



# THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

## A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

London Road  
Buckingham  
MK18 1AT

Tel: 01280 812206

Fax: 01280 822525

Email: [office@buckinghamschool.org](mailto:office@buckinghamschool.org)

Website: [www.buckinghamschool.org](http://www.buckinghamschool.org)

Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

22 July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

After a bizarre turn of events, we have concluded our school year very strangely.

My messaging to you in this letter is very much around standards and expectations for 22-23.

### External Review

We had two colleagues from the local authority visit the school on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July. There are many successes for the school to celebrate on its journey, and this was another landmark in the community recognition that we feel we deserve. Our two visitors spent three hours each in different lessons, and joined the whole school for morning break. I report only what has been said to me:

- Zero disruptive behaviour seen in any lessons, or anywhere in school
- Focussed learners seen, though too many are passive
- Respect and care shown between students in considerate behaviour, supportive comments, helping each other with work
- Staff-student relationships a real strength
- Generally a calm atmosphere of learning that reflects the school's progress and improved standing in the community

In terms of teaching and learning, the visitors supported our own views of where we are. We will strive for even deeper engagement by all our students next year. As I pointed out in a letter early in June, we will focus exemplary attendance, exemplary learning behaviour, further supporting literacy standards and making sure that all learners have their needs met, whether that be support or challenge.

### Branding and Uniform

You will see the school's new logo starting to appear in our literature, our website and, over the summer on the exterior of the school. Some students who have purchased blazers very recently, are already wearing one with the new logo!

The new year 7 will be wearing our new school uniform in full. For sound environmental and financial reasons, our current students will not be required to wear the new uniform in full, until September 2023. Naturally, we recommend that all replacement items purchased from now on, meet the new policy and standards, which can be found on our website. I wrote to you about these standards, and the letter is available on the school website.

From September 2022, there are key things that we will focus on:

- No hoodies to be worn
- No white socks
- Any pleated skirts worn, should be touching the knee (these will be compulsory from September 2023)
- All other skirts worn appropriately
- Shirts tucked in
- Facial piercings – these are not permitted in school, so students will be required to wear a piercing retainer, rather than studs/jewellery
- Ear piercings – the school's policy allows for one pair of studs/sleeper earrings – a retainer should be used for additional piercings
- Good home-school communication about your child's uniform standards

## **Summer Safety**

I wrote to the community on 29<sup>th</sup> April. That letter is available on the school website and I urge our families to revisit some important messages about their children's safety in Buckingham and the surrounding areas.

Our students rely heavily on the adults in their lives for the support and help that they need. Sometimes they find that they need the support of the school, but our staff cannot always be available during the holiday periods. Students can reach out for support from all kinds of other places and I would like to draw your attention to the flyer at the end of this letter and to the information on the school website.

The students have been reminded of this during recent assemblies.

The school monitors the email addresses published on our site, but students should not rely on us being able to respond immediately during the breaks.

## **Ready to Learn - Equipment**

It is demoralising for a teacher, faced with students who don't have the right equipment. They have planned the lesson-content, cross-referenced with the published curriculum. They've discussed the lesson content with colleagues, in a department meeting. They've prepared any powerpoints, done the photocopying. They've checked the seating plan, and the needs of individual students.

Further the process of finding equipment for students to borrow causes low level disruption and affects the learning of the whole class.

All we are asking your child to do is to bring their bag and equipment to school, and to enjoy their free education. In so much of the world education is not a right and our students are privileged to receive an excellent education at The Buckingham School.

If we are serious about learning a school, we are not going to allow this habit to continue, and we need your support. The school is happy to assist financially, and can directly supply your child with equipment. We receive specific funds for families who are encountering hardship, and we are delighted to support our learners. However, the bottom line is, we will not be tolerating a lack of basic equipment.

Contact [finance@buckinghamschool.org](mailto:finance@buckinghamschool.org) to ask about Pupil Premium funding and general financial support.

## **Ready to Learn – Diet**

We have found this term, that most days start in an exemplary fashion, with the kinds of standard of behaviour and engagement that we are getting used to expecting.

