

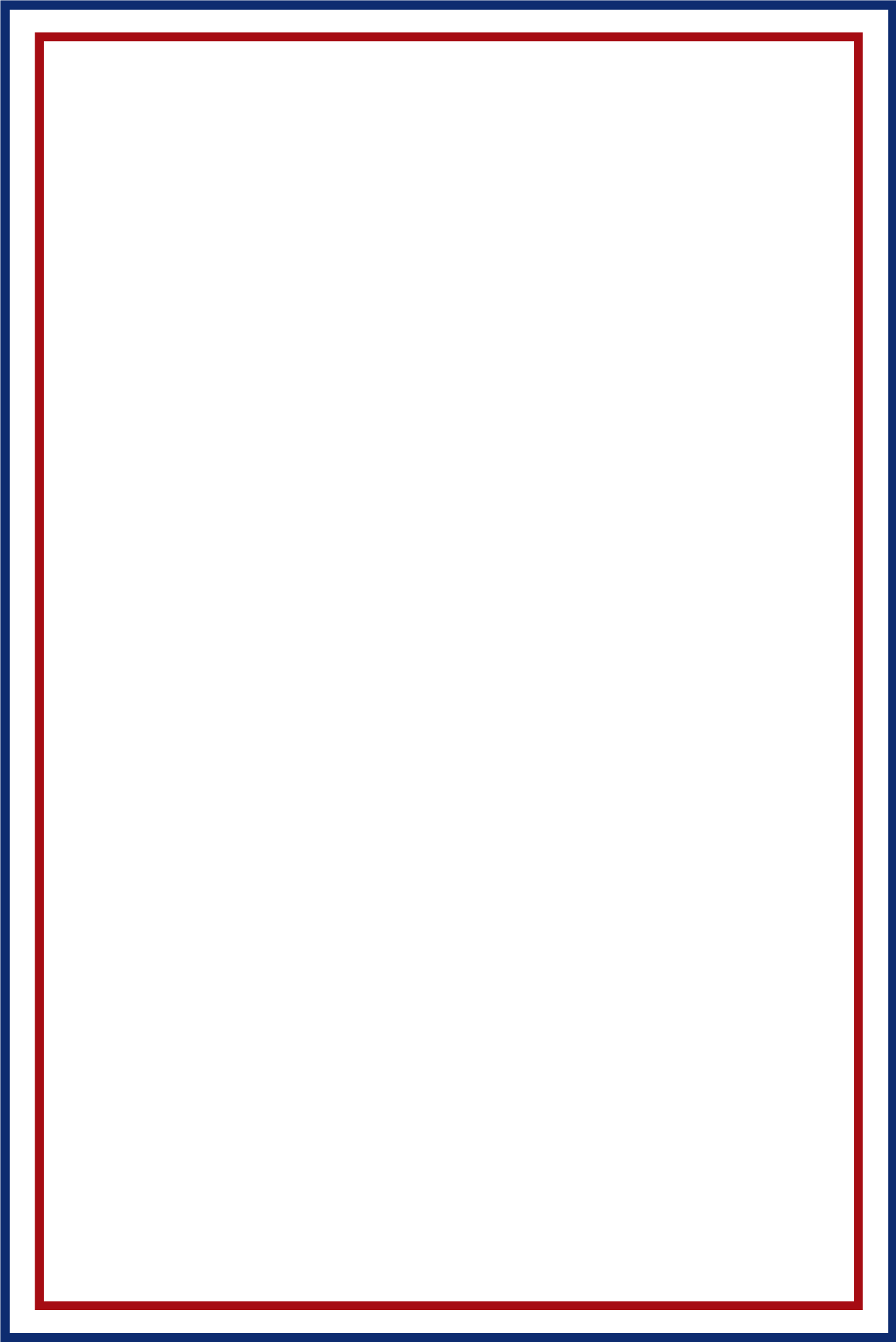


Student & Parent Handbook 2025-26

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COMMUNITY • AMBITION • OPPORTUNITY





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Headteacher Welcome and BFS Values

Welcome to the BFS Family!

Dear Parents/Carers

I am delighted that you have trusted BFS to take your child through the next important stage in their education. Starting secondary school is an exciting time and we are looking forward to working in partnership with you over the coming years.

This handbook has been designed to give you key information about school life at BFS. It covers logistics, our expectations, and important policies and procedures. The aim is for you to find out all the important information from this handbook. The handbook will be supported by regular letters, progress reports, subject evenings, newsletters, and Success Together events.

All parents/carers should download and access the following:

MyChildAtSchool (www.mychildatschool.com) to access your child's homework, rewards and behaviour record.

ParentPay (www.parentpay.com) to receive all communications and make payments.

