BACKWELL SCHOOL WEEKLY BULLETIN

FRIDAY 23 October 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Families, and Friends of Backwell School,

Our Sixth Form Open Evening last night was a tremendous success, with more than 300 families visiting the school to learn about the exciting opportunities available in our Sixth Form. The evening was a fantastic celebration of our broad and ambitious curriculum, with staff and students showcasing the wide range of subjects and enrichment opportunities on offer. Visitors were able to explore established and popular courses alongside new additions to the curriculum, including Dance, which will be introduced next September and joins the recently expanded offer that includes Criminology and Applied Science. Our exciting course guide is found here.

The event also highlighted the continued growth of our Sixth Form, with this year's Year 12 cohort being the largest in the school's history. Increasing numbers of students are choosing to continue their education with us, attracted by the combination of expert teaching, excellent pastoral support, diverse extracurricular opportunities and strong academic outcomes. Our Sixth Form provides a vibrant and supportive environment in which students are encouraged to pursue their interests, develop their independence and prepare confidently for their next steps, whether that be university, apprenticeships or employment. Applications for entry in September 2027 are now open, and we look forward to welcoming the next generation of Backwell Sixth Form students.

On Monday and Tuesday Year 7 students took to the stage for two fantastic concerts. The performances showcased the work students have been developing in their music lessons this term, alongside some impressive individual talents, including piano performances, an Oasis tribute band and a spectacular tuba solo. A special mention also goes to our outstanding Year 10 band, whose support and musicianship helped make both evenings such a success. For many students, this was their first experience performing on the

Backwell stage, and they should be incredibly proud of their confidence and enthusiasm. Our challenge to Year 7 is simple: we hope this is the first of many appearances on the stage during your time at Backwell School!



Our Year 11 Geography students visited Bristol this week as part of their studies for the Urban Challenges unit, where Bristol forms a key GCSE case study. Despite some challenging weather conditions, students embraced the opportunity to experience first-hand many of the concepts they have been exploring in lessons. During the visit, students investigated the history and regeneration of Bristol's Harbourside, learning how the area has been transformed from its industrial roots into a vibrant centre for business, leisure and culture. They also explored the redevelopment of Temple Quay, examining how urban regeneration can bring new opportunities, investment and employment to an area. The trip provided invaluable real-world context to their studies and will form an important foundation for their GCSE examinations.

I wanted to take the opportunity to put the spotlight on The Backwell School Association (BSA) who make an invaluable contribution to our school community and extend my sincere thanks to all of the volunteers who give their time so generously. Last year, the BSA raised over £10,000 through a wide range of events and initiatives, including uniform sales, the ever-popular annual quiz night, and running the bars at our school shows and concerts. Entirely led by volunteer parents and carers, the BSA works tirelessly to raise funds that directly enhance the day-to-day experiences of our students. Thanks to their support, we were able to purchase additional dining tables for our new Dining Centre and provide new picnic benches for our regenerated outdoor spaces. These improvements are enjoyed by

students every day and are a wonderful example of the positive impact that the BSA's efforts have on the life of the school. If you would be interested in getting involved with the BSA, whether on a regular basis or by helping at specific events, please contact the school reception and we will be delighted to put you in touch with the team.

Congratulations to Freya L (Year 13) on her outstanding achievement in this year's prestigious Oxford German Network Essay Prize. Freya was awarded a Commended recognition for her exceptional essay analysing Erich Maria Remarque's renowned anti-war novel, *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*). Writing entirely in German, Freya produced a highly impressive piece of academic work that stood out among entries from students across the country. This achievement is a testament to her intellectual curiosity, commitment to her studies and outstanding linguistic ability. We are incredibly proud of Freya for this well-deserved recognition.

On Wednesday evening our Year 7 boys' rugby team produced an outstanding performance in their victory over St Katherine's, running out deserved 50–5 winners. The boys played some excellent rugby throughout, combining skill, teamwork and determination, whilst also demonstrating some outstanding defensive tackling. Tries were scored by Finnegan L (2), Joe H (2), Ed P (2), Arlo W, Jesse S, Leo T and Louis K, with Finnegan L deservedly being named Player of the Match. A special thank you goes to all the parents and carers who came along to support the team. Your encouragement from the touchline makes a real difference!

Have a wonderful and restful half term break and we look forward to seeing the students on Monday, 02 November for term2! *We Are Backwell*.



