



Backwell School Weekly Bulletin



Friday, 09 January 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Families and Friends,

As we begin the New Year and term 3, we welcome a fresh chapter filled with possibility and purpose. This time of year, invites us to reflect on what matters most and to set resolutions that go beyond good intentions—resolutions that make a real, positive difference in our school and wider community. Whether it's showing greater kindness, embracing new challenges, supporting one another, or striving for personal growth, even small changes can have a lasting impact. Together, we look forward to a year of learning, collaboration, and shared commitment to helping every student thrive.

A school is a funny place. Over the Christmas break, a friend asked whether the first week back would simply 'ease us into the term' — the implication being that the opening days are a little quieter. As those of you with children at Backwell will know, a new term is anything but! We begin exactly as we mean to continue at full throttle, and this week has been no exception.

We have been delighted to see our new 3G astroturf pitch officially open for student use. This fantastic facility further enhances our already outstanding PE curriculum, and will no doubt be welcomed by many families as we move lessons from muddy grass to artificial turf over the coming weeks! It was also wonderful to see the pitch being used by Backwell Juniors Football Club on Tuesday evening. We very much see this as a community facility that we can all be proud of, and we look forward to welcoming more local groups to the school in the weeks ahead.

Continuing with sport, it was a pleasure to see former Backwell pupil George Taylor make his full league debut for the Bristol Bears over Christmas. George started in the second row during their win against Newcastle Falcons, watched by over 23,000 people at Ashton Gate. We will certainly be following his progress with great interest.

This week has also seen the finishing touches added to the Sixth Form production of *Footloose*. The stage set has come to life, rehearsals have stepped up a gear, and the students are ready to perform for us all next week. This show, which is entirely produced and run by students with minimal staff input, is a real highlight of the Sixth Form year and a unique event we are incredibly proud of at Backwell. If you haven't yet secured tickets, please see the poster later in the newsletter — there are still some available across all three nights.

Just before Christmas, we were delighted to learn that Year 10 students James and Sam achieved gold awards in the UK Bebras Computing Challenge. This places them in the top 10% nationally out of more than 41,000 students. The challenge develops computational thinking through a series of interactive tasks designed to test logical reasoning and problem-solving skills. A fantastic achievement — congratulations to both students.

Over the coming weeks, I will be speaking more about our newly established school values, shaped by the entire school community. Thank you to the more than 800 parents and carers who shared their thoughts on what our values should be if we are to truly live them every day. These values will help define who we are at Backwell: a community that is **kind**, **curious**, and **ambitious**.

As I write, we are monitoring forecasts for possible inclement weather. In the unlikely event that the school needs to close due to extreme conditions such as snow, decisions will always be made with the safety of students, staff, and families as our highest priority. Any closure will be communicated via email and shared on the school website and Facebook page.

Finally, may I wish you all a slightly belated happy, healthy, and inspiring New Year. Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Have a wonderful weekend — and remember, it is by working together that *we are Backwell*.

With warmest regards,



Will Penny
Headteacher

New 3G Astro pitch in photos



New 3G pitch in use yesterday evening for local Backwell Junior FC





The above slide shows the finishing touches to the 3G pitch just before the Christmas break.

Year 9 Parents and Carers' Evening – Thursday 15 January

Bookings are now open for the Year 9 Parents and Carers Evening, which will be held on Thursday 15 January. Details on how to book appointments can be found in the letter sent home on 17 December, which can also be found by clicking the following link:

[Year 9 Parents & Carers Evening: Thursday 15 January 2026](#)

Year 10 Mock Interview Day – 22 Jan 2026

As part of their careers education programme, we are very pleased to let you know that on **Thursday 22 January** every student in Year 10 will have a 10-minute mock interview in school with a local employer. Students are being prepared for this interview experience via their tutor time programme so will be fully aware of what to expect.

We believe that this will be an invaluable experience and expect every student to participate; there will be support in place for any student likely to find this task challenging, so please contact your child's tutor if you have any concerns in this regard.