Studybugs (www.studybugs.com) to report student absences.

At BFS we aim for our young people to leave us as adaptable, compassionate, creative and critical thinkers so that they can take a positive role in society and confidently face the challenges the world presents to them. Our mission is to educate the whole person; we see young people as unique individuals with gifts and talents. We do this through our school values.

Mrs King (Headteacher)

BFS Values

COMMUNITY

BFS is rooted in its local community and prides itself on the warm, positive and nurturing relationships it has with students and staff. Individuality is encouraged and celebrated, as this diversity contributes to our vibrant and dynamic ethos. We expect students to work together, and to show respect and tolerance towards each other.

AMBITION

At BFS we set the highest expectations and academic ambitions to ensure our students make excellent progress from their starting points. So that our students go on to thrive in their lives, we view success as a broad term which includes academic and personal development.

OPPORTUNITY

We aim to prepare students to achieve their best. By embracing the opportunities BFS offers them, students will become well-educated and active citizens, and experience a sense of fulfilment through educational and personal achievement.





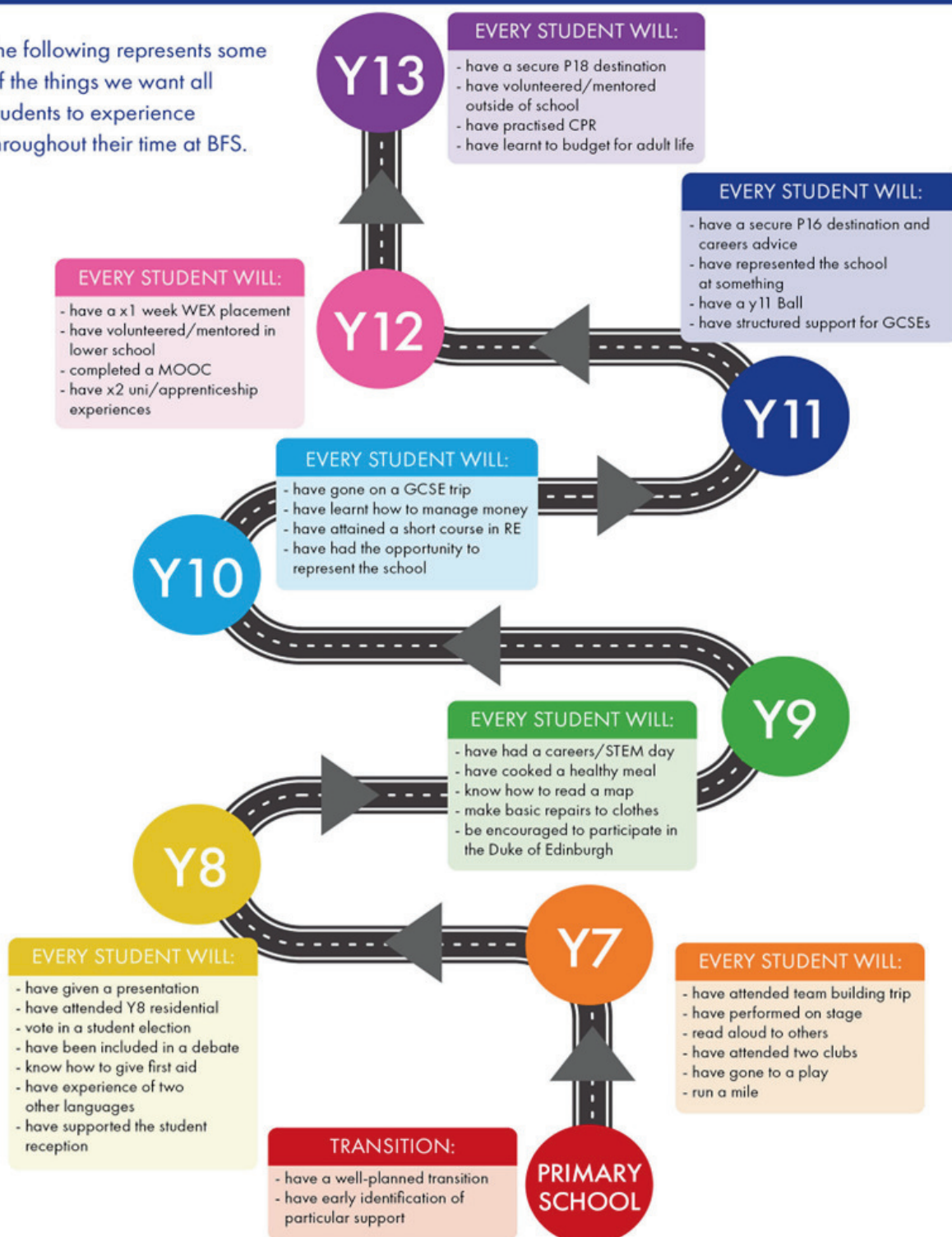
BFS Promise

The BFS Promise is the School's commitment to ensuring that all students have equal opportunity. It brings together the School's pastoral systems, the School Houses, enrichment opportunities and much more. The roadmap illustrates just a few of the things the School commits to doing for every student during their school journey.



