



February 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you all had a relaxing half term break. Now that we are beyond the halfway point of the school year and (hopefully) Spring is on its way, please find some updates and reminders for this half term.

### ***Mock Exams***

The second mock exam season is now underway, with Year 11 students conducting themselves very well in preparation for the summer. These will continue until Friday 13 March and will serve as a good benchmark to help students focus on specific areas of revision.

### ***Year 9 to Year 10 Preferences***

Year 9 students have been introduced to their curriculum options over the past few weeks, following the details of the different courses on offer being presented to parents and carers. Students are now in a good position to know what content each course has and how the course will be examined. Please note that the deadline for students to make their preferences is **Wednesday 25 March**. Students will receive their link to the preference form in the next few weeks via Class Charts to their account.

### ***Quality of Education Developments***

We have continued to develop our classroom practice this year, with increased focus on “communication in the classroom,” which involves clear instructions regarding how the students are to carry out each task (for example, independent silent study, quite paired work or in groups.) This has not only strengthened the quality of student output but also contributed towards improved routines and transitions between lessons. As a reminder, we have a well-resourced Learning Resource Centre which is being used by many students after school for a variety of activities, including completing homework, research for lessons, along with ordering new reading books to take home to read for pleasure. The LRC is open until 4.00pm Monday - Thursday, and until 3.30 pm on Fridays.

### ***The Importance of Literacy***

Our Year 10 Reading Buddy Scheme, which has been running for a year now, has proved to be hugely successful, with Year 7 students benefiting from this approach at great pace (with one student making 47 months of progress in just one term!) This takes place every Wednesday during VIP sessions, with student volunteers supporting Year 7 with their reading.

Alongside our “communication in the classroom” as mentioned above, our focus has been on developing **oracy** with our students. As behaviour has improved in classrooms, this allows for greater freedom for students to take part in group activities, discussions and debates to help their understanding and progress, learning from their peers, and appreciating different viewpoints.

### ***PA2L (Positive Attitude to Learning)***

It has been really pleasing to see that the vast majority of our students continue to make the right choices. Thank you for all your support in ensuring the PA2L system is a success by checking ARCK records and ClassCharts regularly and talking to your child about their day, which makes a huge difference. To celebrate these positive achievements, over 700 students were given a breakfast award and five lucky students each won a bike for their sustained outstanding behaviour and demonstrating our ARCK values every day.

In addition, the number of students being removed from classrooms for poor behaviour has decreased by over 30% since the same point last year, showing that more and more students are engaging positively with their learning. Likewise, the number of occasions of isolation being used as a sanction decreased by 23% and suspensions were reduced by 29% - a huge improvement. All this means that we have more students in more lessons for more of the time which is great news and must continue as we move towards the end of year exam season.

### **Mobile Phones**

You will receive separate communication in the coming week or so, with details of changes to our mobile phone policy. The current rules remain in place until that point, which you will be familiar with. Any student mobile phone, electronic device, earphones or headphones that are seen or heard inside the school grounds during school hours will be confiscated, placed in an envelope and stored in Student Reception until the end of that day. As per existing policy, repeated or serious breaches, parents/carers may be contacted to come and collect the phone or device.

However, before the end of this academic year, we will be making BBEC a **phone-free space** to improve teaching, safeguarding and learning, using a secure and lockable phone pouch system. This is in line with the latest Department for Education and national government expectations. These make it clear that schools must be phone free. Our system will comply with these expectations whilst allowing the students to keep their locked pouch containing their phone with them throughout the school day.

This system has been implemented in thousands of schools to facilitate an engaged and safer learning environment. Local schools to us have successfully implemented the same system and we are confident the secure phone pouches will have a positive impact at BBEC as well. Other BDAT schools are also introducing this system, and we are sharing our planning in preparation for the launch of this new strategy.

We fully recognise that mobile phones have many useful features. However, we have also seen that learning, engagement and social interactions improve significantly when students are fully focused without the distraction of social media and other inappropriate use of mobile devices.

Further information and details of the process will be sent to you next week in a separate letter.

### **Bridge/Connect Update**

There were many positive developments in Connect and Bridge last half term. The number of students from Connect and Bridge enjoying social time in mainstream school has increased again by 11% from half term 2, with another student making that move this week.

