

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a very busy half term with a huge variety of events and activities!

We have had our annual whole school cross country event to raise money for Brian House, a Hallowe'en disco for Year 7 and 8, the fire service have been in to discuss firework and bonfire safety, year 10 have had sexual health talks, our sports teams have enjoyed a range of significant victories in county competitions and there are a number of trips planned for the coming year! Year 10 parents took part in our evening providing guidance on how to support your child in the GCSE studies. Our open evening was packed with visitors and those students who came to help out as guides or subject ambassadors were exemplary and the best possible advert for our school.

Parent and student engagement with our phone pouches scheme has been excellent and we are so grateful for the support that you have given to this. It really has made a big difference. We can see how students are engaging with each other more. At lunchtimes we see groups sitting together talking and eating their lunch that might previously have been going to the toilets to check their phones in secret.

We are launching our Balshavian Award with Year 7, the Archbishop of York Award with Year 8 and we are hugely oversubscribed for the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Year 10! We have our acts of remembrance coming up, Christmas Carol Service and Concert, a prefect and steward pizza and quiz night and the PTA are organising a Christmas Family Fun evening for Friday 4th December.

There will be lots to look out for and details will come out for each event you can get involved with nearer the time.

Keep up to date with school news on our website: [Balshaw's News](#)

Communication Channels - Synergy

Please do read messages sent on Synergy. We try to keep these to a minimum and targetted at the year groups or parents to whom they are most relevant. You get the Parental Bulletin every Friday which seeks to summarise key information that you may need and other messages that come through Synergy may be more time sensitive. We sometimes get parents phoning up to query information that has already been sent out.

Lockdown Practice

We have already done an announced and an unannounced fire drill. Schools also have to ensure that students know what to do in the event of an invacuation or lockdown. On Friday we will have a lockdown practice just before lunch. Schools have to ensure that all of our students know what to do in the event of:

- A 'soft' lockdown, where we have to remain in the building because of a possible risk in the area
- a 'hard' lockdown where we have to remain silent and away from visible line of sight

- “Run, hide, tell” scenario where students have to escape from a direct threat in the event of an attack taking place in the building

Parental Forum

Your opinion as parents is really important to us. As well as the PTA, which meet on the first Wednesday of each month in term time, we also have a Parent Forum that meets three times a year to discuss whole school issues.

This term we will meet at **6.30pm on Wednesday 4th November**. We will be asking for your feedback and ideas on the following areas:

- **Curriculum:**

We are hoping to introduce GCSE Dance and GCSE Photography to the curriculum. What are your thoughts as parents on the breadth and delivery of our curriculum?

- **Extra-curricular activity:**

We are introducing a new Balshavian Award in Year 7, Archbishop of York Award in Year 8 and continuing the popular Duke of Edinburgh in Year 9/10. What are your views as parents on our enrichment offer? How should the school choose students where trips/activities are oversubscribed?

- **Open Item:**

If you are able to attend the forum then you also have the chance to submit a topic that you think could be useful for parents to discuss when you complete the form saying that you are able to join the forum.

If you would like to be part of this term’s parent forum, please let us know by [clicking here to complete the form](#).

Please let us know on this form if there is a topic that you think would be useful for all parents to discuss and provide feedback on.



If you can’t attend the Parents’ Forum, you can always offer your feedback here:



[Click here to offer feedback for Ofsted about the school...](#)



[Click here to offer your feedback on our Christian vision and values...](#)

Year 11 Mocks

Year 11 have their mock examinations after half term. They have all had guidance on revision techniques and organization of their time. We hope that they will make the most of the half term to balance their time between taking time out to re-energise and revision.

Year 11 parents will also be invited to our Year 11 awards morning on Monday 9th November. You will receive an invitation to this shortly.

Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is a major priority for this area of Lancashire. Poor sleep has a huge impact upon mental health, resilience and physical health. It's nice to have a lie-in, but please ensure that your child continues to keep a routine and doesn't turn their days and nights around.

Here are some tips on improving your sleep from Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/tips-to-improve-your-sleep/>



Keeping electronic devices out of your child's room is a major factor in enabling their bedroom to be a place of rest and sleep as well as limiting the time that they have on devices. Watch your child's mood and energy levels improve if you do this.

Back to school on Wednesday 4th November

Please note that school does not return until Wednesday 4th November as the first two days of the week are INSET days.

Yours sincerely

Mr Steven Haycocks
HEADTEACHER
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