

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the Easter break I wanted to write to you to update you on a couple of changes and also some good news about events.

Lenten Charity Weeks

After two years of disruption, our students are throwing themselves into fundraising for Lenten Charity weeks. We aim to raise as much money as possible for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) who are co-ordinating humanitarian relief to areas such as Ukraine. Students have had loads of different ideas and I would like to thank all parents for the support that you give to activities like this as we have previously raised thousands of pounds during these weeks.

Easter Bingo

For those of you in Years 7 – 9, you will not yet know that we have an *amazing* Parent Teacher Association who organise all sorts of events and activities for families and support the school with a range of additional curricular opportunities through fundraising.

These events have not happened during Covid, but I am delighted to announce that we will be having our first event to which you are all invited. It will be a great way for those of you who have not had the chance to get into Balshaw's to get to know the school and other parents.

Easter Bingo will take place on Thursday 31st March. The doors will open at 7.00pm and eyes down at 7.30pm. Families can bring their own beer/wine/food etc. and make a night of it. Dabbers will be available to purchase if you don't have your own.

There will also be our famous Chocolate Tombola last seen at our Winter Wonderland event, so you can be pretty certain to leave with something on the evening!

All money raised will be used to support the further purchase of Young Adult fiction for the school library which we aim to make the best library of Young Adult fiction in the county, if not beyond!

Non-uniform Day

The last day of term is going to be a non-uniform day. Again, this will help to raise money for the Disasters Emergency Committee. If your child would like to come to school in non-uniform then you need to pay £1.00 on ParentPay www.parentpay.com Students will be provided with clear guidance



as to what is appropriate (and *not* appropriate) to wear by their tutor. A lot of students have said that they will be wearing yellow and blue to show solidarity with Ukraine.

As an alternative, they can also bring in chocolate that is at least to the value of £1.00 which will be used in the Chocolate Tombola at Easter Bingo night.

Our Restaurant and Catering Facilities

We are very proud of the quality of food and the service standards of our catering staff at school. Some of our Year 8 recently enjoyed a health and nutrition event called *Thought for Food* that you can see more of on our You Tube page [here](#).

Unlike fast food outlets, The Restaurant is able to provide hundreds of hot meals within a 10-15 minute window every day for less than £3! Can you imagine if McDonalds was able to offer such a cheap and efficient service! All food allergies are catered for, there are salads every day, vegetarian main meals every day and a wide variety of food options that are all within the healthy eating guidance required by schools.

We are always keen to get feedback on the service though and Chartwells have asked that I share a link to a feedback survey for parents which you can access here:

- <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8HN9X2X>

All of our students have also been sent a link to a survey to gather their views too.

Encouraging Avid Readers at Balshaw's

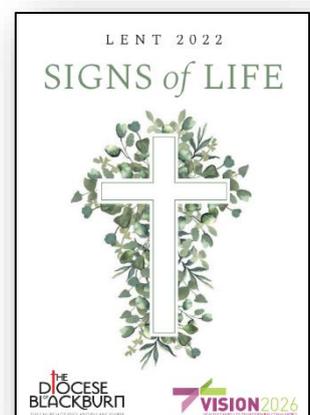
Last year we put out a wish list of books for Young Adults that we wanted to have in the school library. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of response from parents who ordered books through Amazon to be delivered to school.

We have reading time within both tutor time and English lessons. No student in school should be without their own reading book. The school library has developed a Young Adult reading section that we want to be second to none. We are currently focussing on purchasing books that will appeal to our KS4 boys from the legal and detective thrillers of Michael Connolly to classics by authors such as Kurt Vonnegut. If you have good hardback copies of books that your children have read or by authors that would appeal to KS4 boys, please do send them into school and we will add them to our book stock.

Signs of Life

Blackburn Diocese have released their latest seasonal resource: "Signs of Life" for Lent 2022. I have included this as a pdf attachment to this newsletter or you can get a hard copy from your local church or even on a day-to-day basis by email if you [register here](#).

In the introduction, Amy White, Lay Training Officer in the Growing Leaders Team at the Diocesan Offices writes: "It has been said that the Gospel of John is 'a book in which a child may paddle but an elephant can swim deep.' Whether you consider yourself a child, an elephant, or something in between, the Gospel of John is a place where you can paddle or swim in rivers of living water.



