



June 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As always, I hope that this letter finds you well. We are now in the final half term of the school year. Our Year 11 and Year 13 students are coming to the end of their GCSE and A level exams. Our GCSE students will be sitting approximately 24 different exams across their subjects. Our A level students will be sitting approximately 9 different exams across their subjects. It is an intense period for them all and I must commend our students for the perseverance and resilience they have shown throughout the exam period.

There is a very good chance that you will soon be getting a knock on your door from someone representing a political party wanting to canvas your opinion about the general election. If you would like to speak to them about an educational issue, please do ask them what they propose to do to ensure that students in schools in Staffordshire are funded equitably and in line with the higher funding that students in neighbouring local authorities receive. This has been an issue for many years now under Conservative, Coalition and Labour governments. The fact that we get less funding per student than in other local authorities around the country does mean that we have fewer resources available in our school to support the education of your children than in other schools around the country.

School Uniform 2024-25

School uniform is important as it helps to develop a sense of personal pride and form good habits for a student's journey into adult life. I am sure that many of you will be thinking about purchasing the school uniform items that your child will need for the new academic year. To establish clarity about our uniform, to avoid wasted trips to the shops and to ensure that we minimise uniform issues in September I would like to remind you of our uniform rules. The details can be found on our school website (link - [School Uniform - Sir Graham Balfour School](#)), but I would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Jumpers - round neck jumpers are not part of our uniform for the 2024-25 academic year. If worn, jumpers must be a navy blue "V" necked jumper.
- Shoes – some shops market black trainers as being suitable for school. They are not, so please do not purchase them. Shoes must be plain black leather or PVC leather shoes. Please see the separate document which contains a reminder about which shoes are suitable for school.

Current Issues in School

There is a lot to celebrate about life in Sir Graham Balfour School, however there are some issues with year groups that we need your support in addressing. The main issues at the moment are:

- Year 10 Homework – the vast majority of detentions for Year 10 students are for not attending H0 support sessions. Students who complete their homework on time and to a good standard are much more likely to do well in their GCSE exams. This is because they are up to date with their work, they are regularly reviewing work taught earlier on in the course and they are in the habit of working hard outside of the classroom. Please do support your child, and their teachers, by helping them to get into a routine of completing homework on time and to the best possible standard. The Satchel:One App is a great way of keeping an eye on homework content and deadlines.
- Years 7, 8 and 9 – we have noticed, and are dealing with, an increase in the amount of foul language used by students in everyday conversation. School is a formal environment and foul language has no place here. We

know that foul language can be normalised by video games (e.g. Grand Theft Auto) and on social media, but it is not something that teachers should be having to address. As above, please do support your child, and their teachers, by helping them to understand that working in a formal environment requires the highest standard of conduct which, in this instance, means speaking politely and not using foul language.

Dates for the diary

The final half term of the school year is always a busy time. We have lots going on, so please see below for important dates to save in your diary.

- Monday 17th June to Friday 28th June = Year 10 and 12 PPEs; Year 7 Summative Assessment Fortnight
- Monday 24th June = Post 16 Careers Update in the school hall for students, and their parents, in Years 9 and 10 starting at 6pm
- Friday 28th June to Sunday 30th June = Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver Qualifying Expedition
- Monday 1st July = Year 11 Prom at the Moat House from 6pm
- Wednesday 3rd July = Year 10 Celebration Evening from 6-7pm (invitation only)
- Friday 5th July = Showcase Evening to demonstrate the amazing work done by students in our Art and DT classes. Tickets cost £3, under 5s are free. This event starts at 6.30pm.
- Monday 8th July to Friday 12th July = Year 10 Work Experience Week
- Tuesday 9th July = Cultural Visit days for Years 7, 8 and 9. Year 7 will be visiting Warwick Castle, Year 8 will be visiting Blists Hill and Year 9 will be going to Dudley Zoo.
- Thursday 11th July = Year 9 Celebration Evening (invitation only)
- Friday 12th July = Sports Day
- Monday 15th July = Year 8 Celebration Evening (invitation only)
- Tuesday 16th July = Activity Day
- Wednesday 17th July = Year 7 Celebration Evening (invitation only)
- Friday 19th July = End of term. School finished for the summer holiday at 12.30pm.

Finally

I am determined that the school will continue to provide the opportunities and care for our students to enable them to leave Balfour with the very best GCSE and A level grades possible. We cannot do this without your support and it is important that all students make the most of every lesson and every opportunity between now and the end of the school year. All of us here at Balfour recognise that working together offers the best chance for our students to have a successful, enriching and fulfilling experience during their time with us. We are deeply appreciative for the great support you provide to your children and to our school.

Your faithfully,



Matthew Mason
Headteacher