



Backwell School Weekly Bulletin



Friday, 22 May 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Families and Friends,

As we draw another vibrant and successful week to a close, there is a real sense of reflection and celebration across our school community. This week, in particular, has been marked by a significant milestone for our Year 11 students as they reach their final days with us. It is always a moment filled with mixed emotions—pride in all they have accomplished, excitement for what lies ahead, and, of course, a touch of nostalgia as we say goodbye to a cohort who have contributed so much to the life of the school.

For the majority of our Year 11 students, this is not a farewell but the beginning of their next chapter with us, as they prepare to return in September to embark on their Sixth Form journey. We are delighted that so many have chosen to continue their education here, and we look forward to supporting them as they take these important next steps.

For those students for whom this truly marks the end of their time with us, we send our very best wishes for the future. They leave as confident, capable young people, ready to embrace new opportunities, and we have no doubt they will go on to achieve great things.

We now look forward to celebrating together at the Year 11 Prom at Ashton Gate—a well-deserved occasion to recognise their achievements—and again on Results Day, when we are confident their hard work, energy and diligent study over the past five years will be rewarded. As ever, we fully expect their outcomes to be a source of great pride and, indeed, the envy of local schools. Thank you, Year 11, for the legacy you leave behind and for the positive example you have set for the younger students who follow in your footsteps.

On Wednesday you will have received the exciting information outlining a series of changes coming into effect from September, all designed to enhance students' daily experience while maintaining the very highest standards in the classroom. I am genuinely very excited

about these developments, as are the staff, as they represent a significant step forward for our school. The move to a five-lesson day will support deeper, more focused learning and reduce unnecessary movement and fatigue, while our investment in improved dining facilities and the development of vastly improved social spaces will transform the quality of

social time—reducing congestion and providing students with calm, welcoming spaces to relax and connect. Over the half-term break, our new canopy will be installed, providing shade on sunny days and much-needed shelter during wet weather. Together, these changes will create a smoother, more balanced school day that promotes wellbeing, strengthens our community, and ensures that excellent outcomes for our students remain at the heart of all we do.

On Tuesday afternoon we celebrated the Year 7 Musical Theatre Final. It was a fantastic celebration of the outstanding progress made across the year group, following their impressive work in lessons. Each finalist proudly represented their tutor group, performing in front of a judging panel of Mr Hooker, Mrs Gardner, myself, and Sixth Form Drama Scholar Matilda T, who faced the difficult task of selecting an overall winner. Every performance was superb, showcasing originality, teamwork, and genuine talent, while clearly reflecting our school values of ambition and kindness. With over 50 students involved, the audience enjoyed a vibrant range of songs, dances, and scenes from productions including *Matilda*, *Annie*, *Moana*, and *Frozen*. A huge congratulations to 7M2 (Ashlea, Nancy, Wren, Etta, Rowan, Daniel), whose energetic and polished rendition of *High School Musical* earned them the winning title and award!



Congratulations to James E in Year 11 on his outstanding achievement in the Maclaurin Olympiad Competition, where he has been awarded a prestigious Silver Medal—an exceptional accomplishment. The Maclaurin Olympiad is a highly demanding, two-hour paper featuring challenging Olympiad-style problems, and entry is limited to the top-performing students nationally following the Intermediate Maths Challenge. To be among the approximately 1,800 students invited to take part each year is impressive in itself,

making James's success all the more noteworthy. This recognition is a testament to his remarkable mathematical ability, perseverance and dedication. We are delighted that his achievement has been recognised with both a silver medallion and a Maths Challenge puzzle book, and we look forward to seeing his continued success in the future.

We are also delighted to celebrate further sporting success within our school community. Mariella B in Year 11 has been selected to represent England in the coming months—an outstanding achievement of which we are incredibly proud and a testament to her talent, dedication and hard work. In addition, we were thrilled to learn that former pupil Davina Xanh has been selected for the prestigious Curtis Cup. This renowned biennial competition, first played in 1932, is one of the most significant events in women's amateur golf,

featuring teams from Great Britain and Ireland and the United States, and has showcased many of the sport's most celebrated players. Davina will represent GB and Ireland at Bel-Air Golf Club from 12th–14th June, and we wish both her and Mariella every success as they compete on such an impressive stage.



Mariella (Year 11) and Backwell Alumni Davina

As we move into the warmer months, we encourage all students to bring a refillable water bottle with them each day to help them stay hydrated and feeling their best. Keeping well hydrated is key to maintaining energy, focus and comfort in lessons, particularly as temperatures rise. For those students who are affected by hay fever, please do ensure they have their own antihistamines with them as needed, as these are not available from the

First Aid room. Thank you, as always, for your support in helping us keep students healthy, comfortable and ready to learn.

