

Head's Summer Newsletter

July 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

I don't think I have enjoyed a term at school so much for a long time. That is because we have seen our students getting back to so many of the extra-curricular activities that have been unavailable for so long and it has been such a joy to see so many students getting involved.

Beyond the Curriculum

We have had trips running again whether this was our Geography Fieldwork to the Lake District and Morecambe, the North West Sustainability Conference, Big Bang in Birmingham or a trip to watch a Spanish film at the cinema! There are more trips and visits in the pipeline for next year, so keep an eye out...

Then there has been the chance to see the incredible talent of our young people and their performances in *Oliver Jnr* and our Summer concert *Thank You for the Music*. Seeing the joy in the eyes and faces of students performing in front of a live audience after so long reminds all of us of the learning beyond the curriculum that so many of our teachers come to Balshaw's for.

Another great example of seeing our students throw themselves fully into the spirit of extra-curricular enrichment was the Sports Day – something else which Covid held on pause for so long. The energy, supportive community and house spirit that we witnessed from our spectators and competitors was a moment of powerful emotion for all staff involved as they cheered along with years 7 – 9.

Balshavian Values

You will remember in my last newsletter I talked about how we were re-asserting two of our key Balshavian Values: Kindness and Respect. We introduced Balshavian Values cards earlier in the year so that students could be rewarded when they demonstrated these values.



It brings me huge delight to be able to tell you that we have had just short of 1,000 completed Values cards handed in – that's over 4,000 examples of Balshavian Values in action that teachers felt merited signing students' cards for. What an amazing community of students we have!

Goodbye to Year 11

Our Year 11 enjoyed a final Leavers' Celebration on their last day at school. It was sad to see them go after working so hard through the challenges of the past couple of years, but it was also a delight to share an evening with them at the Leavers' Do at Barton Grange. They all looked splendid.



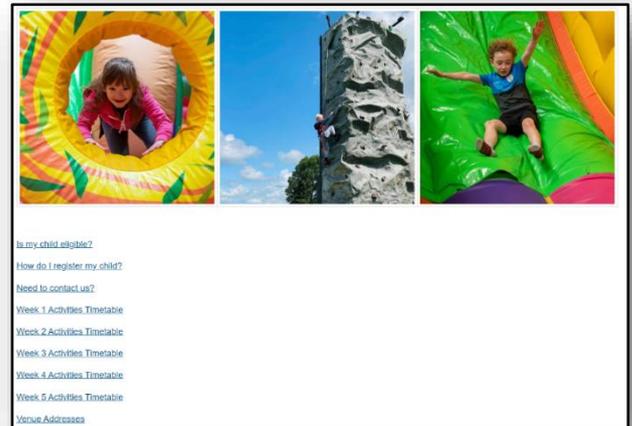
Summer Holiday Activities and Food Scheme

South Ribble Borough Council are running a Summer Holiday Activities and Food Scheme. Although these are aimed at those students who are eligible for Free School Meals, they will never turn anyone away as they know that friendship groups are made up of a range of people. To find out more and to see a timetable of events and activities visit: <https://www.southribble.gov.uk/article/2020/Holiday-Activities-and-Food-Scheme>

Your Feedback

Usually we collect feedback from parents about their views of the school and how their children are doing at parents' evenings. Now that these are taking place online we have started to gather your feedback online. We have taken feedback from Year 7 this term, but please look out for your link to a feedback form coming early next term for those of you who haven't had this opportunity yet.

A summary of the feedback from Year 7 can be found at the end of this newsletter for Year 7 parents.



Important messages that we give to your children

We delivered some timely messages about water safety as the weather got warmer. The importance of this message has become clear to our students after the tragic deaths we have seen over the past week of young people struggling in cold open water.

Child on Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Sadly all schools experience examples of harmful sexual behaviour in their students. We do all that we can to educate our young people about this from the very start of their time at Balshaw's whether that is online safety in the first term of year 7 to issues of consent, coercion, unwanted touching or the sending of nudes.

You received further information about our PSHE curriculum (Personal, Social and Health Education) and the teaching of RSE curriculum (Relationships and Sex Education) this term to remind you of all the information on our website about our coverage of these topics.

We keep reminding our students of these issues because what research is showing is that sexual harassment and sexual abuse between young people is becoming so commonplace that young people see no point in reporting incidents as they think that these behaviours are normalised. Research shows that 80% of girls and almost 40% of boys said that they knew incidents of any kind of sexual assault.

- Over a third (37%) of female students in mixed-sex secondary schools have been sexually harassed while at school, yet just 14% of students who have experienced sexual harassment reported it to a teacher.
- 64% of teachers in mixed-sex secondary schools hear sexist language in school on at least a weekly basis.
- A quarter of all secondary school teachers say they witness gender stereotyping and discrimination in their school on a daily basis, and a further quarter say they witness it on a weekly basis.