THE BFS PROMISE ROADMAP

The following represents some of the things we want all students to experience throughout their time at BFS.





Head of Year 7 Welcome

Welcome to Year 7

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to BFS. My name is Mrs MacBlain and I am the Head of Year 7.

BFS is a wonderful school where you will feel welcomed and included. We are a school with a sense of community that is second to none and we strive to make sure that all our students reach their full potential, making lasting memories whilst growing in skill and knowledge throughout their time with us.



I understand that many young people may feel a mixture of excitement, fear and nerves as they get ready to start secondary school. We are very aware of how big this transition is, but do not worry, our school community will do everything we can to help your child, and you, settle into a new routine here at BFS.

We have the highest aspirations for every one of our students and are here to support, challenge and nurture your child to reach their full potential. My expectations are clear: students should maintain excellent attendance and punctuality, as well as high standards of behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. But above all, I expect students to be polite and respectful towards one another, championing each other's successes and embodying our core values of Community, Ambition and Opportunity.

I am sure that your child will have a wonderful transition experience, and I am looking forward to sharing their successful journey through secondary education.

INTRODUCING THE BFS PROMISE PASSPORT

We are committed to giving all students a set of opportunities and experiences that develop them as young people. It should give them new experiences, embed good habits and provide the cultural capital that enriches and equips them for the wider world. The BFS Promise requires every student to work towards completing their Promise Passport by achieving a 'promise mark' for each of the 18 aspects of the Passport. Our hope is that they will use this across the first four terms to record and showcase their personal qualities and achievements and will provide a record of their participation.

Activities in it include things such as:

- Representing their House in a competition.
- Participating in extra-curricular clubs, trips and visits.
- Demonstrating values such as kindness and politeness.
- Completing physical activities like running a mile!

The Passport contains spaces for staff to sign off completed activities. This is our acknowledgment of their hard work and feedback for you. Once the students complete the Passport, they will be awarded with a metal House badge recognising their achievement. For more information on this and to see a copy of the Passport please see our website.



House System and Rewards

House System

The House system was introduced across the year groups in 2020 to create a vertical community for students. Within these communities, students build relationships, support each other, engage in friendly competition, and work together to make positive contributions within their House, the School, and local community.

The Houses are named after local parks within Bristol. All students belong to a House, which they will represent at BFS. Students can stand for election as a House Leader or for House Parliament, allowing them the opportunity to take on responsibility and develop their leadership skills. Furthermore, all teaching staff are allocated a House to foster healthy competition throughout the School. The structure of the House system means that each student has a chance to shine, to discover their own talents and to make a genuine contribution to the school community.

House assemblies, events and celebrations allow relationships to be fostered and built across the year groups and even into our Sixth Form. There are inter-House competitions in numerous academic, sporting and cultural activities including music, poetry, maths, English, science, drama and art. The varying nature of the competitions allow students to come together and meet others they may not otherwise encounter. The Houses also fundraise for local causes, providing students with a wider sense of perspective as to the role the School plays within its community.



Rewards

At BFS we pride ourselves on acknowledging and rewarding the wonderful contributions students make to school life. We split our House points into three categories which are linked to our core values of Community, Ambition and Opportunity. Students can earn House points through:

Community - awarded for excellence within tutor period and any other pastoral area of the School.

Ambition - awarded for academic contribution within lessons and for homework.

Opportunity - awarded for participating in our extra-curricular opportunities, after-school clubs, performances or sports teams.

Students receive a range of rewards when they meet certain thresholds, including receiving recognition postcards and being invited to breakfast with the Headteacher.