As we look ahead to warmer weather, a reminder that summer uniform expectations will reflect those in place during the warmer months at the start of the academic year in September. Full details can be found on the school website, but in summary, students are permitted to wear black tailored shorts or the school skirt if they wish—consistent with our uniform expectations throughout the year. Thank you for your continued support in ensuring students are dressed smartly and appropriately for the season. The link to the uniform can be found [here](#).

As we reach the half term break, I would like to wish all of our families a restful and enjoyable week, with plenty of opportunity to relax and, we hope, make the most of some sunshine. We look forward to welcoming students back for what promises to be an action-packed final term of the year, with many exciting highlights ahead. These include our transition days and activities with our future Year 7 students—as well as Enrichment Week, Sports Day, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, and, of course, all the enjoyment and achievement that comes from engaging learning in the classroom. We look forward to sharing these experiences with our students as we bring another successful year to a close.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. By working together, we ensure that 'we are Backwell'.



Will Penny
Headteacher



When the whole of Year 11 fits on the stage with their pastoral leads, tutors and staff...

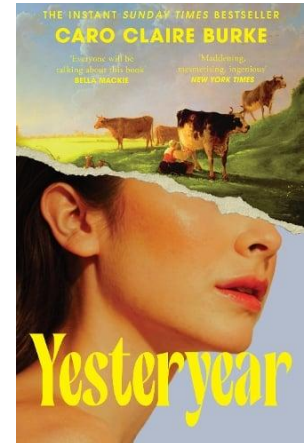
With their own rendition of the classic 'Sweet Caroline'

Book of the Week

Yesteryear by Cara Claire Burke

My name is Natalie Heller Mills, and I was perfect at being alive...'

Natalie lives a traditional lifestyle – and has the social media accounts to prove it. Her charming farmhouse on her working ranch is artfully cluttered, her husband is a handsome cowboy, her homemade sourdough boules are each more beautiful than the last. So what if there are nannies and producers and industrial-grade ovens behind the scenes? What Natalie's followers don't know won't hurt them.



Then, one morning, Natalie wakes up in a strange, horrible version of reality. Her home, her husband, her children—they're all familiar, but something's off. Is this a hoax? A reality show? A test from God? Natalie knows just two things for sure: this isn't her perfect life, and she must escape, by any means possible.

Clubs

There will be the opportunity for a fresh intake of students to sign up to Graffiti Club, Clay Club and Photography Club for Term 6. Please sign up on ParentPay. The payment item will go live at 4pm today and will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please note there is no Year 7 Table Tennis Club in Term 6. Thank you to our volunteer Table Tennis England coach Mr Fitzpatrick for this year's sessions!

Clubs' schedules can be found on the website:

<https://www.backwellschool.net/page/?title=Clubs+and+Courses&pid=36>

Enrichment Week

We're very much looking forward to Enrichment Week which is coming up on Monday 22 to Friday 26 June.

Year 7 and Year 8 students will be bringing home an enrichment week letter after half term that will show their group allocation, trip leader and itinerary.

Year 9 students will have received a letter this week detailing their Osmington Bay residential details, with kit list and coach timings. Please note that there is a Parent/Carer Information evening on Wednesday 3 June at 17.30 in the Drama Theatre for the Osmington Bay trip.

All enrichment week letters can be found in the Letters Home section on the website after distribution.

Backwell School Summer Music Concert

Advance notice that our summer concert is on Tuesday, 16 June at 7pm. All of the usual choirs and ensembles and then something a bit more ambitious in the 2nd half where we've put together 10 (very different!) songs for solo singers with big band / orchestral backing.

Tickets will be available from midday on Tuesday, 19 May on ParentPay.



Backwell School Expressive Arts Showcase

This will be held on Tuesday, 09 June with two performances, 4:00pm and 5:30pm in the Sixth Form Theatre. Tickets are £2.50 each and are available via your ParentPay account. These are limited, so please purchase as soon as possible.

Backwell School Association Quiz Night – Friday, 19 June at 7:30pm

Back by popular demand... the BSA is running another quiz night. Put your team together (maximum of 6 humans) and fill in the form below to book your table. Tickets will be £5 per person, and we will set this up on ParentPay for you once you've signed up. The event has sold out in the last 2 years so book your table quickly to avoid disappointment! Over 18s only - there will be a bar!

Send any queries to Steve Clarke (sclarke@backwellschool.net)

[Backwell School Association Quiz Night - June 19th 2026 – Fill in form](#)

The event is likely to sell out so please get your entries in soon! Final date for bookings is Monday 1st June!

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Year 11 leavers

If you have any PE uniform/kit that you no longer want/require, we will gladly accept donations (especially girls branded PE tops). We also welcome any old trainers/ football boots/rugby boots in all sizes! Students are welcome to drop off in the PE Dept when they next have an exam. Many thanks in advance.