In the week prior to their interview, students will be told the individual time of their interview via their tutor. We would be grateful if you could help us by talking to your child about this opportunity and reminding them to attend on the day. If you have any queries please contact the school careers adviser, Charlotte Ball at cball@backwellschool.net

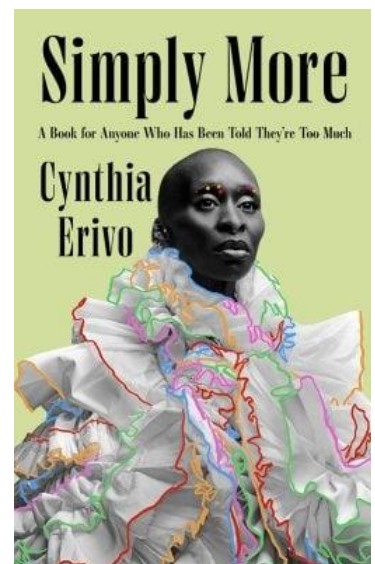
Book of the Week

Simply More By Cynthia Erivo

It is never too late to build the life you're seeking.

Cynthia Erivo learned the music to Wicked a decade before she needed it, not knowing that those same lyrics would change her life. Ten years later, she has the chance to perform those songs on a world stage, showing us that there is always time to keep discovering ourselves, that the journey of becoming is not a finite one.

In a series of powerful, personal vignettes, Cynthia Erivo reflects on the ways that she has grown as an actor and a person, the lessons she's learned over years of performing, and how we are capable of so much more than we think



Kitchen Table

We have introduced a new initiative to students last term and continuing in the new year... Kitchen Table offers a supervised environment with support (from staff and sixth form students), computers and hot/cold refreshments provided to enable students in any year to complete any missed classed work, home learning and revision tasks they wish.

Kitchen Table will run in the School Library on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays until 4.30pm.

We'd love to see students from all year groups attending. We will issue loyalty cards to all students and then if 5 or more attendances are logged (in a term), we will get take away pizza for the last session of the term!



Kitchen Table

Open to students
in all year groups

Backwell School Library
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
3.05pm - 4.15pm/4.30pm

Students can then catch the late bus home
(if applicable)



BSA Uniform Sale

Looking for uniform pieces?

Don't miss the next BSA Uniform Sale, to be held on Thursday, 22 January, 3.30-5.00pm in the Backwell School Conference Room.

Please see advert further in this newsletter.



