

16th September 2022

Dear Families,

Re: Welcome to the start of the academic year!

I hope that you and your children had a lovely Summer and managed to have a well-earned break. A special welcome to our new, year 7 cohort who I have enjoyed meeting in the playground and in lessons! Year 7 students have told me how much they have enjoyed their lessons, and many have said how much they enjoy the food in our canteen. It is really pleasing to hear how well they have settled in.

This is a somewhat different start to the academic year, as although there is excitement of new beginnings, I write to you during a time of national mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a historic but solemn occasion. Last Friday, the day after the news broke, we held a one minute's silence to mark our respects at 12pm, and this week, I have been delivering special assemblies on her life, what this means for us moving forward and how we can use this period as a time for reflection. The Queen's funeral will be held on the 19th September 2022 and it has been confirmed that it will be a bank holiday where schools will be shut by the Department of Education. To ensure that no learning is lost, our staff are rearranging lesson plans so that any content planned for delivery on Monday will be delivered at another time.

As with any start to the new school year, it is important to reiterate certain policies we have and to make you aware of any upcoming events. Thank you to year 7 families who came to our 'Meet the Tutor' event on Monday and our year 10 families who attended the Year 10 Induction Evening last Thursday. Building strong relationships with our families is incredibly important to us and I hope to meet you at more events soon.

'Basics Right, Standards Tight'

In our formal assembly on the first day back, we informed students of our mantra for this year – 'Basics Right, Standards Tight'. As I have mentioned many times before and reiterated to both staff and students, if we get the basics right, the rest will follow. Standards being tight refers to high expectations and not settling for any less. This includes attitudes to learning, uniform and the way in which we treat others. For staff, this includes planning, the delivery of lessons and assessment to name a few. In our first assembly last week, we spoke of the importance of kindness and respect and how we need to treat each other in and out of school. I would be grateful if all families can reiterate these messages at home and help us with the standards that we expect.

I know that tutors and small schools have already made calls home and had meetings with a few families whose children have returned from the Summer holidays not meeting the standards for excellent learning and conduct. As a school, we want to support families where this is the case as we need to work together and have consistent messages both at home and in school for improvements to be made. I understand that sometimes it is difficult to hear what we have to tell you about your child's conduct but I know that I have a team of staff who does this in the most sensitive way possible.

Mobile Phones

I would like to say a huge thank you to all families for your support with our new mobile phone policy where phones are 'off and away until the end of the day'. Students have adapted very well to the fact that mobile phones are not to be seen anywhere on site and so far, I have been very impressed with them.

Although mobile phones are banned on site, I understand that families may still want their child to have a phone with them so that they can call or message them once their child is off site. As there is

not a need for smartphones to be used in lessons, bringing in such items (that can cost over £1000) is not something that we would recommend bringing to school. No matter how careful you think your child is, they can misplace it, lose it or damage it which can cause lots of upset. A simple 'brick phone' that only calls or sends text messages should suffice and be purchased very cheaply.

Communication to us

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the lines of communication at Burton Borough School. With 1200 students and families to work with, it is incredibly important that the correct and appropriate ways of communication are used so that any queries or concerns can be dealt with quickly. **We aim to get back to you within 48 hours.** If the correct procedure is not followed, it causes inefficiencies which impacts on students. **Please do not arrive at school without an appointment.** The reason for this is that staff cannot drop what they are already doing e.g. teaching, meetings already scheduled, investigating a serious safeguarding issue, to meet with you. We will always try and get back to you as soon as possible.

Here is a list of who to contact and when:

1. **Tutor or reception:** first point of call. They will try and resolve the issue for you or pass it on to the relevant person/team.
2. **Small School/Department:** if reception or your child's tutor cannot resolve the issue for you, they will refer the issue to your child's small school or subject department that can answer your query and concerns. Families may also contact members of the Small School team or subject departments via the contact form on the school's website. You may also wish to phone the school and leave a message with reception staff who will pass on the message.
3. **Head of Small School (HoS):** The Head of School is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If you feel that your child's small school or subject department were not able to resolve your query, the HoS would be your next point of contact.
4. **Senior Vice Principal/Vice Principals:** It is very rare that our vice principals have to step in to resolve an issue as we have a fantastic team who can deal with the vast majority of issues. However, in the rare incidences where any issues are not resolved, the Vice Principals will step in. This is the first step of the formal complaints process (which can be accessed on our website).
5. **Principal:** Again, it is very rare for any issues or concerns to reach this level. If you are unhappy with how the Vice Principals have dealt with your concern, I would step in. Again, this is part of the formal complaints process.
6. **Chair of Governors:** For any queries or concerns to reach this level is even more rare, but should you be unhappy with how I have dealt with a complaint, the complaint would reach the Chair of Governors.

Families may contact members of the school directly but if your concern or query is reviewed and previous steps to resolve the issue have not been followed, the query will be passed on to the relevant person in the line of communication above.

For more serious issues, such as those of a safeguarding nature, it will be passed on to the correct member of staff or at a higher level, in this instance, Ms Cousins, our Head of Safeguarding and Mr Morgan, Senior Vice Principal in charge of Safeguarding and dealt with immediately or as appropriate.

Post-lockdown, our staff have experienced verbal abuse and rudeness by parents/carers which we will not tolerate. We will always meet and greet you in person or speak with you on the phone with utmost professionalism/respect. We expect the same courteousness in return.



Communication by us

We will always send written communication to you via **email**. For key letters and information, we also upload information to the **school's website** ('News' section) as well as **Instagram** and **Twitter (@BurtonBorough)**. We upload information onto different platforms so that if one platform fails, there are still other platforms where the information can be found and shared.

Please do not rely on unofficial BBS sites that are not run by the school. Already, we have been made aware of rumours that have circulated on these unofficial sites which has caused families to phone and contact us unnecessarily, pulling valuable human resources away from our students. As a reminder, with over 1200 families, that is a lot of phone calls and emails to answer if everyone decides to contact! **Please always check the official platforms before contacting school.**

Curriculum Overview and Courses

If you would like to see what your children are studying in each subject, please visit our website and look at our curriculum overview and courses.

Show My Homework

Students will be bringing home information, logins and passwords for our homework platform 'Show My Homework' next week. Families will be able to see what homework has been set so that you can help your child at home.

Events for your diary

Year 7 Induction Evening

Our Year 7 induction Evening will be taking place on **Thursday 29th September 2022, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm**. This event will give families an opportunity to see the school and to find out more about various apps and systems that we use. Some examples of this include Show My Homework (SMHW), My Child At School (MCAS) and our pastoral systems. More information to follow.

Open Evening

Open Evening will be taking place on **Wednesday 5th October 2022 from 5:30pm to 8pm**. Due to Covid restrictions, many of our current families will not have had the opportunity to visit our departments and staff. Although the event is usually for prospective students, we would welcome our current families to also come along. I will be holding two sessions for my speech (6pm and 7pm) and after each session, I will be going over to the Science department where they will be setting me on fire in an experiment. Something not to be missed! No booking required, just turn up from 5:30pm!

Open Mornings

These will take place following our Open Evening on **Thursday 6th and Friday 7th October 2022 from 9am to 12pm**. The event is for prospective families to visit us and see us 'in action' but if you were unable to attend the Open Morning events in the Summer term, you are welcome to come to one of these sessions. More information will be sent out in due course.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend and I look forward to seeing your children on Tuesday after the bank holiday.

Yours sincerely,



Krissi Carter
Principal



FRAMEWORK FOR
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP
IN EDUCATION
PATHFINDER