Important Message from Bristol City Council Home-to-School transport

This year Tuesday, 30 June 2026 is the deadline for applications for travel support with Bristol City Council.

Term 5 - Personal Development

In Personal Development at Backwell School, we work together to nurture the whole child, preparing them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens for life in modern Britain, focusing on character, resilience, wellbeing, and developing readiness for the next steps in education, training, or work. Students complete some of this work in specialised timetabled sessions and in tutor time. To help guide parents in their conversations with their children on these topics we are now including an outline of the areas that your child has been

talking about at school in the Newsletter. Please do contact us via the school email - mailbox@backwellschool.net - if you would like to discuss any aspect of our Personal Development Curriculum in more detail.

We will also be launching a consultation on the changes we will be making to the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum from September 2026 to ensure that this aligns with both the updated statutory government guidance and our school values. Please see the [letter](#) on ways in which you can contribute your views.

RSHE Parent & Carer Consultation Survey

Please click on the link below to complete the RSHE Consultation Survey

[Backwell School RSHE Parent and Carer Consultation – Fill in form](#)

Please complete the survey by Friday 05 June 2026. This survey is anonymous, and information will only be shared with staff members directly involved in the consultation process.

What is happening in Term 5

Year 7 are looking at Health and Wellbeing including the importance of exercise for physical and mental health as well as the importance of a healthy diet and the impact of healthy choices on mental wellbeing.

Year 9 are also looking at Health and Wellbeing including revisiting what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and a healthy weight and exploring the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health.

Year 10 will be discussing issues around the benefits of diversity within our society during their SMSC lessons. In tutor time they will be talking about Health and Wellbeing including the physical

and psychological consequences of addiction, the health risks associated with tobacco and the dangers of prescribed drugs.

Year 8 are talking about Internet Safety and harms including the similarities and differences between online and physical world, the risks of over-reliance on online relationships and how to identify harmful behaviours online and where to access support if you are the victim of this.

Sixth form

During Year 12 tutor times students are looking at Relationships, including Consent, Trust and Intimacy and Ending Relationships.



Some of our Year 11 students on a recent DofE Assessed expedition



SPORTS AWARDS EVENING

As we begin preparations for our Sports Awards Evening in July, we would love to celebrate the achievements of our students who are performing at a high (representative) level outside of school. If your child competes at county, regional, national or higher level, please could you send in any relevant information and, if possible, photos showcasing their involvement. We look forward to recognising and celebrating the successes of our elite performers. Please email mailbox@backwellschool.net with any information.



Quick Links

- [School Uniform and Equipment Guidance](#)
- [Financial Support](#)
- [Backwell School Careers Bulletin - June 2026](#)
- [Sixth Form Bulletin](#)

Letters Home

- [Year 12 Future Plans Week](#)
- [Important changes at Backwell School from September 2026](#)
- [Year 12 Parents' and Carers' Evening - Thursday 18 June 2026](#)
- [Year 10 NEA in GCSE DT: Product Design](#)
- [Year 12 Non-Examination Assessment \(NEA\) in A-Level Design and Technology: Product Design](#)
- [Year 11 GCSE Exam Information](#)

Dates for your Diary

Monday 01 June	Start of Term 6
Tuesday 02 June	Year 10 P&R and History Shepton Mallet trip (trip 1 of 3)
Wednesday 03 June	Year 10 P&R and History Shepton Mallet trip (trip 2 of 3)
Friday 03 June	Year 10 P&R and History Shepton Mallet trip (trip 3 of 3)
Thursday 18 June	Year 12 Parents' and Carers' Evening (online)
Monday 22 – Friday 26 June	Enrichment Week / Y10 Work Experience / Y12 Future Plan Week
Monday 29 June	Year 11 Celebration Ball at Ashton Court Stadium (Ticketed Event)
Tuesday 30 June	Year 6 – 7 transition day at Backwell School
Thursday 02 July	Year 10 Parents' and Carers; Evening (online)

Important updated FSM guidance

Please read if your young person is entitled or you have a new young person starting school who may be entitled to Free School Meals funding

When to apply for FSMs for September 2026

- New starters should apply in the summer holidays
- Anyone who has been awarded FSMs through their North Somerset Citizen's account in the past 2 years will not need to reapply.
- Anyone who was awarded FSMs over 2 years ago would have applied via our old system. They will need to apply via their North Somerset Citizen's account as we no longer hold their personal details to contact them or reassess their eligibility. If they don't reapply, their entitlement will end this academic year as the transitional protection will end for all children this summer.