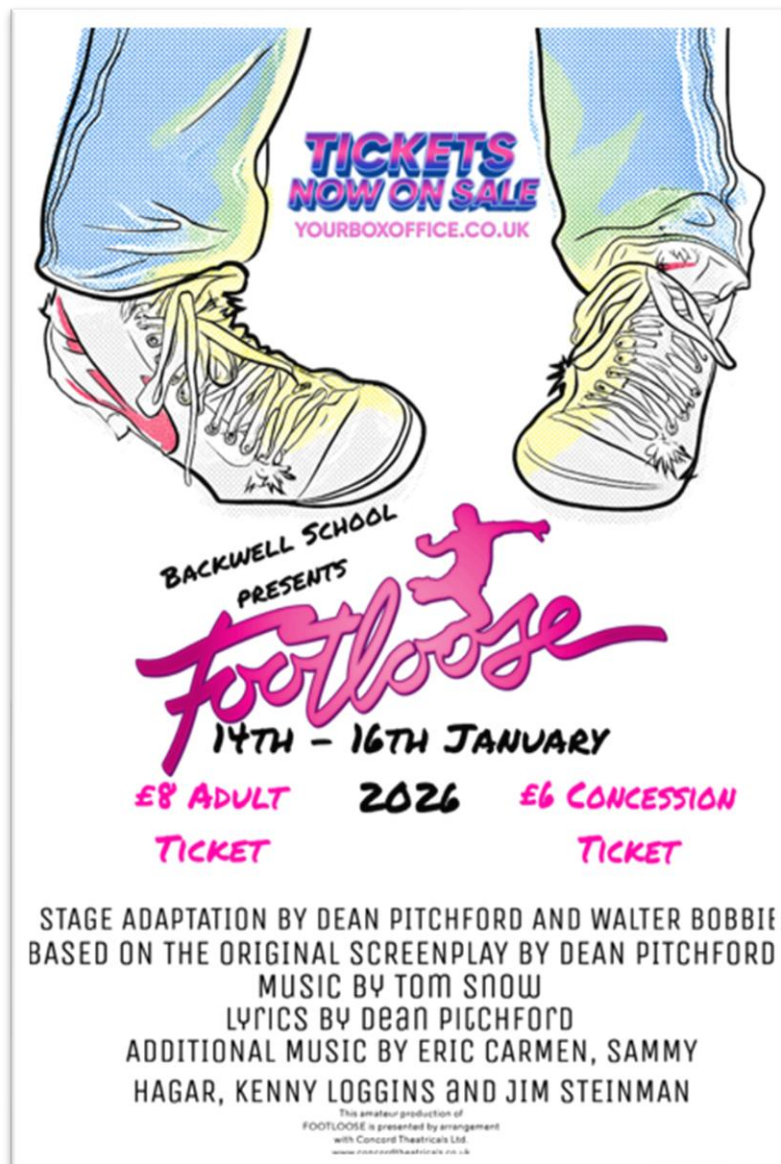
Free Cycling Proficiency Course

Life Cycle UK is running a free Level 3 Bikeability cycling proficiency course, for Years 7 & 8, out of Backwell School during February half term. (Note: Students should have completed their Level 2 Bikeability before doing Level 3). Please see the flyer at the end of this bulletin for details and how to book.

Sixth Form Production of Footloose

Over the last few months, members of the sixth form have been rehearsing for this year's production of the '80s classic, *Footloose*. The talent both on and offstage is incredible, as is the atmosphere for all of us behind the scenes. I think we could all say that you'll see a great deal of that when you come to see us perform in January. Tickets are available now (£8 adults, £6 concession), and all proceeds are going to Alzheimer's Society.

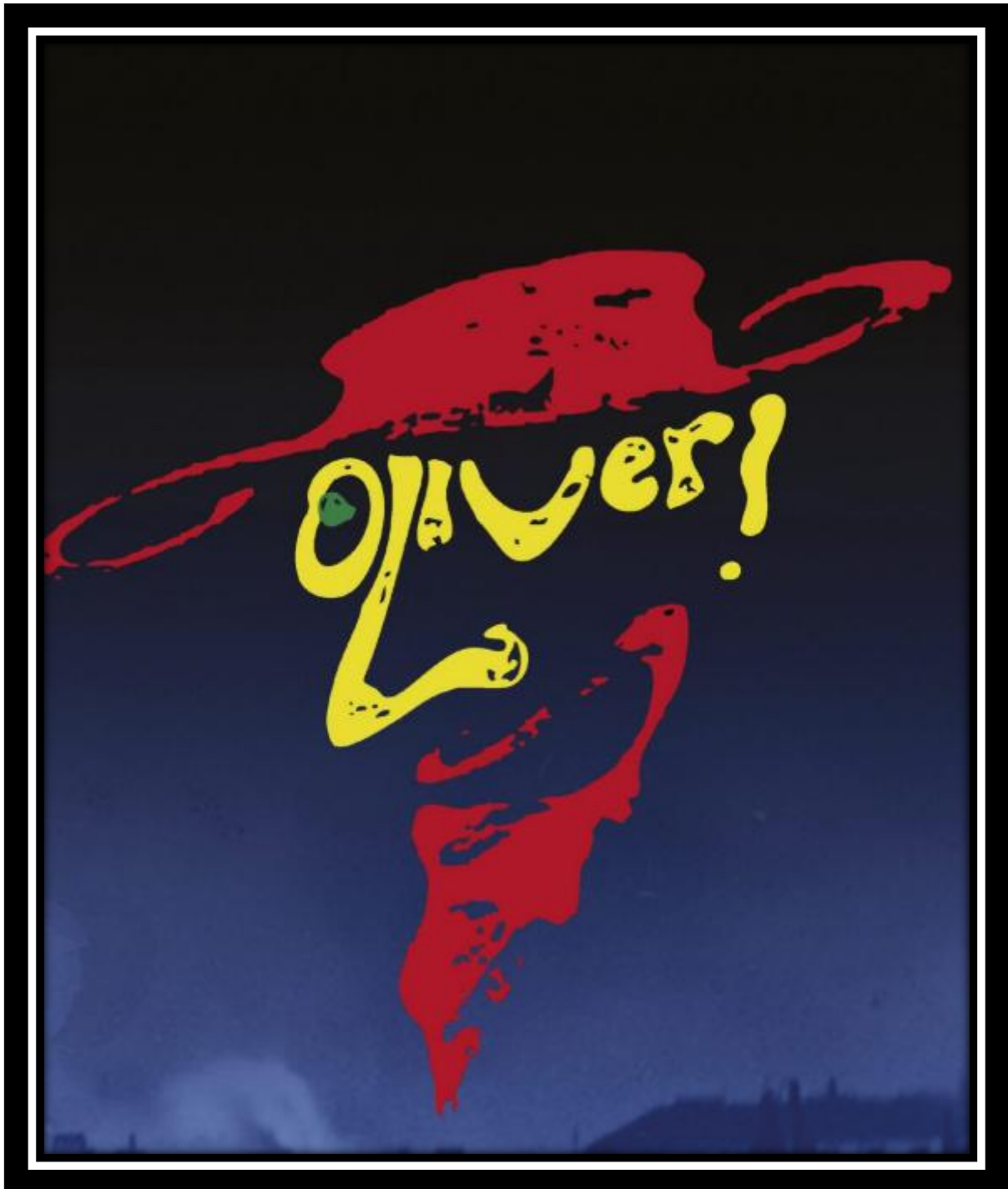
Merry Christmas, and we'll see you in the new year: [Your Box Office - Footloose](http://YourBoxOffice-Footloose)