It is very clear that behaviour dips around lunchtime and into the afternoon lesson. Some of this is clear – my colleagues and your children are exhausted at the end of a long school year. A whole day is too much! However, we do notice how many of our students do not eat a substantial meal during the day, and certainly do not drink enough water. Dehydration has a huge negative impact on learning.

We ask families to support and ensure that their child brings the right food to school, or track their school account to understand what their child is buying with their "dinner money". We are not accepting cash at school for catering anymore and are finding that students are spending cash in (for example) Sainsbury's and buying sweets and fizzy drinks.

If there are financial barriers to supporting a healthy school meal, then families struggling financially are able to receive support. Contact [finance@buckinghamschool.org](mailto:finance@buckinghamschool.org).

## **Summer Reading**

The evidence is clear. We have never understood more clearly the positive impact that reading has on our students, both as learners and in their personal development. The gap between the need to read and what secondary age students are reading has never been wider.

Please do anything you can to support your child in reading this holiday. If books are a bridge too far, then try magazines and non-fiction reading about things that they are interested in. Reading is essential for successful GCSE study, you may be surprised to find that subjects like Mathematics are full of complex vocabulary and descriptions to interpret.

J11 and J13 (Year 10 and 12) should have been set holiday work. To experience true success in their examinations in a year's time, we are urging them to spend some time this summer. The mission is, by moving up, we are three months ahead of where many students in the country are right now – let's make it count!

### **Attendance**

As we start our new year, our ambition is to see attendance rise to at least the levels we were used to before Covid-19. However, our recent family survey revealed that not all families directly connect good school attendance with good progress. For a student to attend school 95% of the time, they are still missing 5% of 190 days of learning – around 48 hours of lessons. That is 48 hours of work to either catch up, or miss for good.

100% attendance for all will be the school's stated target going forward.

### **Standards**

We are committed to raising standards yet higher. There are many different elements referred to in this letter, but in 22/23 we will be striving for even greater consistency as a school. We take the business of education very seriously at this school and we are having great success in shifting the expectations that the whole community has of a Buckingham School child.

In my four and a half years, I have consistently found that this wonderful student body is hungry to learn and, the more that is expected of them, the more they show that they are capable of. British children are incredibly privileged to receive a free education and it is our belief that your child is particularly lucky to be here, at their community's school.








We look forward to 2022/23 with great excitement, and hope that Covid-19, wind, snow and heatwaves will not disrupt our work next year!

I wish the whole community a lovely, happy and safe summer

Best wishes

**Mr Andrew McGinnes**

Headteacher

	<p><a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a></p> <p>Free confidential phonenumber 0800 1111</p> <p>Usually open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but due to the Coronavirus, it is currently open from 9am to midnight.</p> <p>Childline is there to help anyone under the age of 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. You can talk about anything. Whether it's big or small, the trained counsellors are there to support you.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.rethink.org">www.rethink.org</a></p> <p>0300 5000 927</p> <p>9.30am – 4pm</p> <p>Rethink mental illness improves the lives of people severely affected by mental illness through their network of local groups and services, expert information and successful campaigning. The goal is to make sure everyone affected by severe mental illness has a good quality of life.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a></p> <p>Parents helpline 0808 802 5544</p> <p>9.30am-4pm Monday to Friday (free from landlines and mobiles)</p> <p>YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. They campaign, research and influence policy and practice.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.samaritans.co.uk">www.samaritans.co.uk</a></p> <p>Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week</p> <p>Call free (from any phone) 116123</p> <p>The Samaritans is for anyone who is struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. They offer listening and support to people and communities in times of need.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a></p> <p>NHS Choices</p> <p>Provides information on a wide range of health and social care topics.</p> <p>There is an online search tool to find NHS services near you.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.kooth.com">www.kooth.com</a></p> <p>Free, safe anonymous online mental well being community that offers support for young people accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop</p> <p>Online mental well-being community</p> <p>online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop.</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health">www.themix.org.uk/mental-health</a></p> <p>24/7 crisis line: text THEMIX to 85258</p> <p>Helpline: 08088 084 994. Open 7 days a week 4pm – 11pm</p> <p>1:1 chat and counselling services</p>