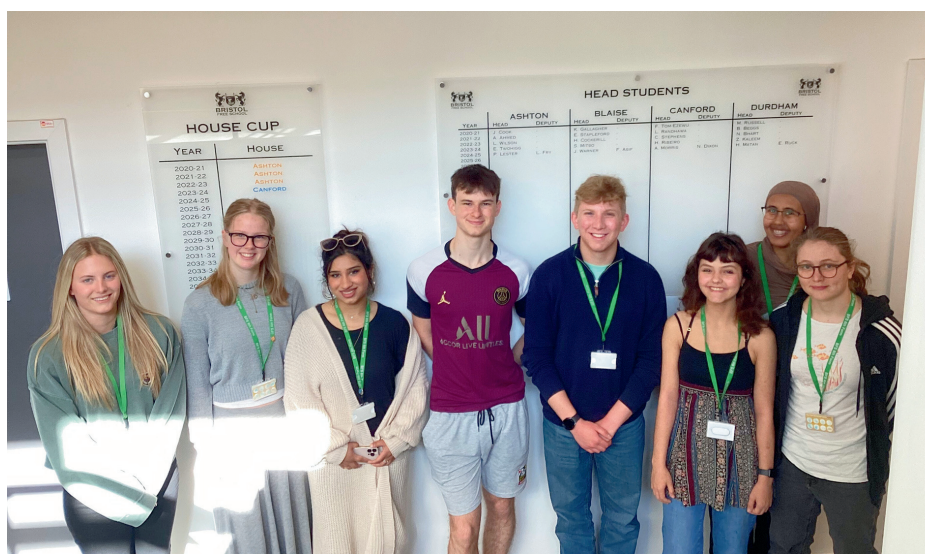


House System and Rewards

House Cups and the Spirit of BFS Award

There are four cups which students can compete for across the academic year.

- **The Community Cup** - the student who has achieved the highest House points in this category by contributing to the School and wider community.
- **The Ambition Cup** - the student who has achieved the highest House points in this category across their subject areas.
- **The Opportunity Cup** - the student who has achieved the highest House points in this category by taking advantage of the most opportunities available to them.
- **The House Cup** - this is presented to the winning House with the highest number of overall House points. This includes all House points collected from Year 7 to Year 13.
- **The Spirit of BFS Award** - awarded to a student in Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 who has demonstrated the school values consistently across their Key Stage. This is the highest and most prestigious school award, founded when the School was formed.



Top left: Head Students (2024-25) in front of the House Cup and Head Students honours boards.

Bottom left: House wall and awards cabinet.

Top right: The Spirit of BFS Award.



Behaviour for Learning

Behaviour Expectations

We have very high expectations of student behaviour as we know that this creates the conditions that young people need to learn and thrive.

This poster was co-constructed by staff and students and aligns our behaviour expectations alongside our core values. We expect students to arrive to lessons on time and move around the School in a calm and orderly way.



All staff are trained in how to adapt their approach to meet the needs of SEND learners. We believe in having clear, consistently applied expectations which support all students.

If behaviour is serious or persistently not meeting our expectations, then the School may place the student in our behaviour support room or may consider possible suspension from School.

Our Exclusion Policy can be viewed on our website.

Behaviour Procedures

Teachers may issue a 1-minute detention. This would take place immediately after the lesson has finished and will allow for minor issues to be resolved there and then.

If a student has not met expectations in their lesson, following a formal warning, they are placed in a partner classroom and must go there immediately and complete the work that has been given to them. Being placed in a partner classroom will result in a 30-minute detention after school that day.



Detentions

Detentions are set as a result of the following behaviours. All detentions are on the same day.

- Late to school. Students should be on-site by 8.25am. Arrival after 8.30am will result in detention.
- Repeatedly late to lessons.
- Failure to complete homework.
- Poor behaviour during social times.
- Ongoing concerns in lessons: 1-minute detention with possible escalation to 30-minute detention.
- Inappropriate behaviour.
- School Leadership Team Behavioural Call Out.
- Uniform breach (untucked shirt, skirt not at knee length, trousers not at waist height, refusal to wear Blazer T1-5, refusal to wear a tie).



Reading and Homework

Reading at BFS

IN THE CLASSROOM

BFS is proud to be a 'reading school', and reading is at the heart of our curriculum. In Years 7-9, students Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) twice a week for twenty minutes. In addition to this, two Tutor Periods per week are dedicated to the whole year group reading the same book together. Tutors read this captivating books aloud, building students' reading confidence, comprehension and knowledge. Across all stages of the curriculum, teaching through reading is a focus, with staff receiving regular training and sharing best practice in this field.



READING CULTURE

We have a wonderful Library with a wide range of books updated often, encouraging all young people to read regularly. Throughout the year students can participate in a wealth of competitions, events, reading groups, author visits and trips, helping to build their love of reading. The BFS Reading Ladder is available on our website and contains great recommendations for each year group. Alongside our knowledgeable librarian, our newsletter also regularly features student book reviews and teachers display their favourite books on their doors. There is always an opportunity to try something new.

READING FOR SUCCESS

Children who regularly read for pleasure go on to significantly outperform their peers at both GCSE and A Level. Reading improves concentration, widens vocabulary and encourages curiosity and creativity. There are also a wide range of wellbeing and developmental benefits to regular reading for pleasure.

