Mon 17 – Fri 21 July

Years 7 to 11 end of term: Tues 25 Jul – **at 12.25 p.m.**

AS/A Level results day Thurs 17 August (**10.00 a.m.**)

GCSE results day Thurs 24 August (**10.30 a.m.**)

Sixth Form applications open now!

Please note:

Advance dates for information (and start of the new academic year, 2017 - 18):

Mon 4 Sept =	Staff INSET (Sixth Form enrolment drop-in)
Tues 5 Sept =	Staff INSET (Sixth Form enrolment drop-in)
Weds 6 Sept =	Year 7 <u>only</u> induction day & fire drill practice. Year 12 Induction/Sign-up (from normal start of day time).
Thurs 7 Sept =	All Years 7 – 11 and Years 12 & 13 P1 to P3 : in Tutor groups (welcome assemblies; timetables and planners; target setting updates; standards; uniform etc) P4, P5 & P6 : in lessons)
Fri 8 Sept =	All Years 7 – 11 and Years 12 & 13 – lessons as normal

Half term = Mon 23 Oct – Fri 27 Oct 2017

Autumn term will end on **Thurs 21 Dec 2017** at 12.25 p.m., back on **Thurs 4 January 2018**.

Can I remind you that students need to be off the site after clubs and activities finish and must not be in the building unsupervised at any time. We know that students feel safe on our site and are reluctant to go home as they enjoy being here with their friends. However, 4.00 p.m. is the official "school closed" time, unless the students are in one of the many organised clubs or activities with a member of staff.

Our leadership re-structuring using the vacancy created by Mr Panayiotou's leaving at Christmas, is gathering pace. The interviews for a Headteacher will take place in early March. This will allow me to move into the role of Executive Headteacher/Teaching School Lead with the new Head in place for September 2017. This is an exciting time as the future shape of BPS emerges prior to our new school move. I look forward to keeping you informed of these developments.

Finally, I hope everyone enjoys a well-earned half-term break where batteries need to be re-charged for a very busy few months ahead. Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely

SUSAN TRIGGER
Headteacher

c.c. Website/All staff/Governors/SNB

Invitation!

Are you interested in hosting visiting students from China? BPS is planning to develop an International Exchange programme with lots of opportunities for students to meet each other and/or visit each other's countries and schools.



Find out more at a briefing on **16 March @ 6.15 p.m.** in the school hall.

*Further details in the letter below from the "Global Youth Ambassador Project"

Bitterne Park School
Hosting Chinese visitors in July 2017



Dear parent,

Bitterne Park School is excited to announce that we will be hosting a group of Chinese student visitors in early July 2017.

The visit aims to provide Bitterne Park students with an opportunity to broaden perspectives of the world, facilitating intercultural communication whilst developing global mindsets. Throughout the visit students will be introduced to Chinese culture and will be able to build friendships with students from the other side of the world.

Hosting a student

Friendly families are sought to welcome the visiting Chinese students in to their home. The experience can be rewarding and exciting for the whole family, and hosts are compensated with a contribution of £280 (for hosting 2 students for the full 2 weeks) towards their hosting expenses.

Chinese students will attend Bitterne Park from 8.30am and will leave at 3.15pm each week day.

Please note that over weekends the Chinese students will attend sightseeing excursions, meeting at 9am each day and returning at 6pm.

Information Presentation

Families that may be interested in hosting are invited to attend a brief presentation, which will be held on 16th March at 6.15pm, at Bitterne Park school. This 20-minute presentation, followed by an opportunity to ask questions, will provide further information about the visit and what hosting a Chinese student would involve.

Please note that Bitterne Park intends to organise a school trip back to China in future.

To register your interest, please email tom@gyapschools.com. Further information about the Global Youth Ambassador Project can be viewed at www.gyapschools.com.

