



NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome

May I start my first Newsletter of the Academic Year by extending a warm welcome to you all; in particular, to our new parents who have joined the Barnwell community this year. It has been a really exciting start to the year, especially because we now have our new Blazer, not only do our new year 7 students look so smart, many of our older students have chosen to wear a blazer as well. We have already received many positive comments on how smart our students are looking. The new PE kit looks really smart as well, remember it is only necessary to purchase the new PE kit when your child has grown out of their current one.

Walking around the school last week I was very pleased to see that our students have returned from their holidays in a positive frame of mind, keen to learn and be challenged.

With the new reformed GCSE qualifications and two year 'A' Levels it is not possible to compare our results like for like with last year's record breaking results. Until the new school comparison tables come out later this month it is hard to give you an overall view in this completely new system. However, I can tell you that our students last year continued to perform well and overall we are pleased. English and maths had strong results which we expect to put us in line with the national average.

There were many outstanding achievements by our students and we are delighted that our students achieved above the national average for the top '9' grade in the reformed GCSE English and math. Our sixth form students achieved more A and A* grades at A level than we have ever had. Last year's year 13 students have gone off to universities across the country, we wish them good luck for the future and have encouraged them to join our Alumni.

As you know, we have a dedicated team of staff at the school and as always I need to thank them for their hard work over the past year. I would also like to thank the parents/carers of our students for their continuing support which is invaluable.

School Open Evening

A reminder that this Thursday 21st September we are holding our Open Evening, students will finish school at **12.30pm** on Thursday and have a later start on Friday of 10.30am (Lessons begin at 10.50am). If you would like to come along Thursday evening you will be very welcome to have a tour around the Middle Campus.

School Term Dates

This year the Hertfordshire County Council have approached terms dates slightly differently and given school more flexibility on setting the days that students are in school. In a bid to



minimise disruption Stevenage schools have agreed to try to keep broadly in line with each other, where there will normally be a difference is when INSET days (staff training) are calendared.

The simple version of Barnwell Term dates for the Academic Year 2017/18 are as follows:

Autumn Term:

Monday 4th September to Tuesday 19th December 2017

Half Term Monday 23rd October to Friday 27th October 2017

Spring Term:

Thursday 4th January to Thursday 29th March 2018

Half Term Monday 12th February to Friday 16th February 2018

Summer Term:

Monday 16th April to Tuesday 24th July 2018

Half Term Monday 28th May to Friday 1st June 2018

Teacher Training days where students are not in school fall on the following dates:

Wednesday 3rd January 2018

Monday 23rd July 2018

Tuesday 24th July 2018

The summer term ends for students on **Friday 20th July 2018**

If you are booking a summer holiday for next year, students will return for the 2018/2019 academic year on **Wednesday 5th September 2018**

School Travel Code of Conduct

Barnwell School has created a new Code of Conduct aimed at ensuring a safe and healthy environment for staff, students, parents and visitors to Barnwell School, and to help minimise disruption and inconvenience to local residents. We respectfully request that all who have cause to visit Barnwell Middle or Barnwell Upper School campuses follow this code of conduct, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation. The code of conduct is located in the policies section of the School website, <http://www.barnwellschool.co.uk/Policies-General>

Student Drop-Off - Middle School Campus

We are aware that there is a high level of congestion at the end of the school day outside the main entrance to the Middle School Campus. Please note there is no facility to drop students off on the Middle School Campus. If you drive your child to school it is easier and safer to drop



them off on Hydean Way, please do not park in front or opposite the school entrance as this restricts access along the road.

Safer Routes to School

With winter drawing near and reduced visibility in the mornings and after school, please remind your child if they walk to use the nearest entrance to the school. We are aware that some of our Middle School students are choosing to walk through Shephall Green to the front entrance of the school rather than using the gate on the A602. At the time when the students are walking to school there are many cars and vans reversing from their driveways presenting a potential risk to students walking past. There is no need for students to walk this way and for their safety please ensure that they use their nearest entrance.