READING FOR ALL

From Year 7 to Year 9, we use the Accelerated Reader Programme which helps us track students' reading ages and habits. By carefully evaluating this data, we provide a range of targeted interventions for students who need additional support, ensuring they accelerate their reading skills to get back on track.

READING AT HOME

Parents can help by talking about what they are reading and showing an interest in their child's reading habits. Reading together can also be very powerful. Thank you in advance for your support. Please do reach out to us if you have any questions or want some advice in how to further engage your child in reading.



Homework and Independent Learning

All homework is set using the MyChildAtSchool app. Parents can view their child's homework through their account, and we expect all parents to set this up to support their child at BFS. This system is also used to communicate rewards and sanctions such as detentions.

We have a fantastic Library which we encourage students to use to support their learning. Homework club runs Monday to Thursday for Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9).

For Key Stage 4 students (Years 10-11), the Study Hub runs Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Students have exclusive access to the ICT suite and are supported by teaching staff.



Uniform and Equipment

School uniform at BFS is designed to be smart as well as practical. Students are expected to wear school uniform while at school and adhere to the dress code. We know our students take pride in their uniform and that feeling good about what they wear to school helps them be at their best. The School acknowledges that parents may, from time-to-time, request variations to the School's dress code on grounds of religion or belief, race, disability, or other special considerations. Any such requests will be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The School may occasionally relax uniform requirements, in particularly hot weather for example.

BFS branded uniform and sportswear is available to buy from Monkhouse. All items of uniform should be clearly named.

Daywear

- **Blazer:** Navy blue blazer with BFS badge on the pocket (fitted and straight-cut available). Blazers must be worn at all times during Terms 1-5.
- **Shirt:** Pale blue, long or short-sleeved shirt with a collar. Top button done up, worn with a BFS tie. Shirts must be always tucked in.
- **Ties:** BFS has been phasing in House ties as each new Year 7 cohort arrives. New Year 7 students should buy their House tie. Ties should be worn smartly and reach the waistband.
- **Jumper** (optional): Navy blue V-neck long sleeve jumper with BFS logo. Navy blue jumper with no logos also allowed. Hoodies are not allowed in school.
- **Trousers or skirt:** Charcoal, straight leg school trousers (not light grey or black) or a pleated charcoal skirt. The skirt should be worn at or around the knee with either tights or socks. No skinny trousers or tight skirts, tracksuit bottoms, leggings, jeans or jean-type trousers.
- **Socks or tights:** When worn with trousers - black or charcoal socks with no patterns. With skirts - short white socks or knee length charcoal socks. Plain/neutral or opaque black/navy tights with no patterns.
- **Headscarf** (worn for religious reasons): Plain navy blue or black. These must not cover the face. No durags. Cloth skull caps can be worn at social times but must not be worn during lessons and must not have tails.



Outerwear

- **School shoes:** Black, leather and polishable. Lace-up shoes to have black laces. No boots, sandals, heels, platform shoes or ballet pumps.
- **Coat:** Sensible winter coat in plain colour. No denim or leather. No extreme commercial logos. No hoodies as a replacement for coats. Coats are not a replacement for blazers and should only be worn outside.



Uniform and Equipment

PE Kit

- **Polo shirt:** Short sleeve, navy blue/red with BFS logo
- **Shorts or skort:** Plain navy blue
- **Base layer top** (optional): Plain navy blue, black or white for extra warmth
- **Tracksuit bottoms** (optional): Plain navy blue
- **Jumper** (optional): navy blue/red with BFS logo
- **Trainers:** Sports trainers with non-marking sole

As an alternative, a smart, plain navy PE kit is also allowed as follows:

- Plain navy blue, short sleeve sports top
- Plain navy blue crew neck or ¼ zip sweatshirt
- Plain navy blue sports leggings

Non-branded PE kit must not include hoodies or any garments with full-length zips.

Other items which students will be advised to purchase for extra-curricular provision, should they choose:

- Football boots with moulded studs
- Football socks
- Shin pads
- Gum shield

Students in Years 10 and 11 will require all compulsory items of PE kit, regardless of whether they take GCSE PE, as they continue to have core PE as part of their curriculum.

Coats are not to be worn during PE lessons.

Jewellery, Make-Up and Hair

- **Jewellery:** Maximum of one plain silver or gold stud (of no more than 5mm in diameter) per earlobe. No rings, necklaces, chains or bracelets, including charity bands. No other forms of body piercing. No nose piercings at all. Clear nose studs are not allowed.

- **Make-up:** Discreet foundation is permitted. No nail varnish, lip stick, artificial nails, eye shadow, mascara or heavy black lines etc.
- **Hair:** Colour must be a natural shade. No extremes in hair dye or style. We have adopted The Halo Code for Afro-textured hair. Please consider timing of haircuts so students are ready for the start of term.



