

18th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of our third week of the new academic year, I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on what has been a **truly excellent start to term**.

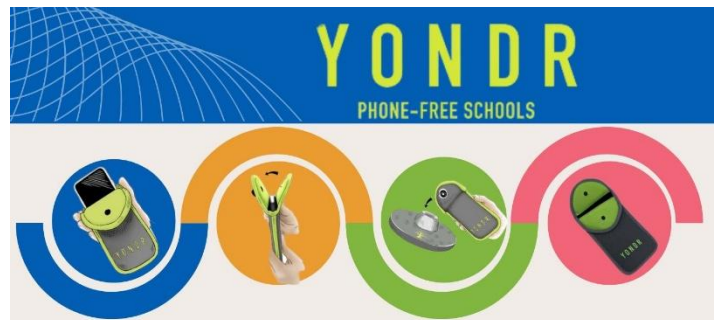
I have been exceptionally impressed by the way our pupils have returned to school. They have demonstrated a **real sense of purpose, maturity and pride**, and it has been wonderful to see them embracing the high expectations we have of them. From the classroom to the corridors, we have seen children engaging positively with their learning, building strong relationships and demonstrating the values that make our school such a special community.

Uniform is being worn well – there are some students who will find that if they grow their skirts could go significantly above their knee. Please check that your daughter does not outgrow her skirt as the year goes on. The other thing to ensure is that if you have bought a laptop for your son/daughter that they charge it each night.

Start of Term Update:

One of the most significant changes this term has been the introduction of our mobile **phone pouch scheme**. I would like to thank pupils, parents and staff for the **exceptionally positive** way in which this has been implemented. The roll-out has been superb, with pupils quickly adapting to the new routines and expectations.

Our decision to introduce the scheme is rooted in our commitment to providing the very **best environment for learning**. We want our pupils to be focused, engaged and present throughout the school day. Removing the distraction of mobile phones enables children to concentrate more fully on their learning, **interact meaningfully** with their peers and develop greater independence. There has certainly been a sudden decrease in the number of children visiting the toilets!



If your child has not yet purchased a Yondr pouch, I would strongly encourage you to do so. **Your support** is an important part of making the scheme work so effectively for everyone. The benefits are already becoming evident, and we want every pupil to experience the positive impact of a school day where mobile phones are not competing for their attention.

Attendance:

I am also delighted to share that our **attendance** for the first full week of term was excellent at 96.8%. This is a fantastic start and demonstrates the importance our families place on ensuring that children attend school regularly and **make the most of every learning opportunity** available to them.

Attendance really does matter. Every day in school provides opportunities to learn, develop friendships, build confidence and make progress. Our ambition is for every child to attend school every day, unless they are genuinely unwell, and I thank you for your continued support in helping us achieve this.

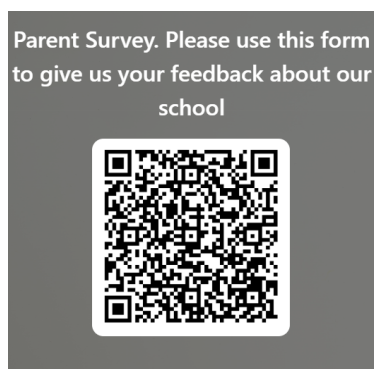
There is a real **sense of momentum and purpose** around the school at present. We have started the year with high expectations, clear routines and a shared determination to ensure that every pupil can flourish. I would like to thank our staff for their hard work and commitment, and our parents and carers for the support you continue to give us.

Your views:

We listen to our parents and carers and there are plenty of ways for you to communicate with school. At a whole school level we have a **Parents' Forum** once each term which you will be invited to later this term. You can join our **PTA** who meet on the first Wednesday of each month and of course, there are all the usual routes to contact your child's tutor, Head of House or to speak to our Pastoral Manager.

We always want your views and feedback. Please use the links below or scan the QR codes with your phone to take you to two different feedback forms.

We want your feedback for Ofsted in the first form and the impact of our Christian vision and ethos in the second:



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



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

We expect that Balshaw's will have the opportunity to show what we do with both a SIAMS inspection and an Ofsted inspection this year.

Examination Results:

Our **class of 2026** gained the best results that the school has had, once again meaning that Balshaw's is one of the highest performing high schools in the county. Our English results place progress levels in English Language in **the top 2% in the country** (Fisher Family Trust). There were lots of grade 8 and 9s across the school and excellent levels of progress from students' starting points with us.

This reflects the consistently good teaching from our staff, consistent effort beyond the classroom by the students and **fantastic support from you**: parents and carers.



We are lucky to have parents and carers that believe in the school, support our policies and who understand that we are driven to provide the best foundations possible for your children, rooted in Christian love. **Loving our neighbour and being the best that we can be** is what drives this – academic results are a happy by-product of this.

Get involved:

There is so much to do in school. Year 7 have already enjoyed their Freshers Fair and signed up to different clubs and groups. Encourage your child to get involved with as much as they can. There are so many things that they can do:

- Leadership opportunities: school council, subject ambassador, eco council, librarian, prefect, steward, sports leader etc.
- Clubs and Societies: from Warhammer to Foreign Film Club, Chess to Art, STEM and Lego, Connect – big questions about life, coding club, choir, drama, brass band, gardening club etc.
- Sports teams and clubs: from table tennis to the Fitness Suite, netball, rugby, cricket, football, cross country

There is so much that your child can do to enrich and develop their skills and interests and we are always happy to support new ones...

One or two reminders:

- School is not open for students on **Friday 2nd October** after our Open Evening as it is a staff training day.
- A programme of revision lessons has already started for Year 11 after school every evening with a different subject each night. All year 11 can attend these sessions.

Be yourself:

We do not want young people to measure themselves against others or against the carefully edited versions of life they encounter on social media. We encourage them instead to **compare themselves with the person they were yesterday**: to keep improving, to persevere and to **give their best**. That is all any parent, carer or teacher can reasonably ask of them.

Most importantly, I would like to congratulate our pupils. They have made a fantastic start, and they should feel very proud of themselves.

This is exactly the way we wanted the year to begin – and, to paraphrase Sam Fender: **we are only just getting started!**

Yours faithfully



Mr S Haycocks
Headteacher



“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105)

Lighting the path to excellence through Christian vision and values.

In conjunction with the school's original motto: *non sibi sed aliis* (not for self, but for others), the school's vision is rooted in the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, friendship, kindness, truth, patience, respect and humility which are the foundation for decisions made in the Balshaw's family.

Our aim is: **to develop students whatever their faith or world view, who reflect Christ's love within our community and wider society.**