



8 March 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

In the week of the latest Budget, I thought it would be an appropriate time to update parents and carers on the financial situation for the education sector and Backwell in particular.

As with most schools, Backwell is facing considerable financial challenge at the moment. Costs for schools are extremely high. One major reason for this is that the recent pay rises for teachers and support staff, despite being well-deserved and arguably insufficient, have not been fully matched by increased funding for schools. This is particularly the case for schools like Backwell who are amongst the lower-funded in the country and, therefore, have been most affected by the government decision not to increase what are called 'minimum per-pupil funding levels.' School funding is very complex, but if you wish to read more about this issue, please follow this link: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/severe-hardship-as-thousands-of-schools-get-0-5-funding-rise/>

As a consequence of our income failing to keep up with our costs, we have been working very hard in financial planning for next year to make the cost-saving changes necessary while reducing as much as possible any undesirable impact on the education provision for the pupils at Backwell. I hope and expect that we will be successful in that aim and that, therefore, parents and carers will not perceive any reduction in the levels of expertise, care and support offered to their children. However, the budget announcement of just a 1% rise (above inflation) in day-to-day public sector spending indicates an ongoing squeeze on funding for schools. Meanwhile the main teaching unions continue to make the case for significant pay rises for 2024-25 and beyond.

Thank you to all parents and carers for your understanding and support as the school and the Trust continue to work hard to retain the best possible educational opportunities for Backwell pupils against the backdrop of economic challenge and unrest.

Thank you.

Jon Nunes
Headteacher

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MESSAGES

Year 11 Exams and Year 12 AS Trial exams - 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 and reflect any late room/seat changes. The emails were sent this week from **noreply@SchoolWorkSpace**.

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 – Preparation for Exams

Well done to Year 11 students who have completed Week 1 of their revision programme this week. Parents/carers have been emailed their child's individual revision programme which supports students with planning their revision and developing effective revision techniques up to and including once the exams begin in May. Keep up the good work Year 11!

Year 10 Trial Exams (11 – 15 March)

Year 10 have been working hard to prepare for their trial exams next week. Parents/carers and students can access their timetable using the email link from the exams team and tutors have explained the arrangements for next week during tutor sessions. Please read the letter to ensure your child is fully prepared for the exams next week: [Year 10 Trial Exams Letter](#)

Careers Fair

On Tuesday we held the Backwell School Careers Fair to support, enthuse and advise our students in their future plans. We are very keen to gather parents/carers feedback whether you attended or not, so that we can run an even more successful event in the future. If you could you give feedback via a 3 minute survey [here](#) we would be very grateful.

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 – 11 March 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

Spring Music Concert - Tuesday 26 March

The music department's spring concert will take place in the last week of this term on Tuesday 26 March. The evening will be a showcase for our choirs and instrumental ensembles and will feature performances from students from Years 7 to 13.

The concert will take place in our main theatre starting at 7.00 pm. Refreshments will be sold by the Backwell School Association during the interval.

Tickets, priced at £5 for adults and £3 for concessions are available to buy from Your Box Office via the following link : [Buy tickets here](#).

If you have any queries about the event, please do contact Steve Clarke (Leader of Performing Arts) by emailing sclarke@backwellschool.net

Comic Relief

Next Friday 15 March, is a non-school uniform day in aid of Comic Relief and students will be able to wear their own clothes in exchange for a donation towards this charity. As we have done previously, we are offering the option of donating online via a dedicated ParentPay donations page, where all monies will go direct to Comic Relief. Please see below for the link for payment.

The minimum donation for our non-uniform charity days is now £2. We would encourage parents to donate online, however if you still prefer to make a cash donation, your child can hand it in to Reception or the Finance office on the day. As always, we would ask that clothing is appropriate to wear in a school setting and that no hair dye is worn. Thank you.

[Comic Relief 2024 \(parentpay.com\)](#)

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

FINAL REMINDER!!! DEADLINE FRIDAY 15TH MARCH - 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.

Something to Shout About!

We have had quite an eventful week with World Book Day, the Careers Fair, a Schools' FA Semi-Final and the North Somerset Dance Festival. You can read more about a couple of these events on the News page of our website via the links below. More reports will follow next week.

[World Book Day Competition 2024](#)

[U12 girls' Schools Football Association Semi-Final](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

11 – 15 March	Year 10 Trial Exams
Thursday 14 March	Year 7 Parents' Evening <i>Bookings opened on Thursday 7 March at 6.00 pm</i> SchoolCloud - Backwell School
Friday 15 March	Red Nose Day and Non-School Uniform day Deadline for ordering Year 11 Leavers' Hoodies
Monday 18 March	AS Trial Exams Year 11 Additional trial exam - Maths
Tuesday 19 March	Student Council Meeting
18 – 25 March	French Exchange – French students in Backwell
Tuesday 19 March	Student Council Meeting
Monday 25 March	Year 11 GCSE Drama Showcase Deadline for ordering a Year 13 Leavers' Hoodie (midday)

Tuesday 26 March	Year 9 MenACWY/DtP vaccinations <i>Deadline for consent 9.00 am on Friday 22 March</i> Spring Concert at 7.00 pm in the main theatre
Wednesday 27 March	Last day for students - non-school uniform day in aid of Bridges for Communities
Thursday 28 March	Last day of Term 4 Inset Day – School closed to students
29 March – 5 April	Ski trip to Folgarida
Monday 15 April	First day of Term 5

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 11 March](#) – Parents/Carers of Sixth Form students

[Year 13 Leavers’ Hoodie](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 13 students

[Year 13 Key Dates](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 13 students

[Application to join Backwell Sixth Form in September 2024](#) – Individual letters have been emailed out this week

[A Level Art Textiles Exam – 2, 3 and 7 May 2024](#) – Parents/Carers of A level Art Textiles students

[Year 12 Geography Field Work Days](#) – Parents/Carers of Year 12 Geography students