School Closure Notification System

Hertfordshire County Council operate a Schools Closure Notification System for advising parents should schools have to close for any reason, such as heavy snow. The system is operated by Everbridge and parents are able to register with Everbridge to receive emails and/or texts sent by schools in the event of closure.

Once registered parents can sign up for any school in Hertfordshire, primary or secondary. To register please copy and paste the following link into your browser:

member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489

This link will direct you to the sign up page where you should click on the 'sign up' button located at the top right hand side of the page on the grey strip and from there follow the instructions. It should take no more than five minutes to register and you can edit your information at any time should you change your mobile number or email address.

Parents/carers are urged to sign up for this service as we will be contacting Everbridge as soon as a decision is made to close the school for whatever reason, it may not be as obvious as heavy snow. The system will only be used for School Closures or other serious issues and is a supplement to information currently provided via the Herts Direct website and local radio stations. Our website will also be updated regularly.

Information on Everbridge can also be found on our website at, <http://www.barnwellschool.co.uk/Weather-Closures>

Schoolcomms

As you will be aware we use Schoolcomms for communication. In order for us to make the most effective use of Schoolcomms we would encourage you to download the School Gateway app if you have a smart phone.



The app is a great way to use the Schoolcomms functionality and it saves the school money as we do not pay for text messages sent to parents using the app, meaning we can use the money we save for other resources.

For parents not familiar with Schoolcomms, we use it for the following:

- Sending news and letters
- Reminding parents of upcoming parents' evenings
- Informing parents of any key updates
- Contacting parents for unexplained student absence
- Emailing specific year groups or groups of parents with key events

In order for us to communicate with you via Schoocomms we must be kept up to date with your contact details. If you change your details please let us know by emailing your name, new contact details, your child's name, tutor and college group to communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk.

Online Payments

In addition to this method of communication we use the School Gateway, which is an application that will allow you to access Schoolcomms to make online payments for catering, trips and other items. You can pay whenever it is convenient for you, without having to find exact change, or having to send a cheque into school. Also places on school trips are usually limited, to make sure your child does not miss out by you can reserve their place instantly on-line using the School Gateway. The School Gateway enables you to see not just all of your payment history and outstanding amounts with the due dates, but you can also see what your child/children have been purchasing in the kitchen.

To use the School Gateway, you must register online or via the School Gateway app. **To register you must have supplied the school with an email address and a mobile phone number.**

Once you have supplied these contact details, follow the instructions below to access your account:

- Go to www.schoolgateway.com or download the app, if you have a smartphone, please download School Gateway from your app store (Android and iPhone). The app shows the same information as the website PLUS you can send app messages to the school for FREE – this will also save the school money when we send text messages
- When you visit the School Gateway website for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter your email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school
- The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and your account will be activated for you

If you have not supplied us with an email address or a mobile phone number please email these details to communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk. Once we have added your contact details you will be able to register on School Gateway.



It is a parent and/or carers responsibility to ensure that changes to any email addresses and mobile phone numbers are notified to the school.

Fundraising at Barnwell School 2017-19

Our school community actively supports the school by raising money to benefit the school environment and enhancing every student's education. From September 2017 we hope to raise £25,000 as part of a two-year fundraising campaign to replace our school minibus. We will be running a rolling calendar of fundraising events to be enjoyed by parents, staff and students.

As a school, we understand that with increasingly busy lifestyles it is not always easy to commit to events and activities, so we have also set up a donation scheme on **Schoolcomms** for our current fundraising campaign. Barnwell School is a registered charity and full details of funds raised and allocated are presented in our annual accounts.

We are always on the look-out for new and enthusiastic people to join our Parent Partnership. If you are interested in becoming involved or would like to suggest new fundraising ideas, please contact us by e-mail: m.patching@barnwell.herts.sch.uk or j.johnson@barnwell.herts.sch.uk

Uniform and Expectations

At Barnwell we actively enforce a uniform policy from Years 7 to 11, with Sixth Form students also expected to attend in smart, professional attire. We are committed to high standards of uniform and appearance from all members of our community, all staff are asked to ensure student uniform and appearance is monitored at all times. Students have started the new year looking smart, showing a real sense of pride towards the way they dress and the school. It signals very clearly that students have come to learn and to be part of a purposeful and business-like environment. I am also grateful to parents for their full support in seeing that high standards are maintained in the wearing of uniform.

