



## Headteacher's Newsletter

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***Welcome back to a new school year!***

*I hope that you have all had a good summer break and the weather was actually very good for once.*

*The Autumn term is always a busy and exciting one with Open Evening, prizegiving, concerts, Hallowe'en Disco, mock exams for Year 11 - it is non-stop!*

*Please note that school finishes at 1.20 on the day of our Open Evening.*

*In this issue you will find out about our Year 11 results from this summer and other important information for you to note at the start of the new school year.*

*To keep up-to-date with everything that is happening at school, please check:*

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- Our news: [click here...](#)
  - Our events: [click here...](#)
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## Year 11 celebrate success!



Our Year 11 students worked very hard for their GCSE exams and I am delighted to say that they have achieved the highest level of progress of any of our year groups since progress measures began. It remains the case that if you want your child to do better than at Balshaw's, the only schools doing better than us are selective on the grounds of academic ability or church attendance and faith.

Outcomes for students at Balshaw's remain significantly above average across all subjects and we are listed in the top 10% of schools for English progress (FFT). We have high aspirations for all of our students and over half of our year complete the E-baccalaureate and those that do are in the top 20% of students nationally (FFT).

Most of our students have gone on to Runshaw College and some to Cardinal Newman or Myerscough. We also have a growing number of students who are successfully securing apprenticeships where they can earn while they learn.

Great results don't just happen. They are the consequence of strong support from parents who reinforce messages from school, from hard work and commitment to learning from our students and the dedication and specialised knowledge of our staff who work tirelessly to create the best learning experiences for your child.

One of the key things that we did differently this year was to keep our students learning in school until they had completed their last examination. This maintained focus and concentration, meant that learning remained 'live' in their memory and helped to keep them in good daily routines to ensure that they performed well.

# Attendance

You will already have received a letter about attendance. Being in school is crucial for your child's learning and we will always chase up attendance issues to make sure that your child is safe and receiving the best possible opportunities to succeed.

**MOMENTS  
MATTER,  
ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS.**

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*Full attendance in the first week is one of the strongest indicators that a student will go on to attend school regularly.*

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The link between attendance and good education outcomes is very clear. Year 11 pupils with near-perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar pupils attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, **missing just 10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%.**

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*Persistently absent pupils in secondary school could earn £10,000 less at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance.*

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I would like to thank all parents who do everything they can to keep their children in school learning - making appointments outside of school time wherever possible, not taking term-time holidays and sending them in to 'see how it goes and stick it out' when they might not be feeling 100%.

## Oversubscribed (as usual!)

Once again Balshaw's had over 650 applications for its 185 places on roll. We remain one of the most popular schools in the county for parents and students. There is a waiting list of students hoping to get a place at Balshaw's in every single year group. We believe that there are a number of reasons for this.



- Our excellent results (as discussed above).
- Our Christian values and ethos.
- Our high standards and expectations.
- Our caring pastoral approach.

This is why we will not compromise on our standards of uniform, behaviour and the expectations that parents will support the school and its policies: these are the reasons that our school is popular and our students are successful.

## PTA- Balshaw's Association

If you are a parent of a Balshavian, you are automatically a member of our PTA, also known as the Balshaw's Association. They organise activities to bring the school community together through events like Balfest, Race night, Bingo and more. At the same time they raise money to develop the extra-curricular opportunities available to our students.

Recently they have been raising funds to reinstate our climbing wall so that students can use it in their PE lessons. They have supported sound and lighting for school productions, contributed to the costs of the new school minibus and much more.

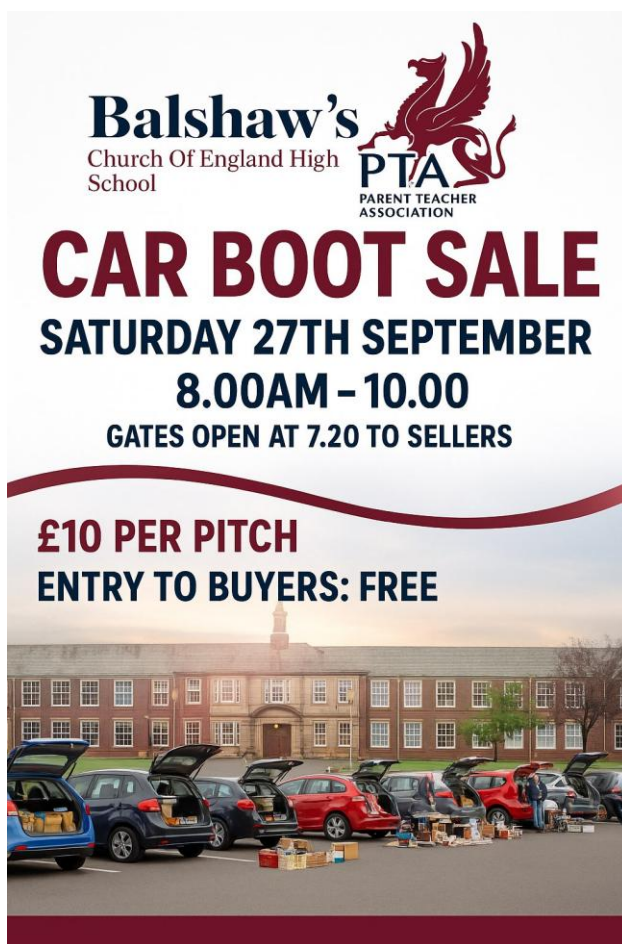
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*The PTA meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm during term time*

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The next event that the PTA have organised is a Car Boot Sale in the school car park between **8.00am - 10.00am on Saturday 27th September**. The cost to sellers is £10 to set up on the car park.