School Bag & Essential Equipment

- **School bag:** Rucksack only, strong enough to carry schoolbooks, essential equipment and a water bottle.
- **Water bottle:** We expect students to hydrate regularly, utilising the many water fountains around the School. We do not sell, or promote buying, bottled water in school.
- **Essential equipment:**
 - Blue or black pens
 - Red pen
 - Pencils and sharpener
 - Eraser
 - Colouring pencils
 - 30cm ruler
 - Protractor
 - Pair of compasses
 - Scientific calculator (preferably Casio 83GTX or 85GTX)
 - Glue stick
 - Reading book
 - YONDR pouch





Student Support

Student Support

The strength of the BFS community is the quality of its relationships between staff and students.

Our tutors are the first port of call if students or parents have any queries or need support. Year Leaders, supported by senior members of staff, are also on hand to give advice - there is always someone to help.

At BFS, all students and staff are a member of one of our four Houses. Our House system creates smaller schools within one big school - a smaller community of students and staff who have a sense of belonging and shared identity. The House system provides a focal point for awards and events, and mixes all age ranges to enable older students to mentor younger students.

The School has a variety of support staff including a Safeguarding Team, SEND & SEMH Team (encompassing mental health support), Behaviour Team and Student Services. They work alongside teaching staff to provide a full range of support for our students' needs. More information on the following page.

Year 6 to Year 7 Transition

The move from primary to secondary school can be a daunting experience, as well as being exciting and stimulating. Through our transition process, we aim to allay fears and ensure students start in September with confidence and enthusiasm.



Student Groupings

Everyone at BFS is a member of a tutor group. Your child's tutor moves up the school with them each year and is the main point of contact for parents and carers. Students spend time with their tutor at the start of each day during Tutor Period and then attend lessons for most of their day in their tutor groups.

Year 7 tutor groups are not based on friendships and great care is taken in their construction to maximise academic progress for all. We believe very strongly that the chance to come to a new school is an opportunity to make many new friends as well as retain existing ones. Tutor groups are co-constructed with primary schools and balance students of different genders, backgrounds and abilities.

For lessons, students are taught in tutor groups for some subjects and mixed groups for others. This changes according to the curriculum requirements as students progress through the School.

Clubs and Activities

We run an extensive selection of clubs and activities at BFS. There are many opportunities to join in with sports, music, drama, nature club, reading, scrabble and many more.

Peripatetic music lessons are offered in school through our partnership with Bristol Beacon Musical Schools.

The Library is open after school to allow students to read or complete homework and our friendly librarians are on hand to help. Further information about extra-curricular activities is available on our website.



SEND and Wellbeing

SEND

The BFS SEND Curriculum Offer is designed to empower all students to be the best they can be. Balancing an academic curriculum with emotional support is vital and we pride ourselves on putting the needs of our students first, adjusting their curriculum where required.

All students at BFS receive high-quality teaching tailored to their individual needs and providing a wide range of differentiation. Much of our SEND offer is provided by Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP). Further details regarding this can be found on our website.

Students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those on the SEND register receive support additional to and different from other students. Interventions are implemented following SEND reviews as part of our Graduated Approach ('Assess, Plan, Do, Review' process). Students and parents are fully involved in this process and progress is monitored regularly.

SEND Curriculum Offer

Our SEND Curriculum Offer includes a wide range of support for all four broad areas of need:

- Cognition and learning
- Communication and interaction
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

Students are referred to the SEND Team by parents/carers, Year Leaders, tutors, teachers and support staff. Students are encouraged to see a member of the SEND Team if they are experiencing difficulties with their learning.

To speak with a member of the SEND Team, email sen@bristolfreeschool.org.uk.

The SEND Team

Mrs Jenkins - SENDCo

Ms Cook - Deputy SENDCo

Ms Vinyard - Assistant SENDCo & Exams Access

Arrangements Co-ordinator

Mrs Gardiner - SEMH Manager

We also have Teaching Assistants who work with students in lessons, small groups and 1:1.



Wellbeing

We are aware that some students can experience mental health issues during school, and we offer a range of support in this area. We use a referral process to identify need and follow up with appropriate support.

Students are referred to the SEMH Team (Social Emotional Mental Health) by parents/carers, Year Leaders, tutors, teachers and support staff. Students are encouraged to see a member of the SEMH Team if they are experiencing difficulties.