All of our students know that for years we have taught that there is **no such thing as banter** – this is an excuse to disguise attempts to bully and humiliate. We have a **zero tolerance approach** to all behaviours that can be seen as Child On Child Abuse.

Some useful resources that you might want to look at to find out more about this topic are here:

- <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/08/a-year-on-from-the-launch-of-the-ofsted-review-into-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2021/ofsted-review-sexual-abuse-in-schools-colleges-caspar-briefing>

Sports Day

Clayton House were the proud winners of Sports Day. We won't know which house has won the prestigious Silver Griffin until all the GCSE results are received in August. Clayton is the house to beat, but Cuerden, Farington and Worden are all within 10 points of each other.



Other news

In line with other schools across South Ribble and Lancashire, we **are unable to allow parent spectators at extra-curricular activities** (unless specific invitations are sent out). This is to ensure that we are safeguarding all students. Although it has not happened yet at Balshaw's, there have been examples of unknown members of the public walking into schools during sports events. Unfortunately, some parents from other schools have also been abusive towards staff members and students during matches.

I hope that all our families stay safe and healthy over the summer and look forward to welcoming you all back in September.



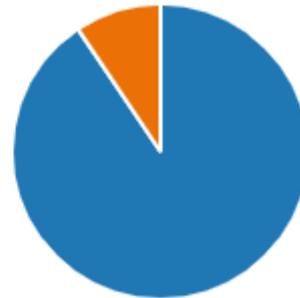
Feedback from the Year 7 Questionnaire

There were only 64 respondents to this questionnaire which represents only 34% of students in Year 7. Please do use future opportunities to respond to these questionnaires as it is our chance to know what we can do better and what we are doing well to do more of it.

Summer School / Settling in:

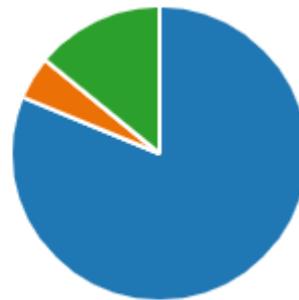
Summer School was helpful in the start to Balshaw's. We know that the numbers for this are overwhelmingly high from our initial feedback:

● Yes	58
● No	6



Given that students have no choice but to be in school, it is good to know that so many of them enjoy school:

● Yes	52
● No	3
● Not sure	9



It is perhaps not surprising given the positive impact of summer school and the fact the Year 7 have settled in:

● Yes	61
● No	3



All are students if they haven't yet got a routine together are developing one:

● Yes	48
● No	0
● Still developing	16



We would expect an hour per night for homework at Key Stage 3 and it appears that this is the typical amount of time that our Year 7 students are spending:

● Less than one hour	25
● 1 hour	35
● 2 hours	4
● More than 2 hours	0



For the most part the homework is appropriately challenging:

● Yes	53
● No	11



About a quarter of parents do not feel that their child is working to their full potential. If there is more challenge that you feel is appropriate, please contact your child's subject teacher:

● Yes	48
● No	16



In terms of the feedback that Year 7 parents get about their children, most feel that the three tracking reports, online parents' evening, Meet the Tutor and the live data provided on Synergy about positives, negatives, homework and attendance is sufficient information. The most common reason given for not thinking that this was enough was a desire to move away from online parents' evenings. However, the feedback we had from parents who wanted to keep parents' evenings online was overwhelming.

● Yes	54
● No	10



Not all parents felt that their children knew how to improve their grades. Please do make use of the ability to email your child's subject teachers if you would like to know more and also encourage your child to speak to their teacher:

● Yes	53
● No	10



Almost everyone thinks that Synergy is a useful tool to check live information about their child:

● Yes	61
● No	3



We have emphasised with all of our students how important it is to get engaged with the many clubs and activities that are available at Balshaw's. Although most respondents' children had taken part in something, there are still a number who could take up an opportunity:

● Yes	39
● No	25



Getting involved as a parent in the life of the school is really important. Sadly most respondents had not attended any of our functions:

● Yes	29
● No	35

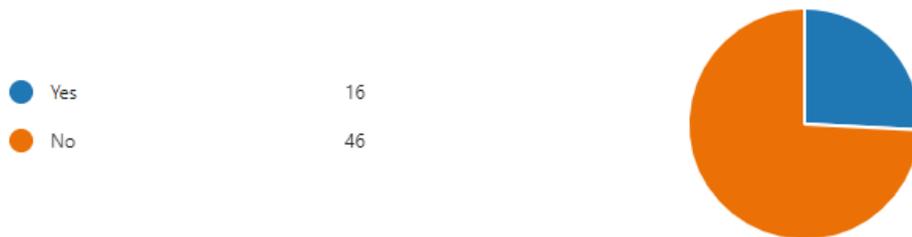


The Christian ethos of the school, underpinned by our Balshavian values have a positive impact upon most respondents' children:

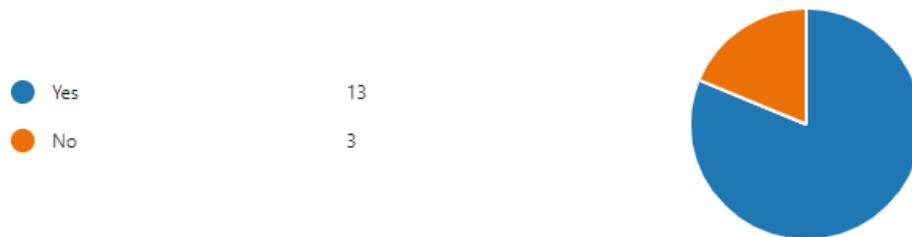


The next series of questions in the survey were about bullying in school. Bullying always happens in schools, but it is important to report it so that we can deal with it strongly as we do not tolerate unkindness.

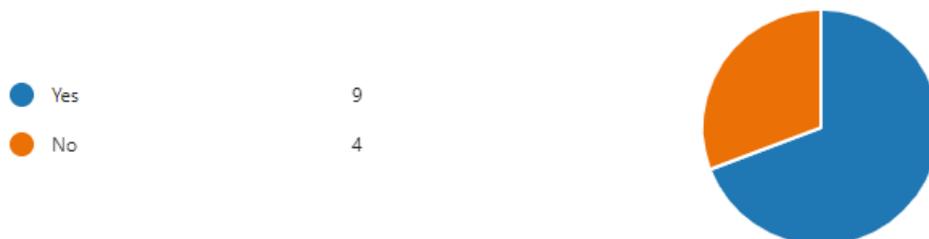
Most children had not experienced any bullying:



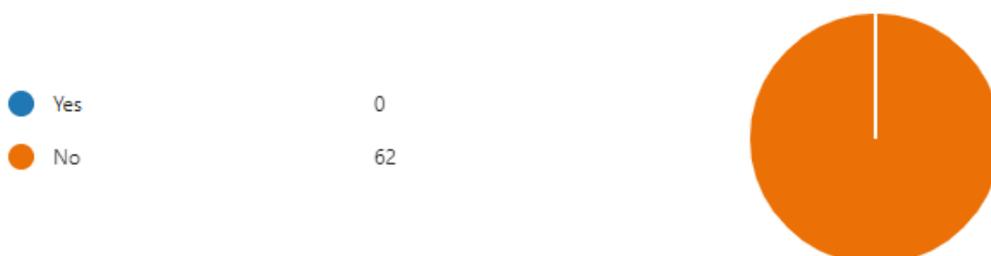
Most did report it:



Most were happy that the school's intervention stopped it happening. Where the answer was no, we have followed this up with parents:



None of the children of the respondents said that their children had experienced any unwanted sexual harassment in school. However, we know that this happens and we have dealt with incidents in Year 7:

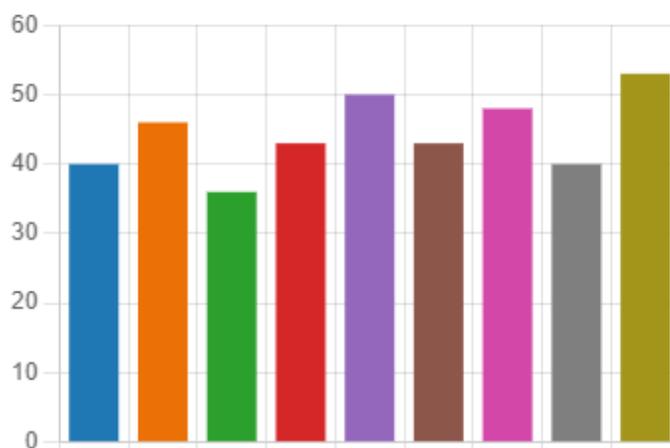


Only three respondents said that they did not know that they could contact a Tutor/Head of House/Pastoral Manager or any other member of staff if they had concerns about their child's wellbeing:



It was very pleasing to see that of the 64 parents who responded, so many felt that they could agree that so many of these elements were strengths:

- Care for your child's physical an... 40
- Provide academic challenge 46
- Communicates well with you as ... 36
- Develops a strong sense of Bals... 43
- Provides a broad and appropria... 50
- Prepares your child to be a resp... 43
- Has high standards for behaviour 48
- Encourages your child to make ... 40
- Uses laptop technology well to ... 53



The vast majority of parents would recommend Balshaw's to another parent. Again, we have had follow-up communication with parents who didn't feel that they could recommend Balshaw's:



Thank you to all parents who took the time to respond to this questionnaire.