As you will know we have changed our uniform supplier to Kids Connection, if you have any feedback on our new supplier or the uniform in general please email: communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk

Smart Watches

A reminder that after careful consideration last year, we took the decision not to allow students to bring Smart Watches into school. This is in line with County Guidelines due to various E-Safety concerns and the high value of the item. If students bring a Smart Watch into school, it will be confiscated and returned to them at the end of the day.

Mobile Phones

As a school we have a very clear line on mobile phones being brought into school. We acknowledge that it is important to many parents that their children bring a mobile phone to school so they can be contacted on the way to and from school. However, during the school day the expectation is that mobile phones are switched off and placed in students bags to avoid them becoming a distraction.

Attendance

At the beginning of the school year it is always useful to remind parents and carers of the importance of good attendance to school. At Barnwell we consider 95% or better to be good attendance and we are proud that most of our students are able to reach this target and that a pleasing number reach the end of the year on 100% attendance.

Understandably, some illness is on occasion unavoidable and we ask that parents and carers contact the school every day that their child is absent. When attendance looks like it might be falling towards 90% we will issue a letter to parents and carers to alert them. Should a student get to 90% attendance then they slip into a category called 'persistent absence' and this is when attendance begins to be monitored by both the school and the local authority. Holidays in term time are not authorised by the school and the latest local authority guidance on this issue states that Hertfordshire County Council will issue penalty notices for unauthorised holidays where there are other unauthorised absences which take the attendance percentage below 90% for the current and the previous term.

Mrs R Latta, Assistant Headteacher, Behaviour and Student Welfare

School Marking Policy

Parents of students who attended Barnwell last year will be familiar with the new Marking Policy that was introduced in September 2016. One of the main changes was that rather than writing lengthy targets into students' books, teachers were going to be reviewing work much more regularly and planning specific intervention tasks for the next lesson. Half-termly summative tasks were still marked in detail, with each student receiving an individual strength and area for development for their work. Feedback regarding the Marking Policy from both staff and students highlighted that more rapid intervention allowed students to make more progress and staff had more time to plan high quality lessons. As a result of this positive feedback from staff and students alike, we will be continuing with this Marking Policy at Barnwell for the foreseeable future.

The second change to the Marking Policy last year was that if a teacher judged a student's work to be below expectations, the teacher would first give the student a warning and then if there is no improvement, the student will receive an 'inadequate work' point which would result in a detention the following day. If a student's work was judged to be above expectations, the student would be rewarded with a credit. This again has been very successful, and well

received by students and teachers. We appreciate that careful consideration needs to be given when setting expectations for individual students and how these expectations may be influenced by a multitude of factors. A huge number of students received credits for good work last year and it remains as a really fantastic opportunity to celebrate their day-to-day successes on a regular basis. This in turn has been a real step forward in raising standards and achievement at Barnwell School and we thank you for your on-going support.

Mrs C Francis, Senior Teacher, Teaching and Learning

Expectations for Homework

We would like to apologise for the disruption to 'Show My Homework' over the last couple of weeks, the issue was a national problem not isolated to Barnwell School, we have been reassured that the system is fully operation now. For new parents 'Show My Homework' is an online tool which also has an app for Android and I-phone that allows parents to see the homework set by the staff and allows you to support your child's learning outside of the classroom.

Homework at Barnwell is an important part of deepening and developing knowledge and learning that is taking place in lesson time. In line with the school's focus on learning and progress we aim to develop the tasks which students complete at home, by helping them to acquire and develop research and study skills, through independent study. The emphasis is placed on setting your child tasks which will be manageable, yet challenging.

You should expect homework to be set regularly.