We work closely with outside agencies for the benefit of our young people and can refer students to organisations such as:

- School Counsellor
- Anna Freud Counselling
- CAMHS
- Off the Record



Home School Agreement and Online Safety



Home School Agreement

When your child joins BFS, we ask parents/carers to sign a Home School Agreement that outlines the role of home in supporting the work of the School. The Agreement can be viewed on our website.

Online Safety

The School communicates regularly about safeguarding and current news. Families should speak to their children about the various safety risks they may encounter through their use of IT and mobile devices.

Mobile devices have benefits but also have the potential to be very distracting and can present serious safeguarding risks. Schools are increasingly drawn into issues raised by social media and there is a limit to the action we can take beyond the school gate. If your child is experiencing issues online, please get in contact so we can direct you to the appropriate support.

Phone-Free School Policy

BFS has accepted the mounting evidence emerging over the last few years about the negative impact of smart device use on young people. Whilst we continue to teach about safe use and the positive aspects of technology, the School has adopted a phone-free approach during school hours and all students will secure their phones in lockable pouches during the day. The School believes this will allow students to be less distracted, more present at school and, ultimately, improve their learning. More details can be found on our website.



IT Arrangements

School Network

Students need a password and user ID to get on to the School's network.

User ID: Year of joining school (if student joins late, this will be the year their Year Group joined the School) followed by 'surname.initial'.

Example: 25bloggs.j

Password will be given at school.

Please note, BFS does not operate a 'Bring Your Own Device policy'. Students cannot connect their personal devices to the School's network. This is for safeguarding and to protect network security.



School Email

All students are given their own school-based email. Email addresses will normally be of the format:

Year of joining school (if student joins late, this will be the year their Year Group joined the School) followed by surname.initial@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

Example: 25bloggs.j@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

Password will be given at school.

MyChildAtSchool (MCAS)

All homework and independent learning is set on MyChildAtSchool (MCAS), which you can access on the internet from school or home, or via the MCAS app.

Details of your personal login credentials will be shared at the start of the school year.

Microsoft Office 365

To access Office365 resources, sign in using your school email and password at www.office.com.

The next screen is the School's access screen with school User ID already displayed. Enter your school password to complete login.

Once access is completed, you will find all the Office365 resources available to you.





Reporting

Year 7 to Year 9

HOW STUDENTS ARE ASSESSED

Teachers assess students' work continuously, at the end of units of work, as well as at the end of each year. The continuous assessment is often referred to as formative assessment, whereas assessment that takes place at the end of a unit of work is usually referred to as summative assessment.

CONTINUOUS (FORMATIVE) ASSESSMENT

The purpose of formative assessment is to monitor students' learning and provide ongoing feedback to staff and students. It is sometimes called Assessment for Learning. It helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, enables them to improve their self-regulatory skills so that they manage their education well, and provides information to staff about the areas students are struggling with so that sufficient support can be put in place.

Formative assessment can be teacher-led, peer or self-assessment. Formative assessments have low stakes and usually carry no grade.

Feedback from formative assessment may be in the form of marks, comments or discussion, and these may be communicated in writing or verbally.

END OF UNIT AND YEAR (SUMMATIVE) ASSESSMENT

In Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), we use Stage Ladders for end of year, summative assessment. In all subjects, this will consider the students learning throughout the year. In subjects where there is an end of year examination, or equivalent, we also use Stage Ladders to feedback on this.

Subject Leaders across the Russell Education Trust have worked collaboratively to draw up these Stage Ladders which set out clear descriptors for what students know and can do as their attainment improves in each subject. Some subjects may use these descriptions of learning during the year and some will assess units of work using marks out of a total.

There is one Stage Ladder per subject, although there are multiple strands within the Ladder for different skills, for example, in Modern Foreign Languages where students are assessed on their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

REPORTING PROGRESS

Progress towards end of year Stages are reported during term 3 and at the end of the academic year where a final, holistic Stage is agreed by the teacher. Parents will also receive one full written report and be able to attend a subject evening to discuss their child's progress.





Reporting

Year 7 to Year 9 Continued

EXPECTED PROGRESS

We would expect students to make one stage of progress per academic year.

This means that students will be progressing well if they move from Stage 2 on entry to Stage 3 at the end of Year 7, Stage 4 in Year 8 and Stage 5 at the end of Year 9. The attainment described in Stage 5 of the Ladder represents good progress for most students in Key Stage 3 and readiness to continue the subject to a good GCSE pass in Key Stage 4.

Stages describe attainment at higher levels than this (up to Stage 7) and many of our students will make more than one stage of progress in some years and move into Key Stage 4 having reached Stage 6 or 7. These students will be well placed to achieve very high grades in their GCSEs. Typical Stages that the majority of students will reach are summarised below.

