



Benfield School, Benfield Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE6 4NU
Headteacher – Mr R Carr

Friday 10th September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Information for parents/carers – End of first week of term

I write to you as we reach the end of our first week back into the new academic school year where we have proudly welcomed back our students for lateral flow testing to take place, followed by essential student induction days across this week for all year groups. Students have also met members of the new senior leadership team and those members of teaching, support and administrative staff who have joined Benfield this September as we continue to rapidly increase in size.

I would like to begin by extending my thanks for your patience and continued support for myself and the school as our students have arrived in the highest standard of school uniform this week. Where there have been slight issues, we are working supportively with families to ensure that all students attend in full uniform and meet Benfield's expectations regarding student appearance.

As we have already posted on the school's social media pages, we are aware of some supply issues with our school uniform provider Emblematic, and we are understanding and happy to work with those families affected by this through no fault of their own if specific items of uniform orders have not yet been received.

I would particularly like to highlight how well our new students in Year 7 and Year 12 have made the transition into their next phase of education and overall we are very pleased with the attitude and effort which students in all year groups have demonstrated so far. After the disruption caused by COVID-19 to our students and staff over the past eighteen months, it is fantastic to see the whole school community once again able to access the full site whilst still remaining cautious to ensure that everyone minimises risk in the building and grounds.

We have continued to address all aspects of the school over the summer in our drive for improvement as well as making some key changes to attendance, behaviour, teaching & learning in order to meet the recommendations made to us by OFSTED at our last inspection in March 2020.

Attendance and Punctuality

A number of our year groups this week have met or have been near to meeting the school attendance expectation for every student of 96%. It is essential that students attend school every day in order to address the lost learning generated from school closures caused by national lockdowns over the past two years.

This year we will be implementing a new sixty minute 'call back' detention at the end of the same day of a late arrival for any student who arrives significantly late for school as we strive to fully eradicate poor student punctuality and lost learning caused by lateness to school. Parents and carers will always be informed if their child/children have arrived late for school and have received a punctuality call back.

We are of course aware that at times, individual circumstances for lateness need to be considered, such as disruptions to public transport, when speaking with our students each morning as to reasons for lateness to school.

Student movement, social areas and catering

Having periods out of school last year and having to attend school under COVID-19 safety measures and systems of control, this week as part of induction days we have supported students in all year groups to become familiar with our new school systems and routines. This includes how we group students in year groups to enter and exit the building and how we expect all students to move around the inside of the building this year. Students have already shown how well they have adapted to this very successfully this week as we aim to ensure safe, calm and ordered social areas and corridors which encourage students to be best prepared for learning once they have entered the classroom.

This year we have given each year group their own individual social areas outside once again and locations for these will be reviewed at half-term as the weather changes.

We have also ensured that students in Year 7, 8 and 9 have a separate period of time during our new 'split lunch' from our older students in Year 10 and 11. This has improved access to hot and cold options of food and refreshments in response to our largest ever number of students on site this academic year. We have also introduced additional internal and external seating within social areas. We will continue to review catering provision and arrangements throughout the first few weeks of the new term responding to student feedback.

Quality First Teaching & Learning

Students this week have also received key information about our new approaches and routines to teaching and learning in lessons, as well as how work is expected to be presented in books. A priority has been to inform students about how staff will provide feedback on their work and how they will be informed about target grades, current progress and how they can further improve.

This year every student has been issued with our new 'Learning Journal' which will allow parents and carers to see what students have been learning each day in lessons, how learning is sequenced, and which key learning points and language has been recorded.

This year in school we are prioritising the importance of reading widely and often upon students' return to school. Literacy and reading will be given increased time and priority within morning registration period, balanced with a robust and effective personal development and careers curriculum to help inform students and support mental health and well-being.

Behaviour for Learning

Here in Benfield we aim to provide a safe, caring, well-ordered environment, which is vital to effective teaching and learning.

Our approach towards behaviour and attitudes to learning requires the commitment and consistency of practice of all staff to ensure that learners know the standards expected of them. All members of the school are expected to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, with courtesy and mutual respect as basic requirements. Students will be treated consistently.

Benfield's approach towards behaviour is not exhaustive and underpins the school rules:

- **Be Prepared**
- **Follow Instructions**
- **Look the Part**

Aims

- Promote British values
- Support effective teaching and learning
- Foster mutual respect

- Prepare learners for the adult world
- Create consistency of expectations and consequences
- Challenge poor behaviour in an appropriate manner
- Keep staff and students safe
- Create calm corridors and purposeful classrooms

Positive behaviour and attitudes towards learning will be widely celebrated and remarked upon via spoken word, postcards issued home and student Learning Journal comments and can be viewed daily by parents/carers at home.

Forms of unacceptable behaviour will be met with an appropriate sanction (e.g. verbal reprimand, Learning Journal comment or 'call back' detention. This year we will be implementing a new sixty minute 'call back' detention at the end of the same day for any student within a lesson who progresses through our multi-staged behaviour system and is issued with a formal 'call back'. As part of this same day detention students will be required to take part in a conversation with the classroom teacher issuing the lesson 'call back' in which the behaviour, the sanction and how a different choice of behaviour for learning in the next lesson will be discussed.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child/children has received a behaviour 'call back' detention.

Communication home from school

I hope to launch our new Benfield School website over the next week which will make gaining key information about school and events easier to navigate.

Over the coming term we will also be rolling out our new student information tracking system for parents and carers. The *GO 4 SCHOOLS* app will enable all parents and carers to view live student attendance, behaviour and academic progress data for their child/children. Full training and information will be provided to support parents/carers in this.

Last academic year, Benfield conducted Parent Evening events by telephone as a result of COVID-19 related safety measures as meetings could not take place in school. Following a review of this, we are currently looking to develop our ability to hold virtual Parent Evening events using wider sources of technology this year. Further information will be released nearer the end of the current term.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your understanding and support over the summer period and I look forward to working in partnership with you as we move through the school year, sharing the successes and achievements of our students.

Yours sincerely



Richard Carr
Headteacher



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