[For more details, please click here...](#)



*1 - Car boot sale on Saturday 27th September*





We were delighted to be awarded the status of School of Sanctuary at the end of last school year and to be the only Church of England High School in Lancashire to achieve this accolade.

The school has worked hard on achieving this status. Developing empathy, global citizenship, and understanding of displacement are vital skills for young people growing up in an interconnected world. We have educated our community about the right to sanctuary, further developing and embedding principles of welcome and inclusion into Balshaw's culture and practice

As a school committed to reflecting Christ's love in the wider community, this is the kind of compassionate, educational work we should be doing with young people and we are very proud that this has been recognised.

Report from the Children's Commissioner

Dame Rachel De Souza, the Children's Commissioner conducted a national survey of young people called *The Big Ambition* earlier this year. The report was published this week and provides an insight into the concerns that face young people in education which anyone in education would have been able to tell you.

The report is a powerful one and makes for very interesting reading for any parent in the UK today.

[You can see the report here...](#)

There is a student friendly version in the images below.

**Youth Voices:**

**Schools supporting children** September 2025

Every child has the right to a great education. You should be able to **attend** a brilliant school, close to home and friends, that supports your needs. You should feel **engaged and enriched** at school, with fun, meaningful experiences that allow you to thrive. You should be encouraged to **achieve** academically and developmentally, and you should be supported to **excel and succeed** with great careers education and a focus on independence.

**CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER**

“It’s really hard to get help.”  
SEND Youth Panel member

“Solving root causes of school attendance issues (mental health, discrimination, lack of facilities/ adjustments made at school for children who don’t fit).”  
Girl, 16, The Big Ambition

“Support (especially mental health and SEND support) should be far more easy to access for children. Children shouldn’t have to be on the verge of breakdowns before they get noticed for exam access arrangements, breaks etc.”  
Child, 16, The Big Ambition

“When I got my Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for special needs it was meant to take six weeks to be completed, however it took over 30 weeks. If I had not got the EHCP, I would most likely be out of education as I would have found a mainstream school too stressful as they would be unable to provide to my needs.”  
Boy, 11, The Big Ambition

“A school nurse could come and ask if you want to talk about home life school life or if you just want to talk.”  
Girl, 11, The Big Ambition

“They should think about what children actually want not what they want children to have.”  
Boy, 11, The Big Ambition

### What has the Commissioner found out?

The Commissioner recently carried out a ‘census’ of schools in England to find out how they are supporting all children and young people academically and pastorally, including those with additional needs such as bereavement, homelessness, social care and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). She found:

- Children have a wide range of additional needs outside of the classroom, but schools don’t always know what they are. Many things children are facing in their lives don’t currently qualify for extra help in school from the government, like bereavement or having a parent/carer in prison.
- Many schools are trying to fill the gaps in support for children with additional needs. They are often worried about children’s experiences beyond education including mental health, online safety, early help services and poverty. Secondary schools are more concerned about the funding for these services than their own funding.
- Children who face multiple challenges in their lives have an increased risk of not doing well at school, with each additional challenge increasing this risk.
- Consistency of support and services provided differs from school to school e.g. school nurse, educational psychologist, family support officer, speech and language therapist.
- Support and services (e.g. mental health) are often delivered through external partners which might be costing schools a lot of money with no oversight of what is provided.

### What is the Commissioner going to do?

The Commissioner knows from her school census how much schools do to help their pupils – and that many schools want to do more but don’t have the resource.

**The Commissioner is asking for the government to:**

- Make sure every child has an ambitious education of some kind, no matter what challenges they face in their lives.
- Increase understanding of children’s additional needs and what qualifies for extra help.
- Help schools become the central place in a community where children can get all the help they need by providing them with extra support and resources.
- Ensure no child loses the support they are currently entitled to and more children have a right to help.
- Improve all the services working with schools, like mental health services, healthcare trusts and local social care and provide a unique ID (personal identification number) for each child that improves the sharing of information across the services allowing joined up support.

“My School Census confirms headteachers and leaders agree with what children have already told me: that they deeply value education, but where they need extra help, it should be easily accessible and available locally. Schools have been meeting the challenge of filling gaps in support for children left by years of other services being cut back or under-resourced. Too often, children with additional needs – those which require extra help to attend and engage at school – are ignored, unrecognised or lost in a system that cannot provide the right support. The government must redefine how it thinks about ‘need’ in school, because for some children even the best teaching will not be enough unless the systems around them can respond to the daily complexities of their lives.”