One Year 10 Bridge student has commenced a programme of reintegration into mainstream lessons this week, and the plan is to put this in place for two or three more students between now and the Easter break. Three Year 11 Bridge students have successfully transitioned to mainstream tutor groups with two of those likely to join mainstream lessons at the conclusion of the mock exams that are currently running.

Connect and Bridge students have participated in Lego therapy and art therapy. They have participated in pop-up food tech lessons and had a pancake making session in the final week of the last half term. Connect and Bridge students have also been on trips to Cartwright Hall and Shibden Valley and Empower Provision came to school for circuit and boxing training. They are also busy with a project restoring the school's science garden.

These students have been invited to join a sports league and hope to enter a 5-a side football competition in March. They are extremely excited at having the opportunity to represent their school. We know they will do us proud.

## ***Attendance***

Students at BBEC continue to improve their overall Attendance this academic year. Compared with two years ago, the school average Attendance has improved by nearly 2% and continues to close the gap to the current national average Attendance figure of 91.9%.

125 students remain on 100% Attendance this academic year - a brilliant achievement. 416 students have above 97% attendance, 554 students have above 95% attendance and well over half of the school (875 students), have above 90% attendance.

Despite these figures being very pleasing it is alarming to note that, at this stage in the school year, if your child has 97% attendance, they have missed approximately 2.5 days of school. If your child has 95% attendance, they have missed approximately 4 days of school and **if your child has 90% attendance, they have missed approximately 9.5 days of school this academic year.**

Punctuality is continuing to improve. Compared with last year, 'Late to Lesson' and 'Late to School' marks have been reduced. We continue to ask for your support in making sure your child arrives at school before 8.30am, to avoid a 'Late to School' mark.

Every day at school matters and we continue to thank all our parents and carers for supporting the school in making Attendance 'everyone's business'.

## ***Enrichment Activities***

Our enrichment opportunities for students continue this term, with a total of 57 clubs for students to choose from, in addition to a variety of trips and visits to enhance students' understanding of British Values and cultural capital. Almost 800 students have participated in one of these, which is excellent.

For further details of our before and after school activities, please visit the website

<https://www.buttershaw.net/extra-curricular-activities>

There are some new and exciting projects in full flow this term. These include our largest ever cohort of 62 Year 9 students starting their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, as well as the start of our Horticultural project to begin growing fruit and vegetables in the science garden. Students have already planted fruit trees and bushes and are about to plant potatoes and onions.

## ***Careers***

Our Careers team has been extremely busy this term, celebrating the recent National Apprenticeship week with assemblies for all year groups, also involving Bradford College and the Department of Work and Pensions and a visit to the Apprenticeship show at Victoria Hall, Saltaire. Our Year 10 students have also taken part in workplace visits to Robertson Construction at Airedale Hospital and the local company, Melrose Interiors.

There have also been STEM trips with Maths event at City Hall and the National MathsFest event in London, where our students excelled and took away one of the top prizes.

Our students have also continued to lead the way with the "Leeds2Success" project, in collaboration with the University of Leeds and attended a recent graduation event on their campus.

We are also extremely pleased that so many Year7, 8 and 9 students are now accessing their "Unifrog" accounts that will provide them with high quality careers guidance and information through to university and beyond!



***Dates for diaries***

Mon 23 Feb – Fri 13 March	Yr11 Mock Exams
Thur 26 Feb	Yr10 Progress Evening
Fri 27 Feb	Yr7 Linking Network – Connecting Together Day 1 @ City Hall – invitation
Fri 6 March	Yr7 Linking Network – Connecting Together Day 2 @ City Hall – invitation
Tue 10 March	Yr11 GCSE Business Grade Booster Session
Fri 13 March	Airecon Harrogate Trip – invitation
Fri 13 March	Pi Day
Wed 25 March	Duke of Edinburgh First aid Training
Thur 26 March	Yr7 Chester Zoo Trip
Fri 27 March	Art trip to London
Fri 27 March	Break up for Easter
<b>Mon 13 April</b>	<b>Whole school returns</b>

Thank you for your continued support and engagement, and I look forward to seeing you at one of the above events.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Taylor  
Headteacher