Backwell School Production of “Oliver!” – Tickets on sale now!

Tickets are now on sale for our school production of 'Oliver!' which runs from Tuesday 10th February to Friday 13th February. Tickets are priced at £10 for adults and £6 for concessions. Our whole school shows tend to sell out so get your seats quickly to avoid disappointment!

[Your Box Office - Ticket booking for Oliver!](#)



Quick Links

- [School Uniform and Equipment Guidance](#)
- [Financial Support](#)
- [Year 13 Key Dates 2025-2026](#)
- [Sixth Form Bulletin](#)
- [Careers Bulletin - 09 January 2026](#)

Letters Home This Week

- [Year 11 Philosophy and Religion Trip to Masjid E Noor Mosque on Tuesday 03 February 2026](#)
- [Year 9 GCSE Drama and Btec Performing Arts taster session – Tuesday 20 January 2026](#)
- [GCSE Practical - Climbing trip at Redpoint Climbing Centre](#)
- [Year 11 DT Food NEA Bristol Food Market trip](#)
- [ALL Sixth Form Lectures 2026 - Wednesday 11 February](#)
- [Year 9 Options Information Evening: Thursday 29 January 2026](#)

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 15 January 2026	Year 9 Parents' and Carers' Evening (online) 4:00pm -6:45pm
Wednesday 14 – Friday 16 January 2026	Sixth Form Production of Footloose (see information above)
Monday 19 January	A-Level theatre trip - 'Lost Atoms' 19:00-22:00
Tuesday 20 January	Drama taster session Year 9 in Sixth Form Theatre 15:15-16:15
Thursday 29 January	Year 9 Options Evening 17:30-19:30 in Main School Theatre
Thursday 05 February	Year 13 Parents' Evening (online) 16:00-18:45
Tuesday 10 – Friday 13 February 2026	School Production 'Oliver' Performance in DTH 19:00-22:00
Friday 13 February	Inset Day 5 – School closed to pupils End of Term 3

Upcoming Aspens Theme Day at Backwell School

Thursday, 15 January

STREATERIES



ROMAN ROOTS

15TH JANUARY 2025

ON THE MENU



PIZZA'S

Pizza Bianca
with Smoked Ham (white base)

Pizza Potatosa
(white base with potatoes)

Spinaci e Funghi
(white base with spinach & mushrooms)



PASTA

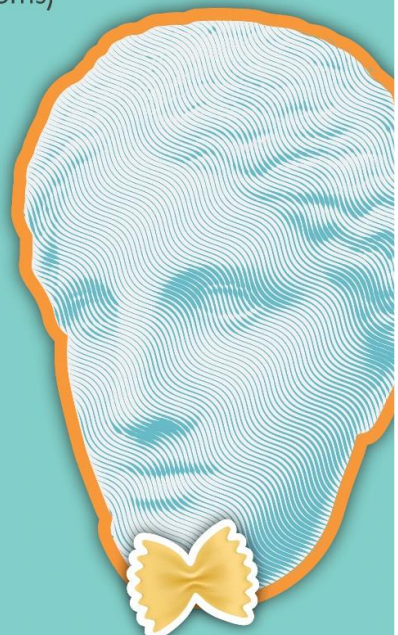
Pasta Amatriciana
(homemade tomato sauce,
cheese & bacon)

Pasta Cacio e Pepe
(cheese and black pepper)



DESSERTS

Tiramisu





**BSA
SECOND HAND
UNIFORM SALE**

**22nd January
3.30 - 5pm
Conference Room
Cash or card**

Donations gratefully received in Reception
anytime and up to Thursday 22nd January.