**Dame Rachel de Souza**  
Children’s Commissioner for England

### Reach out for support

Speak to a trusted adult e.g. staff at school, a youth worker or a social worker

### Share your voice



Take part in The Big Conversation Survey.



Aged 13+? Join our Youth Voices Forum.

Get involved with your school council if it has one.

Write to your MP or look into joining your local council’s Youth Council if it has one.



If you are living in care, are living away from home, have a social worker or are a care leaver you can contact the Children’s Commissioner’s **Help at Hand team**



## School Governance



2 - Keith receiving his award for service and dedication to school governance at County Hall.

Keith Woodcock is known to many parents who attended Balshaw's Church of England High School as a Physics teacher and Exams Officer. He has served as a governor for decades and has been the Chair of Governors for the past ten years. Keith is currently undergoing treatment which involves chemotherapy and has stepped down from his role as Chair of Governors.

Keith's commitment to governance at Balshaw's will continue as he will remain as a governor. It is no surprise therefore that earlier this year Keith's commitment to governance was recognised with an award for service and dedication to school governance at County Hall.

We hold Keith in our prayers for strength as he works through his treatment to recovery.

Father Paul Robinson of St Ambrose church in Leyland and a long serving governor across a range of schools through his career has been confirmed as our new Chair of Governors. Reverend Paul Davies, vicar of St Andrew's church in Leyland joins Kevin Anthony as our vice chairs.

We also welcome two new governors, both of whom are parents: Kitty Ellison and Georgina Jacobs. You can find out more about school governance and the governing body of Balshaw's by looking at our [governance pages on the website...](#)



# Vaping

We have a zero tolerance approach to vapes at Balshaw's. All of our students know that to be found with a vape/vape liquid will mean suspension. There is a good reason for this...



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*25% of vapes confiscated in schools in Lancashire contain the synthetic drug spice.*

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Our Personal, Social and Health Economic Education (PSHE) programme is outstanding and covers a wide range of life issues from loans and mortgages to knife crime and risk-taking behaviours. We cover the risks of vaping within this programme. We also provide support for any students who find that they have developed a dependency on vapes with organisations such as We Are With you and SmokeFree Lancashire. Staff are trained to recognise vape use and along with our zero tolerance policy we ensure that the school environment deters vaping in areas such as toilets where students have to sign in and out.

Whenever there is suspicion that a student may have a vape, the school has powers to search and we also use an electronic wand to check for concealed vapes.

If you would like to read more about the research done by the [University of Bath](#) you can read about [it here...](#)

## Information about catching school buses



### 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.

- 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 stated on your pass.
- Pay your fare and try to have the correct change. Keep your ticket to show the inspector and/or for your return journey.
- 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/season ticket you must pay your fare. The information marked on the pass/season ticket must be clearly legible to the driver. Lost or damaged passes/season tickets can be replaced for a fee by contacting the county council on 0300 123 6738.
- Misuse and fraudulent use of travel passes is treated very seriously and could lead to prosecution.
- Take your seat, please wear a seat belt if one is provided. Don't take up more than one seat. Place bags in the luggage compartment/under your seat/on your knees. Don't place bags on seats or in the aisle.
- If all seats are taken, you should stand sensibly behind the driver area and use grab rails where available. You should not stand adjacent to emergency exits, on staircases or upstairs on a double deck vehicle. Do not walk around during the journey.
- 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.
- All bus and taxi services have No Smoking Policies including all e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Please be aware that vaping or smoking may result in sanctions and removal of your pass/season ticket.
- Respect others at all times and never distract your driver.
- 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 stops marked on your pass/season ticket. Overriding could lead to prosecution.
- When leaving the bus please take the time to thank your bus driver.
- Remember to take all of your belongings including any rubbish when you leave the bus.
- Let the bus depart before crossing the road. Find a safe place to cross and remember: Stop, Look and Listen.
- 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.

[lancashire.gov.uk](http://lancashire.gov.uk) >>>> Lancashire County Council



## The Balshaw's School Prayer

***We finish this school newsletter with the Balshaw's School Prayer:***

Heavenly Father.

We ask for your blessing on all who teach  
and work at the school and all those who learn.

Help us to be guided by your spirit  
and ever mindful of the part we play in your world.

Help us to be responsible and react kindly  
towards each other and all we meet.

As we go out into your world, help us to take the standards of our school,  
remembering past students  
and all who have been associated with Balshaw's.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



## Contact details for School Staff

If you need to make contact with your child's teachers, please find all the email addresses for staff below:

### Balshaw's Church of England High School

#### Teaching Staff Contact details

##### Art & Design Department Staff

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##### Business & Computing

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## GCSE Film Studies

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## SEND Department

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### Office/General Enquiries

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**PLEASE NOTE YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT BALSHAWS VIA OUR CONTACT PAGE HERE**

**[www.balshaws.org.uk/contact](http://www.balshaws.org.uk/contact)**

## Contact Us

You will receive a list of the email contacts for all staff in the school.

**Email:** [enquiries@balshaws.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@balshaws.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01772 421 009

**Web:** [www.balshaws.org.uk](http://www.balshaws.org.uk)

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