



5 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to thank parents and carers of Year 11 students for returning the students' 'trial assessments' to school for us. This means teachers can begin the marking process and prepare the most helpful feedback for students next term, when we expect to hear from government the details of how GCSE (and AS and A Level) grades will be awarded this summer. Most of our Year 11 students have Sixth Form interviews next week: you will have been notified of the time of these meetings. We would be grateful if you could remind the students about their appointment, where they will be able to discuss their subject choices and future plans.

I'd also like to thank Year 9 parents and carers for the record attendance at last night's Year 9 parents' evening, which provided many extremely valuable conversations about students' progress and their GCSE choices for next year. Please can I remind you that information and guidance for parents is still available on the school website, and there are additional subject videos for students to watch on FROG. The deadline for choices is Monday 22 February.

Year 9 pupils discussed options choices with their tutors yesterday: all other year groups focused on 'Time to Talk Day'. This excellent initiative encourages both pupils and staff to reach out and speak to someone – there are a lot of resources and advice on the Student Wellbeing page on Frog. I hope it inspired some children to make phone calls to those friends and family they cannot currently meet up with – I know that I really appreciate the interactions I have with my colleagues and students, even via Teams, during this current lockdown.

Student wellbeing is our greatest priority at the moment. We are currently looking at plans for the start of Term 4 to include opportunities to vary the delivery of some lessons in order to reduce 'screen fatigue', as we know that full days of live learning can be very draining for some of our young people. We will continue to use Core PE lessons as a further chance for students to take a break from their screens and/or catch up on home learning. However, we would like to remind parents and students of the range of advice, tasks and challenges that the PE department are posting on FROG.

I thought I would take the opportunity to look forward to the next few weeks

- Friday 12 February is an INSET Day which means that the school is closed and there will be no teaching/live lessons as staff will be undertaking training on this date.

- The school will be closed for the February half term: 15 - 19 February 2021 meaning staff and students can take a break from online lessons.
- We will all return to remote learning on Monday 22 February and expect to continue with online lessons until Monday 8 March at the earliest. We understand the Prime Minister will update schools and parents during this first week of Term 4 regarding the timeline for the return of students to the school site.
- We are also, as mentioned above, awaiting the outcome of the Government/Ofqual consultation on awarding GCSE, AS, A Level and VTQ qualifications this year. As soon as we know more we will update parents and students on the plans for awarding results following the cancellation of the usual examination processes this summer.

In-School Supervision for critical workers and vulnerable students

We will not be offering in-school supervision for critical worker children or vulnerable students on the INSET Day or over the half term week.

Parents should make their requests for in-school supervision for the 22 - 26 February (first week of Term 4) by 10.00 am on Thursday 11 February. Please note that our in-school supervision is at capacity so please ensure your request is registered in time so that it can be considered.

Mr J Nunes
Headteacher

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OTHER MESSAGES ...

Out-of-Catchment Coach Service

We have had a couple of queries from parents regarding payments for our out-of-catchment coach service. Please be aware we are planning to carry forward all payments made for the coach service for Term 3 into Term 4, so we do not need parents to pay any further instalments at this present time.

Once we know the date when students will be returning to school after lockdown we will be in a better position to calculate any refunds for any overpayment that parents have made. If you have any queries, please email finance@backwellschool.net.

Students Taking Qualifications in Summer 2021 (Years 11, 12 and 13)

Thank you to everyone who has checked their statements of entry and responded accordingly. We will be in touch next week to confirm those where you have highlighted changes that need to be made.

If you haven't yet completed the form, please make sure you do this as soon as possible. Final entries will be submitted to the Exam Boards next week – changes notified after this may incur a charge.

Year 8 Parents' Evening – Thursday 11 February

A reminder to Year 8 parents that the booking system for Year 8 Parents' Evening opened on Wednesday this week. If you haven't yet made any appointments, please [click here](#) to access the booking system.

Full details on how to book and attend appointments can be found in the [Year 8 Parents' Evening letter](#).

Careers Bulletin

Please find below a link to the Careers Bulletin on our school website. This bulletin includes a section on online and virtual careers resources, including the school's online careers platform, Unifrog.

[Current Careers Events and Opportunities \(5 February 2021\)](#)

If you have any queries regarding future plans Mrs Ball can be contacted on her school email cball@backwellschool.net.

Upcoming Events

Thursday 11 February	Year 8 Parents' Evening (bookings opened 3 February)
Friday 12 February	INSET day and last day of term
Monday 22 February	Start of Term 4

LETTERS HOME ...

[Sixth Form Bulletin \(week commencing 8 February\)](#) - Parents/Carers of Sixth Form students