The link to apply is www.n-somerset.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals



**SIXTH FORM
ADMINISTRATOR**

**Permanent, 30 to 37 hours a week
Monday to Friday
47 weeks a year (inc 6 days holiday
working & 5 INSETs
JG5 £25,777 (min pro rata salary)**

Closing date 3 June

Mental Health Support Team (MHST)



Hi, I'm Hayley!
Your school's Education Mental
Health Practitioner



The MHST is a partnership between the NHS and Off The Record (OTR). We are an early intervention service that focuses on prevention and supporting young people's mental health. I attend Backwell Secondary School on a Tuesday. I work with young people and their families to deliver Low-Intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) over a course of 6 to 8 sessions and can offer 1:1 or group work. I also support the Whole School Approach to mental health and wellbeing, creating and engaging in activities that increase awareness and reduce stigma.

Ways that I have supported Backwell Secondary School over the last year:

- Transition support for Year 7's worried about their move to secondary school
- Therapeutic group work for children struggling with Low Mood or Anxiety
- Working with key staff members
- Sharing mental health resources
- Signposting to appropriate organisations and services
- Assemblies
- Lunchtime Hubs



'It was easy to understand all the tasks and it was fun. I feel happier now.'

'Hayley tailored the sessions to our needs and was a great understanding ear each week.'

'Hayley was very supportive and understanding, I really appreciate it'

If you are a young person struggling with your mental health and you may be interested in having support from the MHST, please contact your class tutor or Martin Sills. Parents / Carers can make a referral too.



Codingbug

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CODERS & MAKERS

Python Club Term 6

Learn to code in Python while building games, apps, and simulations. Develop problem-solving skills that boost creativity and confidence. Explore machine learning, and discover how to work with data and visualise it.

Python opens a door to many career opportunities.

Suitable for students in Years 7-11.

IN PERSON

5-6pm
WEDNESDAYS

Hangstones Pavilion
Stowey Road, Yatton,
BS49 4HS


HOW TO JOIN 

Scan the QR code to book
Limited spaces available



ONLINE

5-6pm
MONDAYS after school

HOW TO JOIN 

Scan the QR code to book





 VISIT OUR WEBSITE
codingbug.co.uk

 info@codingbug.co.uk

HAF NORTH SOMERSET
Holiday Activities & Food

#HAF2026

SAVE THE DATE

Bookings go live **Friday 12th June at 9am**

Young people who receive benefits related free school meals are invited to book onto our free HAF Summer Activities.

BEST START IN LIFE

Funded by UK Government

For more information about HAF please visit: [About the HAF programme](#) | North Somerset Council

This summer we have a wide range of activities on offer across North Somerset, including a variety of sports activities, swimming sessions, family activities, farm visits, arts and crafts, gymnastics, teenage-specific activities, and sessions at Mendip Activity Centre, alongside many other exciting opportunities for children and young people.



Important Update About Free School Meals (FSM) and HAF Eligibility

We wanted to share an important update about changes to Free School Meals (FSM) that will begin from September 2026, and what this means for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

From September 2026, there will be two different types of Free School Meals eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM** – this is the current eligibility criteria used for HAF programmes.
- **Expanded FSM** – this is a new, wider category that will allow more children and young people to receive free school meals in school.

What does this mean for HAF?

Although more children may become eligible for free school meals through the new Expanded FSM category, the government has confirmed that HAF eligibility will continue to be linked to **Targeted FSM only**.

This means:

- Some children may receive free school meals at school but may not automatically qualify for HAF-funded holiday activities.
- Children who meet the Targeted FSM criteria will continue to be eligible for HAF.

Why is there a difference?

The HAF programme is designed to support children and young people experiencing the highest levels of financial disadvantage. The government has therefore decided to keep HAF linked to the existing Targeted FSM criteria.

Could this effect families already accessing HAF?

Potentially, yes. Some families who previously qualified for HAF through temporary protections under the old FSM system may no longer automatically qualify from September 2026 if their circumstances have changed. We understand this may be worrying or disappointing for some families and we are committed to supporting families as much as possible during this transition.

What happens next?

Schools and local authorities will begin using a new system from June 2026 to check whether children qualify under Targeted FSM or Expanded FSM. We will continue to provide updates and clear guidance as more information becomes available. We will also continue to explore how local discretionary support may help families who may be affected by these changes.

If you have any questions, please contact your school or local HAF team.





Vote for us



Waitrose

Henry, Emily, George and Emma are raising funds to attend the World Scout Jamboree and they would love your green token vote in Nailsea Waitrose.



Vote for **1st Nailsea Scouts.**



Heading to Waitrose in Nailsea this weekend?

Please use a green token to support Henry, Emily, George, and Emma get to the World Scout Jamboree.

Grab a green token and drop it into the '1st Nailsea Scouts' box. The fundraiser is running now, and they are currently in 2nd place, with the support of the Backwell School community, they would love to make it to 1st place!

Every green token vote counts.

Thank you.

Henry, Emily, George, and Emma