



Dear Parents/Carers

As we mentioned last week we have begun planning for re-opening the school in September.

There are still many things to be organised and communicated with students and parents, including travelling to school, timings of the school day and catering arrangements.

Therefore we **will be in touch with parents, by email, throughout the summer holidays.**

Please regularly check your email and visit our website for updates.

### **September 2020 - Start of Term 1**

We wish to update parents on changes to the start of Term 1. The term will begin for all students on Monday 7 September. This is to allow us to offer a comprehensive induction to new students in Years 7 and 12 which we have not been able to run this summer due to social distancing regulations and the lockdown period.

- Tuesday 1 September – INSET Day (school closed to all students)
- Wednesday 2 September – INSET Day (school closed to all students)
- Thursday 3 September – Induction day for Year 12 - school will be open to all of those joining our Year 12 only.
- Friday 4 September – Induction Day for Year 7 – school will be open to all new students joining us in Year 7 only.
- Monday 7 September – First day of school for all year groups.

Specific communications on these transition days will be circulated to parents/carers of these year groups before the end of term.

### **September 2020 – arrangements for full school opening**

We are currently drawing up our plans and risk assessment for full opening in September. The school must be organised to reduce contact and mixing between students of different year groups. This will mean very significant changes to 'normal' school working. These changes will most likely involve temporary changes to the 'school day'. It is likely that the start of school day will remain unchanged, but we are likely to reduce the length of lunchtime and, therefore, have an earlier finish time. As mentioned above, we will inform parents and carers of all arrangements as soon as we can.

Home to school transport arrangements will need to change in order to conform to social distancing guidance. We have been communicating with North Somerset Council and are confident we will be able to put appropriate arrangements into place. If you are eligible for home-to-school transport next year, please expect contact from North Somerset in the form of a survey. Completing this will help North Somerset identify their capacity for different options.

We can confirm that students will return in full school uniform in September. The Government Guidelines for re-opening state that “We would encourage all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”

Therefore we would like to remind parents of our uniform expectations (please see the [Uniform page](#) on the school website) and that new uniform items can be purchased online from Price and Buckland <https://www.pbuniform-online.co.uk/backwellschool>.

Please ensure that uniform orders are placed by Sunday 2 August to ensure delivery for September.

We are aware that some families have uniform their children have now grown out of with minimal wear/still in good condition. We are investigating whether we could look at offering a uniform donation system so that these can be passed onto other families. If we are able to organise this we will update you all in September.

We can also confirm that we will continue to use a PIN system, instead of biometric thumbprints, to pay for items purchased from the school canteens. We reverted to PINs in March and will continue to use this system, as it means that students are not touching the finger print sensor. Students will be reminded of their PIN at the start of term.

## Year 11

Today we hosted our Live event for induction to Sixth Form and we are pleased that so many students were able to attend; they asked some excellent questions! If your child was unable to attend the event for any reason, then they can access a recording of the event by visiting our “Year 11 into Year 12 remote learning” page on FROG (also available in the resources section of the parent portal). Alternatively you can access it using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quyYnVn65Yc>

We will update you as soon as possible as to how we will structure pastoral support for students on and after results day this year – please ask your child to check their school email regularly.

## Year 12

A reminder that end of year reports will be sent home via email next week to all Year 12 parents/carers – they will also be available on the parent portal. The vast majority of students have worked hard during the lockdown and Mr Lewis will be sending out a narrated assembly next week in order to congratulate them and to say goodbye for now. We value student voice and would ask parents to encourage their child to complete the Year 12 Exit questionnaire which asks them for feedback on their experience of Year 12 both prior to and post lockdown. This will be available to complete on FROG from Monday 13 July.

We'd like to remind students and parents of the importance of continued Future Plans research over the summer. Students have been given three resource booklets and can access the information and guidance materials on the Future Plans page of FROG. They can also access Unifrog which has a wealth of Future Plans information. We expect students to upload a version of their CV to Unifrog by September and to continue with their UCAS applications, particularly if they have an “Early Bird” deadline. A number of virtual open days are taking place over the summer so students should be making the most of these

opportunities - we really hope that parents/carers and students are reading the [Careers Bulletin](#) for inspiration. Please note that further guidance on writing personal statements will be given to all students in September.

### **Year 13**

This term Year 13 have been saying goodbye to their teachers and tutors via Microsoft Teams. We hope that they have managed to join live lessons and we'd like them to continue to check their school emails for important updates and information. For those students who think that they might enter the autumn exam series, subject teachers have given clear instructions on revision and exam practice. We are centralising these instructions on the Sixth Form page of FROG and this will be available to students from Monday 13 July along with updated revision guidance. The Sixth Form team are also working with subject teachers to decide what extra support can be put in place from September. We will update you as soon as possible as to how we will structure pastoral support for students on and after results day this year.

### **Results Days**

A Level Results Day is Thursday 13 August and GCSE Results Day is Thursday 20 August. We will send parents of students in the relevant year groups full details in the next few weeks; arrangements are being adjusted to allow for safe social distancing and in the light of the changed grading systems in place this year.