"This Gospel is often given to people who are new to following Christ, as they seek to learn more about who He is and what He has done. But it has also been studied by great theological minds over the centuries and its depths have never been fully plumbed. Whoever you are, wherever you've come from, and however much of a journey you have walked with Jesus, this Gospel has something to say to you."

Covid numbers growing again

At the start of this week (Monday 21st March) we are seeing a rapid increase in the number of Covid infections and a shortage of supply staff at agencies. We have 5 staff absent with Covid and the number of students who have tested positive has jumped from 2 to 20 in the space of a week.

Staff have returned to wearing face masks. I am going to leave mask wearing for pupils at their discretion (about one quarter of our students continue to wear a mask), but would recommend that they do to avoid potentially ruining your Easter break with Covid infection.

614B Bus Service Update from LCC (Brindle via Clayton Brook):

An additional bus service was added to allow students to remain, as much as possible, in their school bubbles. In line with the government's updated advice on "*Living with Covid*" there will be no additional service and the 614 is now reverting back to its original route and timetable.

A letter with full details about School Transport and Covid-19 guidance is available on request from the school. There is a poster summarising safe travel at the end of this newsletter.

Good luck to Year 11

Year 11 have their first GCSE exam on Monday 9th May as it looks like the summer exams are definitely going to take place. We wish them the best of luck and hope that they are able to get some really focussed revision done over the two week Easter holiday so that they can identify which areas they want additional help with when they return after Easter.

Ofsted Inspection

As more and more schools and colleges around us have been visited by Ofsted, we expect that our time will come soon. We continue to do the very best we can to ensure that your children receive academic challenge in a loving, Christian environment as we have always done. It seems that fewer and fewer outstanding schools and colleges are retaining their outstanding status under the new Ofsted Inspection Framework, but we will continue to do what we believe is right for your children and will continue to be the best we can be. We remain the most oversubscribed school in the area and currently have more appeals for places than any other school in Lancashire County Council.



Catching the school bus

Please behave sensibly and responsibly when travelling to and from school for your own safety. If you misbehave you may have your travel pass taken away or be excluded from using school bus services.

1

Be at the stop 5 minutes before. Queue sensibly and keep well away from the kerb. Give a clear signal so the bus driver knows to stop. Make sure you are boarding the bus at the correct stop.

2

Pay your fare and try to have the correct change. Keep your ticket to show the inspector and/or for your return journey.

3

If you use a bus pass/season ticket, it must always be presented to the bus driver - allow time for it to be examined. Bus passes/season tickets are not transferable and should only be used on the service for which they are assigned. If you cannot show a valid pass you must pay your fare. Lost or damaged passes can be replaced for a fee by the County Council on 0300 123 6738.

4

Misuse and fraudulent use of travel passes is treated very seriously and could lead to prosecution.

5

Take your seat, please wear a seat belt if one is provided. Place bags in the luggage compartment/under your seat/on your knees. Don't place bags on seats or in the aisle.

6

Don't take up more than one seat or walk around during the journey.

7

Antisocial behaviour/damage to the bus or anyone's property/bullying on the bus, is taken very seriously and can be reported to the police. Please report incidents to the driver, a teacher or a parent. Do not throw anything whilst on the bus, at the bus or from the bus.



Face

please wear a face covering when on school transport

8

All bus and taxi services have No Smoking Policies including all e-cigarettes and vaping devices.

9

Respect others at all times and never distract your driver.

10

Make sure you know which stop you are getting off at and to alert the driver by pressing the bell only once or asking them to stop at the next bus stop.

Never override past the bus stop you have paid for. Overriding could lead to prosecution.

11

When leaving the bus please take the time to thank your bus driver.

12

Remember to take all of your belongings when you leave the bus.

13

Let the bus depart before crossing the road. Find a safe place to cross and remember: Stop, Look and Listen.

14

DO NOT text/use your mobile phone when crossing roads. Remove ear accessories to allow you to hear any oncoming traffic. CONCENTRATE - often accidents happen due to a lack of concentration.