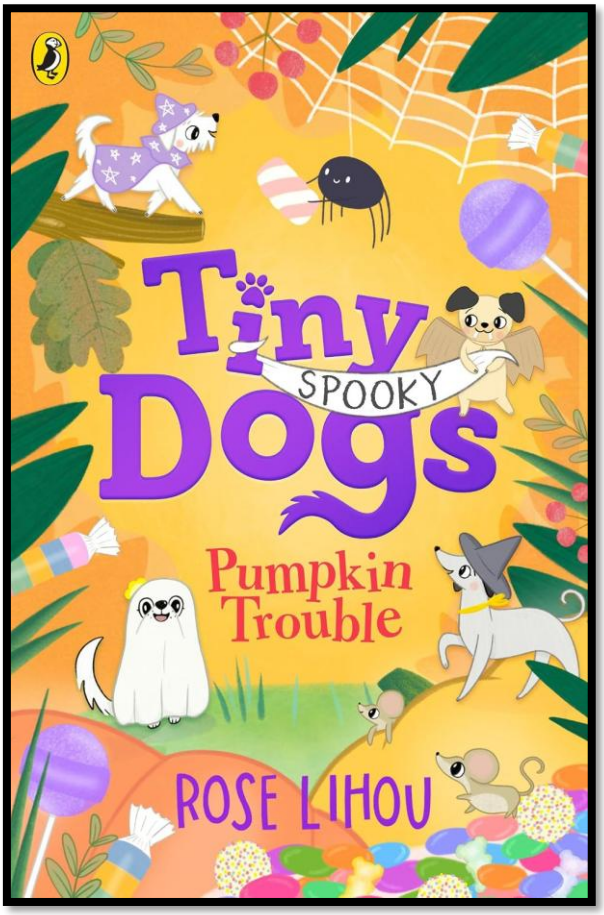
Will Penny
Headteacher



Book of the Week

Tiny Dogs: Pumpkin Trouble – By Rose Lihou

Bea is getting ready for Halloween - the costumes, the parties, trick-or-treating, it's all so much fun. The tiny dogs are excited about the spooky celebration too. But when Bea's attempt to decorate a pumpkin and win a competition goes wrong, it looks like Halloween might be ruined. Can the tiny dogs help Bea with her pumpkin?



Emma Carroll - Author Event - Year 7 Exclusive – Wednesday, 11 November

Join bestselling author, Emma Carroll as she presents her spellbinding, deliciously new gothic adventure Dracula & Daughters: School for Slayers.

As part of this interactive schools' event, students will join Emma for a fang-tastic delve into the dark beginnings of the vampire myth, where she'll share the gothic inspirations- including books, movies, stories- behind Dracula & Daughters. Expect castles, graveyards, garlic and… the unexpected! Students will also have the chance to put questions to Emma during this special event.

Pre-order Emma's newest book through Storysmith to receive your copy directly at school: https://storysmithbooks.com/emmacarrollbackwell

Deadline for Pre-order (Friday, 06 November)



Royal British Legion Poppy Sales

Poppies, pin badges, wrist bands and other poppy items will be on sale in school from Monday, 02 November. Please advise students to bring in cash to purchase items. Students will be able to use their phones to make a purchase using a QR code, at the end of the school day from Reception. Recommended minimum prices / donations of £1 for poppies and wristbands. Minimum price for pin badges is £3.00.

Thank you for your support

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

A Busy Week for Backwell Geographers!

Year 11 were out in Bristol carrying out their GCSE fieldwork in the Temple Quarter regeneration area. Their day took in a train journey into the redeveloped Temple Meads Station, a walking tour of the regeneration area and a boat trip around Bristol Harbour, followed by their own data collection. The weather was against us, but Backwell students are made of tough stuff and managed to make the best of their data collection in the wind and rain.



Many **Year 12 and 13** Geographers made the journey into Bristol on Tuesday evening to attend a lecture at the University of Bristol. Dr Chris Spencer from the University of the West of England (UWE) delivered a fantastic lecture to students from across the region on the Somerset coastline. A similar version of his talk can be found here as a story map. Coastal projects are some of the most popular among students when completing their Independent Geographical Investigations (NEA coursework).

Personal Development at Backwell School

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.

Personal Development covers all aspects of Relationships and Health Education, as well as Careers and wider Learning Skills and British Values and Citizenship.

This school year we are changing our delivery model for the Personal Development Curriculum.

- Years 7, 8 and 9 will now be taught Personal Development in fortnightly timetabled lessons.
- Years 10 and 11 will continue to be taught in tutor time, twice weekly as well as in fortnightly SMSC lessons.
- Years 12 and 13 are taught in tutor time sessions.

As a result of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance for Years 7-11, and in response to our Parent consultation, we have updated our curriculum plans. Please find the outlines for Term 1 lessons by clicking on the link below – this should help in developing conversations at home as required. We are in the process of updating our website so that Parents will better be able to track what their child is learning about across the full school year, and this should help us all to work together in supporting your child.

Personal Development at Backwell School

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.

A reminder to parents and carers that Backwell School is a **NUT AWARE SCHOOL**. Please ensure you do not send your child to school with any products containing nuts. This is to keep our school community safe. Many thanks for your support with this.

Backwell School Weekly Bulletin

www.backwellschool.net



Quick Links

- School Uniform and Equipment Guidance
- Financial Support
- Careers Bulletin - October 2026
- Sixth Form Bulletin

Letters Home

- WJEC Level 3 Criminology – Controlled Assessment Arrangements
- Year 10 Parents / Carers Evening: Thursday 26 November 2026
- Year 11 – Information applying to Backwell Sixth Form

Dates for your Diary

Monday 02 November	**Start of Term 2**
Monday 09 – Monday 23 November	**Year 11 Trial Exams (mornings only)**
Friday 20 November	**Inset Day 4 – School closed for students**
Thursday 26 November	**Year 10 Parents' & Carers' Evening (online) 4:00pm-6:45pm**
Monday 30 November – Friday 04 December	**Year 13 Trial Exams**



Some of the fabulous edible creations created by Year 7 this week for their fun Halloween fundraiser





New Aspens Streateries Menu

Please note our Aspens Streateries Menu will be changing from the beginning of Term 2



Train to teach with the Lighthouse Learning Partnership

The Lighthouse Schools Partnership offers school-based teacher training through the Lighthouse Learning Partnership.
These training placements take place in our own schools and are offered with our Higher Education Institute partners, University of Bristol and Five Counties SCITT.

Across the partnership, we offer secondary teacher training in the following subjects:

- Art & Design
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
- Drama
- English
- Geography
- History
- Maths
- MFL
- Music
- PE
- RE
- Sciences

Some of these placements are offered at Backwell School. Please refer to the LSP website for further information and how to apply for vacancies.

LIGHTHOUSE LEARNING


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