### **Autumn Exam Series**

Dates have now been published for these examinations. We will contact parents and carers of students in Years 11 and 13 with the relevant information in due course.

### **Years 11 and 13 Leaving Procedures and Leavers' Hoodies**

If you ordered a Leavers' Hoodie just a reminder that these will be delivered to your home address by the end of this term.

We have also put in place procedures for students in Year 11 and Year 13 to return any borrowed library books, Sixth form lanyards and access cards (Year 13 only), as well as information on how to reclaim any dinner money balance that remains on ParentPay.

Click here to read [Years 11 and 13 Leaving Procedure Letter](#)

A Word version of the letter with the Dinner Money Refund/Transfer Request section can be downloaded and completed electronically for emailing back to [finance@backwellschool.net](mailto:finance@backwellschool.net). Please click on the link below:

[Dinner Money Refund/Transfer Request form](#)

### **New Build for Backwell School**

We are pleased to announce that we have received planning permission for a new sports hall, with classrooms, on our school site. This is following a successful PSPB2 grant application, and allocation of additional funding from the Lighthouse Schools Partnership.

The new building will comprise a sports hall and five classrooms. It will also contain a fitness suite (gym), a staff office and Science prep room. It will be located next to our current Sports Hall. Images and more details can be found on our website:

<https://www.backwellschool.net/planningapplication>

We hope building preparations can begin soon – and we look forward to the improvement in our school facilities once the year-long build has been completed. This building work will have implications for the school site from September, including accessing the site for pick up and drop off in cars. We will update parents in due course.

We are currently thinking of a name for this new building – any suggestions can be emailed to [mailbox@backwellschool.net](mailto:mailbox@backwellschool.net) – we are particularly keen to have a local connection and to allow students to vote to decide the final name.

### **Duke of Edinburgh – Volunteering**

This week we received confirmation that Backwell School students, currently completing their Duke of Edinburgh award, have undertaken over 1456 hours of volunteering support this year!

The social value of this to the local community is £6333.60.

I am sure you will agree this is an incredible figure and the students should be very proud of what they have achieved, especially as this is alongside their school studies and the other elements of their Duke of Edinburgh award.

### **Refunds for Cancelled Trips and Events**

Please find below an update on the status of the latest refunds for cancelled trips.

Unfortunately, the school is currently unable to provide a date for issuing refunds for the Sorrento 2020 instalment payments, as these monies are still part of an outstanding insurance claim, which is still ongoing. We will bring you more news as soon as we are able.

By 24 June	Little Canada 2020 and Osmington Bay 2020
By 1 July	Ardèche 2020 (Deposits and instalments)
By 15 July	Tregoyd 2020, Nettlecombe Court 2020 (A level Geography field trip) and Sorrento 2020 (deposits only).
By 22 July	Base Backwell, German Exchange and A level Biology Field Course

### **How to withdraw the trip refund payments from ParentPay:**

You will be able to see your trip refunds in the 'basket' area on your ParentPay account. To withdraw these funds back onto your debit/credit card, you will need to go into your Parent Account on ParentPay (top of screen); Statements; then click on the 'withdraw' box at bottom left of screen. If you have any issues withdrawing funds from your Parent Account, please contact ParentPay directly, via your home page.

(Important, please note: ParentPay only allows a total of three withdrawals from your Parent Account within a three-month period.)

As and when a refund has been made for a specific cancelled trip, we will continue to communicate with parents via the Friday email home. Unfortunately, we will be unable to respond to individual requests and we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

## **Careers Bulletin**

The Careers Bulletin contains lots of really useful information about work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as virtual careers fairs and virtual college and university events. Please take a look by clicking on the link below:

[Current Careers Events and Opportunities - 10 July 2020](#)

## **A message from Aspens**

Aspens, our school caterers, have asked us to pass on some important information and reassurance about the school meals service in September. Please click on the following link to read their letter: [Letter to parents from Aspens](#)

## **And last but by no means least ....**

Pupils at Backwell have been involved in a collaboration with South African vocal group Zakhele. This project was the culmination of a scheme of work learning about the life, music and activism of South African singer Miriam Makeba and in particular her track "Pata Pata", meaning "Touch Touch".

Recently, as a Covid 19 health message, UNICEF released a version of this track by Benin born singer Angelique Kidjo called "No Pata Pata" meaning "No Touch Touch". After discussing the project with Zakhele, they agreed to perform a new version of "No Pata Pata" specifically for the project. Backwell students and staff added the music and dances to accompany the amazing voices and dances of Zakhele.

Currently, the infection rate in the region of Mpumalanga in South Africa where the group are based, is still increasing, and the Za Foundation have had to suspend their programme of after school clubs. Instead, Zakhele and other members of the community are working with the children, offering hygiene advice, food and friendship where needed. Members of the group and those involved in these projects are still being paid, however, fundraising opportunities are extremely limited for the Za Foundation currently.

If you enjoy the video below and wish to learn more about the area, as well as the music and projects of Zakhele and the Za Foundation, please visit [www.zafoundation.org](http://www.zafoundation.org)

Please click on the following link to open the video on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/u3scc-P6Uc0>

*Emailed to parents 10 July 2020*