**BRANDED ITEMS ONLY - NO TROUSERS PLEASE
CLEAN & GOOD CONDITION**

**BACKWELL
SCHOOL**



**BRISTOL
TEEN
BOOK
AWARD**

**Shortlist
2026**

**WHO WILL BE
YOUR
WINNER?**

ON SILVER TIDES
KATYA BALEN
SYLVIA BISHOP

WILD EAST
ASHLEY HICKSON-LOVENCE

KING OF DEAD THINGS
NEVIN HOLNESS

THE BOY I LOVE
WILLIAM HUSSEY

THE TWELVE
LIZ HYDER
ILLUSTRATED BY TOM DE FRESTON

YOU WOULDN'T CATCH ME DEAD
TESS JAMES-MACKEY

 @bristolteenbookaward



If your child has special educational needs or disabilities, you know better than anyone how important accessible, timely and compassionate healthcare is...

Survey closes at midnight on Sunday 18 January 2026



We want to know how local healthcare providers are doing - what's working well and what could be improved?



Complete the survey

The three local parent carer forums - Bristol Parent Carers, North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together, and South Glos Parent Carers (SGPC) - come together as BNSSG to make sure the collective voice of parent carers is heard and understood.



Your experience matters.
Help shape change.

Navigating health services can be a challenge for families with children or young people who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Parent carers are in the best position to highlight what works well and where improvements are needed in the healthcare system. To support this, we are running a **Health Services Survey** to gather valuable feedback on experiences with GPs, hospitals, mental and physical health services, dentists, opticians, audiologists, pharmacies, health visitors, school nurses, and assessment/diagnostic services.

Survey Details:

- **Who can take part?** All parents and carers of a child or young person with any additional need or disability – diagnosed or not.
- **Time to complete:** Approximately 20 minutes.
- **Confidentiality:** The survey is completely confidential.
- **Closing date:** Sunday 18 January, midnight.
- **Link to Survey:** [Click here to complete survey](#)



Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to inform you that I have recently published a new guide

[What I wish my parents or carers knew: A guide for parents on managing children's digital lives.](#)

Supporting children's safety is a shared responsibility between families, schools and wider society. For parents and carers, this responsibility has become increasingly complex as children's lives are now deeply intertwined with the digital world. Many parents face difficult decisions about how to balance protecting children from online harm with enabling access to spaces that are now central to learning, socialising and play.

The last time I published a guide like this, ***The things I wish my parents had known: Young people's advice on talking to your child about online sexual harassment***, in December 2021, it was to help parents and carers navigate difficult conversations about sexual harassment online. This guide is different in scope, in recognition of the complex, rapidly evolving landscape in which children – and parents – are navigating. It focuses on the challenge of managing children's everyday online habits.

This guide was written with the direct involvement of children in England. It is a reflection of their views. My office visited schools to speak to teenagers and spoke to my Youth Ambassadors and Youth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Panel to get their expertise on what works and what doesn't work between parents or carers and children in the 21st Century.

When I speak to children about what they would do differently when it comes to being online, with the benefit of hindsight, I ask them: would they give a smartphone to their own teenager? Almost unanimously, they tell me no. They want to be protected from it as long as possible.

Educators and leaders play a vital role in supporting parents and carers to navigate these challenges. Responses to my recent school survey show just how concerned school leaders are about their children's safety online, despite most already taking steps to limit or ban devices from the classroom. Children are clear that they value firm, informed and protective boundaries when adults have concerns about the content they are accessing online.

As parents, carers, and educators, our job must begin and end with our children's care and safety. It's what they expect and what they want from you.

As one young person told me: "Don't be afraid to be firm... If you are worried [that] your child is seeing harmful content and you don't know what they're watching and it's affecting the behaviour, just take it that you know best – they don't."

I hope this guide will be a useful resource for your school community, and I encourage you to share it with staff and parents where appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Rachel de Souza

Children's Commissioner

**Life
Cycle**



**Backwell School
February half term
Bikeability
Level 3**

Bikeability Holiday Courses

Unlock your child's cycling potential!

Cycling confidence, road safety, and planning skills –
taught by Life Cycle's qualified, DBS-checked instructors.

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 www.wellspringcounselling.org.uk



“Please see below flyer explaining how to become a host family for French students visiting the UK for short periods. This is a great opportunity to experience different cultures whilst earning extra money.

Please note, the students are not linked to Backwell School.”



We are looking for host families in your area!

Why choose us?

- Excellent rates
- 24/7 support
- Locally based
- Weekly payments
- 3 or 4 night stays
- Weekends free



How to contact us

07910746108
07956870011

enquiries@bristolhostfamilies.co.uk

