



23 February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Last week the government announced new guidance around the use of mobile phones in schools. As was widely reported, the measures suggested in the guidance are already in place in the vast majority of schools and this includes Backwell.

On this, I agree with Geoff Barton, General Secretary of ASCL, who says: *"The amount of time that some children – and adults for that matter – spend on mobile phones is concerning because it can amount to addictive behaviour and is often accompanied by access to completely inappropriate and damaging material. However, this compulsive use of these devices is not something that is happening in schools – where robust policies are already in place – but while children are out of school. Most schools already forbid the use of mobile phones during the school day or allow their use only in limited and stipulated circumstances."*

Nevertheless, this announcement gives an opportunity to remind parents/carers as well as pupils of our approach to the use of mobile phones in school.

Government guidance suggests that mobile phones should not be used by pupils during the school day, including at break and lunchtimes. It also suggests schools should be mindful of the risks of young people travelling to and from school without a mobile phone. Our existing policy aligns fully with these principles: students may bring a phone with them to school, but it must be switched off and in their bag for the whole of the school day. Once the bell has sounded for the end of the day, pupils can use their phones to contact home if necessary.

The government guidance suggests that less rigid rules might be appropriate for Sixth Formers, but that they should not use their mobile phones in front of younger pupils. Again, this is already part of the Backwell policy: sixth form students can use their mobile phones in the Sixth Form area, but not around the site. It is also our policy that staff should avoid using mobile devices for personal reasons in front of students.

I ask parents and carers to support us in implementing our mobile phone policy, including ensuring that any communication between home and pupil during the school day is done via the school telephone systems.

Thank you.

Jon Nunes
Headteacher

MESSAGES

Year 10 Trial exams: 11 - 15 March 2024 - Important exam change

To help students and parents/carers manage exam entries and exam timetables (real and trials) throughout the year, we are migrating to a new online system supported by 'SchoolWorkSpace'.

We will no longer issue paper copies of exam timetables.

Instead, students and their parents/carers will be sent an email with a link to view the student's exam timetable. As this is a 'dynamic link' it will always display the latest timetable information. The email will be sent from **noreply@SchoolWorkSpace**, so please look out for this next week (check spam/junk folders too).

Students must view their timetable and check they know their exam dates/times and room. When the link is open there is an option to print the timetable (the school library printer is available if needed). Alternatively, you can take a screenshot of the timetable on a device for future reference.

For any queries, please contact exams@backwellschool.net

Thank you.

Backwell School Exams Team

Year 11 Parents' Information Evening – Preparation for Exams

Last night (Thursday 22 February) we held a parents' information evening where Mrs Mason and Mr Pretty talked about the forthcoming GCSE examinations and how the school is preparing students to achieve their very best. They also discussed what parents/carers can do to support their child with their revision over the next few months.

Shortly we will be sending out an email to parents/carers with a personalised revision programme for each Year 11 student. So please keep an eye out for that. You can read a letter giving information about the revision programme by [clicking here](#).

For those parents/carers who were unable to attend the parents' information evening, you can view the presentation given last night on our school website by clicking on the link below.

[Year 11 preparation for exams presentation](#)

Careers Fair – Tuesday 5 March

To link with National Careers Week, we are excited to announce that this year's Backwell School Careers Fair will be held on **Tuesday 5 March**. All students in Year 9 will be visiting the

fair during period 6 before it opens to **all years** from 3.10 pm until 5.30 pm. Over 40 representatives from universities, colleges, apprenticeship training providers, professions and employers will be present as well as our own careers adviser who will be available to give impartial advice and guidance.

Additionally, there will be two talks in the sixth form theatre: the first at 4.30 pm on **Why Go To University** and the second at 5.00 pm on **Why Do An Apprenticeship**.

We would encourage all students and their parents/carers to attend, even if they have been before. It is a great chance to find out about the many and varied opportunities out there and students may even find their future career! Please note that if you are planning on parking on site we would ask you to arrive after 3.30 pm to avoid congestion.

Enrichment Week Admin

To assist Student Services with the considerable task of preparing for Enrichment Week, if you haven't already done so, please could we ask parents/carers of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 to spend a few minutes completing the following online forms:

Year 9 forms:

Student Essential Information - <https://forms.office.com/e/sFA6dZBXT8>

Behaviour Agreement – <https://forms.office.com/e/Ez2yp0PpuV>

Year 8 form:

Behaviour Agreement – <https://forms.office.com/e/Ez2yp0PpuV>

Year 7 forms:

Student Essential Information - <https://forms.office.com/e/sFA6dZBXT8>

Behaviour Agreement – <https://forms.office.com/e/Ez2yp0PpuV>

Please could we also ask that you check ParentPay to ensure you are up-to-date with your payment plan to assist the school in making timely payments to the activity and accommodation providers. If the overall cost of Enrichment Week is a barrier, then please contact the Finance team in the first instance, on finance@backwellschool.net and also take a look at our [Financial Assistance](#) form which can be found on the school website. General information about the week can be found on the [Enrichment Week pages](#) of the school website.

Year 9 Vaccinations - MenACWY and Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio Vaccination

All Year 9 students are being offered booster vaccinations to fully protect them against Meningitis C and Diphtheria, Polio and Tetanus into adulthood. Sirona Healthcare, North Somerset's School Nursing team, will be in school on Tuesday 26 March 2024 to carry out these vaccinations.