- Key Stage 3 groups in the core subjects of English, maths and science all set one piece of homework per week. Languages, humanities, technology and art all set one piece of homework per fortnight.
- Key Stage 4 groups should receive one piece of homework from each examined subject per week.
- Key Stage 5 groups should receive a minimum of five hours of homework from each subject per week.

Free School Meals

For every child registered, Barnwell School gets £935 this year. The School will only receive this money for those students who have been registered as eligible for Free School Meals. It is therefore important that, in order for the School to receive this additional funding, all those who think they might be eligible apply as soon as possible. If you receive one of the benefits listed below your child may be eligible for free school meals:

- Income support
- Income-based jobseekers allowance
- Income-related employment and support allowance

- Support under immigration and asylum law
- The guarantee part of state pension credit
- Child tax credit and you have an annual income of £16,190 or less before tax
- Working tax credit

You may apply online at www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals or by phoning 0300 123 4048. If your child receives Free School Meals, please remember to inform Hertfordshire County Council if you change your home address. Regular audits are carried out and if the home address held by them is incorrect it may result in your child being removed from their list of those eligible for Free School Meals.

Campus Times

A reminder to look out for our termly Campus Times magazine which is emailed out at the end of each term via Schoolcomms, it can also be viewed on our website.

IT at Barnwell

A reminder that all students can use O365, Microsoft's cloud solution, which allows them to download Office 2016 to their own personal computer for free as well as having 1TB of free storage with OneDrive and many new apps.

All Upper Campus students can also utilise the school's remote desktop solution, 'Dashboard', allowing them to access their own and the shared area containing lesson resources as well as being able to use licenced applications such as Adobe CC from home.

The Sixth Form students have been given access to the school's secured WIFI and are encouraged to Bring Their Own Devices (BYOD) to school (such as tablets and laptops) for use in their studies.

The school is able to provide this under our licence agreements with respective companies and suppliers. Access and use of these facilities and apps are available to your child whilst they are on roll at Barnwell School, this ceases once your child leaves the school. Please note the school cannot provide any support for these facilities and apps if you experience problems.

Mrs K Palin, Associate to SLT – Network

Safeguarding

The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board will be holding a Parents Conference at Robertson House in Stevenage on Saturday 14th October 2017 as detailed on the attached flyer. Attached to this newsletter is also an eSafety newsletter.

Sixth Form

After another very successful summer examination series we are delighted to welcome 101 Year 12 students into our sixth form to join our 101 returning Year 13 students. These numbers give us a valuable opportunity to continue to develop a strong, successful academic culture. We are also delighted to welcome over 40 guest students from our Stevenage Sixth Partnership Schools who will be joining us for lessons in a variety of subject areas on both campuses.

We have a newly appointed sixth form student leadership team who have already undertaken their first public engagement; supporting colleagues and representing our student body at our recent Prospective Parents Evening. They are Kaitland Baker, Head Girl and Kieran Weston, Head Boy.

University Applications

Our Year 13 students are currently in the process of completing their university applications with 80% of the cohort electing to continue their learning journey at university, an increase of 19% in 2016, including four students applying to the University of Cambridge.

Barnwell Alumni

We have a newly formed Barnwell Alumni and are keen to hear from and keep in touch with all of our ex-students. We hope that our ex-students will become members by completing the application form which can be found both on our website or by the following link: <http://www.barnwellschool.co.uk/Mainfolder/Sixth-Form/Alumni-Association-Registration-Form-2016.pdf> and returning this to j.johnson@barnwell.herts.sch.uk.

As a member you:

- Become a member of a family with a common aim
- Will be kept up to date with current developments and successes at Barnwell School via the school website
- Will be able to both contribute to and learn about other alumni and their experiences

Mrs J Johnson, Assistant Headteacher – Post 16

Making a good start

Your support as parents and carers is invaluable to the success of students and our whole school community. Thank you for your support and please continue to help your son or daughter to be organised with equipment, to commit time and space to complete homework and to engage with extra-curricular school activities where possible.

Parental Feedback

We are always keen to hear any feedback from parents, if you have any comments, compliments, suggestions or questions email these to communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk.