



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

An Ofsted Graded Good School

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12 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

The school was saddened to hear of the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, who was a constant in all our lives. The school community of staff and students reflect that Her Majesty reigned for longer than we have lived and it is with anticipation that we embrace our new King, His Majesty Charles the Third.

Further plans to mark this huge event are in the pipeline, and the students will enjoy opportunities in lessons, assemblies and further school event(s) to explore their thoughts and feelings.

Please note that, because of the State Funeral on Monday 19th September, The Buckingham School, and all schools in the UK will be closed.

My original letter, delayed from last week, continues:

As we start our first full week back, the school is looking forward to the year ahead, with huge optimism.

Examination Results – Summer 2022

It is my pleasure to share the successes of our students in their BTEC, GCSE and A Level examinations.

Our departing Year 13 students excelled, and yet again raised the standards being achieved by our Sixth Formers. Due to Covid-19 these students did not sit formal examinations at GCSE, and therefore had no previous experience of them. Our A Level students did slightly better than we expected, and the Level 3 BTEC results were outstanding.

At GCSE, the students performed better than any group before them. Compared to their starting point in Year 7, they achieved a good progress score. In improving the school's progress score by 0.4, the cohort achieved a total of over 400 grades higher than the last "normal" cohort in 2019.

Early analysis by a respected organisation called "Fischer Family Trust" shows that our GCSE students made more progress than typical students in other schools. This has not happened before at our school.

Sixth Form

It is no surprise that the success at GCSE has translated into a large Sixth Form intake. We are delighted to have offered five new A Level subjects this year – PE, French, Spanish, Film and Physics.

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to finance@buckinghamschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.

We apologise that there were issues with the process of celebrating our Year 11 exam results this year, and confirming our students welcome into Year 12. Miss Branson, the new Director of Sixth Form is making it one of her first priorities to review the process, so that it is quicker, and clearer next year.

Attendance is So Important

Attendance across all schools in the country suffered hugely throughout Covid-19. Even when schools were operating normally, attendance was far below pre-Covid levels. Our attendance suffered more than we would have liked and fell below 90% for the year. Our persistent absence, students missing more than 10% of school, was unusually high.

It is very clear in our GCSE results that those students who attended school well (one third attended over 95%) averaged a whole grade better per subject than students of similar ability nationally. The tiny handful with very poor attendance dropped by almost two grades.

The school remains committed to encouraging 100% attendance for all, and is keen to support where students are struggling to attend school well. We have all kinds of different support available, ranging from financial support with uniform and food, through to support with mental health. Please do get in touch with our attendance team via attendance@buckinghamschool.org, or call the school and ask to speak to Mrs Smith, Director of Attendance.

As a school we insist on the highest standards from our students and challenge ourselves to give the highest standards of support.

Standards and Support for Families

The school has a commitment to raise standards yet further. As a school, we haven't suddenly changed the rules overnight; we are gently raising the bar, higher and higher. The students are being challenged to meet yet higher standards this September. The vast majority have returned to school raring to go, and have easily adopted good uniform, good behaviour and a hard-working ethic in class. We make no apologies for strengthening our processes for checking this.

It is good to see Year 7s looking immaculate in the new uniform, and the numbers of other students already in new items is higher than expected. The new PE uniform looks good, too. Please do not waste any items of current uniform, as your child is welcome to wear them for the whole year.

Naturally, it would make sense to replace any items, according to the new policy, which is fully in force from September 2023. This includes pleated skirts, to the knee, available from Uniform Direct, and high street retailers.

With the exception of blazers, ties and PE T-shirts, *all* items are available from high street school uniform retailers.

In contrast to the school's need to prepare your children for later life, which includes complying with standards set by others (employers, most obviously), we are painfully aware of the financial pressures that continue to grow on families at this time. As a school, we are worried about energy price rises, resource cost rises and salary rises. Please do not let our insistence on correct uniform and equipment become a worry - contact the school at finance@buckinghamschool.org.

Tolerance, Respect - No to Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

As we return in September 2022, we re-commit ourselves to not tolerating bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The Buckingham School has a simple, one word stance on any harassment or violence - "no!"

No-one should suffer because of who they are. Their gender, or their gender identity. Their sexual orientation, race or beliefs. Our school should be a safe space for students to explore their identity and their beliefs.

Standards for All

As a school, our staff are constantly heartened by the messages of support and gratitude from the community. We also take seriously those messages that share concerns about things that we have got wrong, or do not do well. We rely on all messages, to make us feel valued by the community and to support us in keeping improving.

The vast majority of contact made with the school is polite and respectful. I expect all of our exchanges to meet the standard of the school's Virtues and The Buckingham Way. In 2022, the school will strengthen its steps to try and ensure that respect underpins our interactions as adults, just as we expect of our children.

2022-23

As we launch our new year, Success for All means more than ever. This year, we will strive to improve yet further, paying particular attention to:

- The Buckingham Way
 - Taking responsibility for our actions
 - Looking to reflect and improve upon everything that we do
 - Respecting the authority of our teachers and of all our adults
- Developing our curriculum further and valuing our fantastic teaching staff
- Being ready to learn, and being better learners, valuing our fantastic support staff
- Particular attention to literacy, especially reading for knowledge and pleasure
- Highest possible levels of school attendance
- Ensuring that all of our learners make good progress

We thank you for all of your support and look forward to building yet more successes for our wonderful school.

With best wishes

Mr Andrew McGinnes

Headteacher

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