



25 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We have been working very hard this week, planning and preparing for the return to the classroom *from* Monday 8 March, as well as keeping abreast of the plans for examination results in the summer which were published on Thursday.

I am conscious that there is a lot of information to digest and circulate and that will result in increased communications with you all over the next few days - we will endeavour to keep this as straightforward as possible – please keep a regular eye on your emails. Your support and reinforcement of our messages to your children over the coming weeks will play a significant role in a smooth transition back to school.

Important change to Term 4

One decision I have made this week is to bring forward the INSET day we had scheduled at the end of this term to **Friday 5 March**.

I appreciate this change is at short notice for parents, but it will allow staff and students to fully prepare to transition from live learning to on-site lessons. It also means that whilst students will not have live lessons on Friday, they will instead have an additional day of face-to-face classroom teaching on Thursday 1 April instead.

This does mean that the school will be closed on Friday 5 March to vulnerable students and children of key workers.

Key communications this week

There have been a number of key communications this week:

- I [emailed all parents](#) on Tuesday following the return to school announcement from the Prime Minister.
- All Parents/Carers have been sent an email relating to [consent for mass testing](#). Please do support us in this and your prompt return of this consent form will hugely help our planning. We would ask you to complete the form in all cases, i.e. whether you are giving consent or not.
- At the end of this email is a short summary of yesterday's announcement by Ofqual of how examination grades will be awarded this year.

Face coverings

The government guidance for the re-opening of schools includes guidance for the wearing of face masks in classrooms as well as in indoor communal spaces as we do currently. This proposed change

has already generated a lot of attention in the media, illustrating that it is a difficult issue on which not everyone agrees. I know there are significant numbers of our parents and carers who are very pleased with the announcement and feel that it will make school safer for their children. There are also parents and carers who are strongly opposed to the change.

We are, therefore, looking closely at how best to implement the government guidance in the interests of our students and we will publish the details of our approach next week. The government advice on face masks is going to be reviewed at Easter so I hope that, in the four weeks of in-school lessons ahead of that review, we can all work together.

Risk Assessments and systems of control on the school site

We are currently reviewing and updating our Risk Assessment – this will be published on our website once finished. There were many systems of control in place during Terms 1 and 2 that will still be in place in March, including dedicated year group bubbles; transport to school; timings of the school day; hand sanitising and cleaning procedures; and the wearing of PE kit on days when PE is timetabled for your child. Self-isolation and contact tracing will also continue for positive COVID-19 results.

I would appreciate it if you and your child(ren) could take some time to familiarise yourselves with the expectations and requirements we have in place. Our dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) outlines how the school continues to operate during the ongoing pandemic.

Whilst there is a lot to organise we are certainly looking forward to returning to school. We will be in touch next week regarding the exact testing schedule for students and a number of other updates.

I hope you all have a pleasant weekend

Mr J Nunes
Headteacher

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OTHER MESSAGES ...

A summary of the Ofqual announcement on grading for GCSE, AS, A Level and Vocational qualifications: For parents and carers of students in Years 11, 12 and 13

How will students' grades will be worked out?

- Graded by teacher judgement
- No algorithm will be used
- Teachers will tell students what evidence is used to grade them
- Students will only be assessed on what they have been taught

What evidence will be used?

- Assessments, trial exams and work students have completed can be used as evidence
- Results will also be based on future work and assessments students will complete so they should keep doing their best
- Non-Exam Assessments (NEAs) can be used

- Art and design grades are based only on student's portfolio
- Teachers can also use question banks provided by exam boards

When will students receive their results?

- A level and AS level results on Tuesday 10 August
- GCSE results on Thursday 12 August

Is there an appeals process?

- If a student is unhappy with a grade, they can appeal it. The first step would be appealing to the school.

Will there be an opportunity to sit these exams in the future?

- There will be a full series of examinations for students to take in all subjects and qualifications should they want which would be held in the autumn of 2021

We are now looking at this in detail as a school, and as a Trust, to ensure that students are fairly awarded the grades they deserve. We will then further communicate this to students and parents in the very near future.

Webinars for Parents: Online Safety – “It is never going to happen to my child”

You may remember that on two occasions this winter we have advertised a webinar being run by Avon and Somerset Police entitled ***Covid-19 Online Safety - “It is never going to happen to my child...”***; aimed at parents/carers who have concerns about their children and safety online, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the sessions were hugely oversubscribed and booked up very quickly leaving many parents disappointed.

We are pleased to let you know that Avon and Somerset Police are now offering a recorded session to view online via YouTube, so you will be able to view it in your own time.

The session consists of three videos for parents/carers and cover topics such as:

- Exploitation of children online.
- Technical protective and safety measures available.
- Top tips on starting a conversation with your child about the internet and how to work together to use the internet safely.

All of the above videos will also be uploaded with sign language in due course.

Please click on the following link to view the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf41oqLODZCDK0mdj6ulSDg>

Student Well-being

The news that all students will return to school during the course of the week beginning 8 March may well evoke a variety of feelings, and students will all have different thoughts about this. Some may be relieved, others worried, some delighted and others not! Some may also have a mixture of these feelings, that may be confusing, but which is perfectly normal. Our Student Well-being page

on Frog has been updated with tips for students to help them manage whatever they are feeling about the weeks ahead ... so please encourage your child(ren) to take a look! We are looking forward to having everyone back in school soon.

National Careers Week: 1 - 6 March 2021

Next week is National Careers Week and there are a number of excellent opportunities for students to take part in, including the National Careers Week Virtual Careers Fair. There is also guidance on how you can help and support your child to make the right choices (<https://nationalcareersweek.com/parentsguide/>).

In school, teachers will be talking to students about how their subject links to potential careers and about the skills they are developing from each subject in order to be “employment ready”. Students will have a Careers Week assembly in tutor time and we will be launching two exciting student competitions for Careers; a competition to design the logo for our careers linked lessons and a competition to see which students in every year group can make the most use of our Careers platform (Unifrog) in a two-week period. These will be launched on Thursday next week so please do encourage your child to get involved!

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 \(26 February 2021\)](#)

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

News from the Library

Things have been a little different in the library over recent months during the Covid-19 pandemic! Please take a look at our new Library Newsletter to catch up on the latest news and discover what's been happening behind the scenes!

[Library Newsletter \(February 2021\)](#)

Upcoming Events

Friday 5 March	Inset Day (brought forward from 1 April)
Thursday 18 March	Year 7 Parents' Evening (<i>information coming soon</i>)
Thursday 25 March	Year 11 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 31 March	Year 13 Parents' Evening
Thursday 1 April	Last day of Term 4 (Inset moved to 5 March)
Monday 19 April	Start of Term 5

LETTERS HOME ...

[Sixth Form Bulletin for week commencing 1 March 2021](#) - Parents/Carers of Sixth Form students

[Covid-19 Testing and Return to School](#) – All Parents/Carers

[Email communication following government announcement on return to school](#) – All Parents/Carers

[Year 10 OCR Sports Studies - Trip to Mendip Activity Centre](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 10 Sports Studies students