[Please click here](#) to read the letter from Sirona, which gives full details about the vaccinations on offer and contains a link (and a QR code) to an online consent form for completion. They

would like all parents to complete the consent form even if they do not want their child to receive the vaccinations; parents can consent for none, either or both of the vaccinations. Also in the letter there is a link to a leaflet about the NHS vaccination programme.

Please read the attached letter carefully. If you have any questions, please contact Sirona directly: sirona.sch-imms@nhs.net or call 01275 373104.

Please note that the **deadline** for completion of the consent form is midnight **Thursday 21 March 2024**.

Year 11 Leavers' Hoodie – A reminder to place your order

If your Year 11 child would like a Year 11 Leavers' Hoodie and you haven't already placed an order, please make sure that you get your order in soon. You will need to make payment via www.parentpay.com by **Friday 15 March 2024**. Please indicate in the comments box the size you would like to order.

PLEASE NOTE THAT LATE ORDERS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

Environment Committee Clothes Swap Event – Wednesday 28 February

A final reminder about the Environment Committee's Clothes Swap event which will take place next Wednesday 28 February at lunchtime in the main theatre, where students will be able to exchange any spare or unwanted clothes for other items that have been donated.

The last chance to drop clothes off in Reception will be on the morning of 25 February (before tutor time). A maximum number of 10 items of clothing per person can be donated. They need to be in a plastic bag with the student's name, tutor group and the number of items on a piece of paper inside the bag. The number of items donated equals the maximum number of items the student will be able to take out of the clothes swap. Clothes can also be purchased for 50p per item with all profits being donated to the Wildlife Trust for adopting a hedgehog.

Careers Bulletin

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

[Current careers events and opportunities – 23 February 2024](#)

Please visit our dedicated Careers website to read all about our Careers programme, including information on work experience, careers guidance, mock interviews and post-16 and post-18 study options. Careers website: <https://lspcareers.org.uk/backwell-school-2/>

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

Something to Celebrate!

[Click here to read](#) our news article on the whole school production of 'West Side Story'.

West Side Story Grand Raffle

Thank you to everyone who entered our West Side Story Raffle. Winning tickets are as follows:

B Watson – FED Voucher
S Weber – Marco Pierre White Afternoon Tea
J Elliot – Heaven Voucher
L Thomas – 2 tickets to 'Starter for Ten'
R Waller – Hot Stone Massage
A Grzonka – Online Live Pilates Classes
C Walters – Salt and Malt Voucher
K Norman – Portable Heater
J Lamb – Body Conditioning Class
J McElwee – Coates House Voucher for Coffee/Tea and Cake
H Bailey – Red and White Wine
E Sills – Nutrition Consultation
Dunlop family – Pink Champagne

Please contact the school to collect your prize from reception.

Notification from North Somerset of work on the 'Festival Way' cycle path

We have been advised by North Somerset Council that work will be taking place next month to improve some of the crossings on the cycle path between Nailsea – Backwell – Flax Bourton. This may affect some of our students walking or cycling to school, as this will involve some closures of the cycle path in March, although they hope to minimise disruption by working only between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm. The affected areas are as follows:

- Backwell Bow in Backwell on Monday 25 March.
- Station Road in Flax Bourton from Tuesday 12 until Friday 15 March and on Monday 25 March.
- Lodge Lane in Nailsea from Monday 11 to Tuesday 19 March and on Monday 25 March.
- Golden Valley path in Nailsea at the crossing with Trendlewood Way between Monday 4 and Tuesday 13 March, on Monday 18 March and on Monday 25 March

The programme of the works is weather dependent, so there might be some minor adjustments if required. You can read North Somerset's press release [here](#). They would like to thank all residents for their patience and look forward to a safer path for all.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday 23 February	Deadline for submission of Year 9 Options Forms Year 11 Parents' Evening booking system opens
Monday 26 February	Year 9 Wild and Well trip to Mojo Active (9E) German Exchange Information Evening
Wednesday 28 February	Year 9 Wild and Well trip to Mojo Active (9A & 9B) Second-hand Clothes Swap at lunchtime in the main theatre
Thursday 29 February	Year 11 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 5 March	Careers Fair: 3.10 pm – 5.30 pm in school
Thursday 14 March	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Friday 15 March	Red Nose Day and Non-School Uniform day Deadline for ordering Year 11 Leavers' Hoodies
11 – 15 March	Year 10 Trial Exams
Monday 18 March	AS Trial Exams Year 11 Additional trial exam - Maths
18 – 25 March	French Exchange – French students in Backwell
Tuesday 19 March	Student Council Meeting
Tuesday 26 March	Year 9 MenACWY/DtP vaccinations Spring Concert at 7.00 pm in the main theatre
Wednesday 27 March	Last day of Term 4
Thursday 28 March	Inset Day – School closed to students
Friday 29 March – Friday 5 April	Ski trip to Folgarida

For further trips and events, please see the ['Calendar' page](#) on the school website.

Quick link to [Parents' Handbook 2023-24](#).

LETTERS HOME

[Sixth Form Bulletin for week commencing 26 February](#) – Parents/Carers of Sixth Form students

[Year 11 Personalised Revision Programme](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 11 students

[Year 11 Revision Programme for Combined Science and Triple Science](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 11 students