Year 10 to Year 11

HOW STUDENTS ARE ASSESSED

Teachers assess students' work continuously, at the end of units of work and at key points during the year. In Year 10, students have a full, internal summative exam series in early May. Year 11 students undertake two sets of mock examinations in November and late February.

REPORTING PROGRESS

Progress towards end of year Key Stage 4 targets are reported from the summative assessments outlined above. These are sent to parents as interim reports. Parents will also receive one full written report and be able to attend a subject evening to discuss their child's progress.

Typical Progress Stages

Stage	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
7				
6				High
5			High	Typical
4		High	Typical	Support
3	High	Typical	Support	
2	Typical	Support		
1	Support			



Innovate Dining

Our food service is provided by Innovate who are well established at the School. BFS works in partnership with the dedicated on-site Innovate team to ensure a high-quality dining experience for our students. There are varied menus, packed with healthy ingredients, and lots of interesting new things to try.

Students can purchase food in the main Dining Hall and at the Outside Kiosk for 'Grab and Go' items.

WHAT IS ON THE MENU?

All dishes are prepared fresh on-site every day using quality, seasonal ingredients that are responsibly sourced. As well as ensuring the food on the plate is healthy, we want students to understand the importance of eating the right foods and help them with their food and nutrition journey. Here is a taste of what is available:

- A selection of 'Grab and Go' items including baguettes, paninis, burritos and salads.
- A variety of healthy main meals prepared fresh every day from carefully selected ingredients. The menu will follow a similar rotating weekly pattern, so students know what to expect such as Curry Thursdays and traditional fish and chips on Fridays.
- Vegetarian and vegan dishes.
- Themed days and Chef's Specials.
- A Street Vibes range - global street food that tours the world. From Korean fried chicken to Chinese bao buns to Greek souvlaki.
- A salad bar featuring homemade healthy salads such as pomegranate quinoa, roasted sweet potato and rocket, or chilli, orange and beetroot.

For more information and menus visit our website.

MEAL DEALS

All meal deals cost £2.85.

Choices are:

- Main meal with dessert or fruit.
- Hot or cold sub with cake or fruit.
- Blue Dot Meal - any four items displaying a blue dot sticker. Items include rolls, sandwiches, drinks, cakes, bakes and fruit.

FREE SCHOOL MEAL ALLOWANCE

£2.85 daily allowance covers the cost of all meal deals and can be used on any food items but excludes some drinks.

Once you have tried our service, let us know what you think. Email Innovate (hello@impactfood.co.uk) with feedback about your dining experience. We look forward to welcoming you!





School Payments and Pupil Premium

School Payments

BFS is an entirely cashless school. All payments for catering and other items, including trips, must be made using ParentPay. You will be provided with details of how to set up your ParentPay account when your child enrolls.

It is important that you create your account and keep it topped up with a cash balance as debt is not allowed. Students will not be able to buy food if there is no money on their account.

Important communications are also shared via ParentPay.

Pupil Premium

If your child is registered for Free School Meals, the School receives extra funding from the government called Pupil Premium. This is given to schools to support all students to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation.

It is provided for pupils who:

- Are currently registered for Free School Meals.
- Have been registered for Free School Meals at any point in the past 6 years.
- Are, or have been, in care.
- Have parents in the armed forces.

To find out if you are eligible to claim Free School Meals for your child, please use Bristol City Council's online checker. You will need to input your National Insurance number and date of birth. This is a quick online form that takes no more than five minutes to complete.

Free School Meals (FSM)

You can apply for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit - if your household income is less than £7,400 a year or £616.67 a month after tax
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (as long as you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

If your child received Free School Meals during primary school, you will need to reapply for secondary school as they will have finished their current phase of schooling at the end of Year 6.

As well as receiving Free School Meals, any child registered can access financial support for other resources and school activities, such as trips and music lessons. To apply, visit our website for the FSM application link.

We offer a range of residential and day trips. A schedule of residential trips is prepared each year to help families plan. If your child qualifies for Free School Meals, you can apply for a contribution towards the cost of some trips. Details of how this is accessed will be explained in each trip letter.



Parent Communication

Communications

Effective communication is critical for the smooth running of the School. We communicate in the following ways:

- Letters will be emailed and posted on the School website. Our website is a good source for all school information including letters sent, previous newsletters and curriculum information.
- ParentPay is used to send important school communications. It is also used to manage catering accounts and all other school payments. It is important that you activate your ParentPay account at the earliest opportunity so your child can use the on-site catering facilities and to ensure you receive important communications.
- MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) is the online platform teachers use to set homework and award House points. Parents/carers will be able to view these through a parent app, alongside any other announcements and detentions.
- Weekly newsletters are emailed to all parents/carers, giving updates on activity in the School and upcoming events. Students can access the newsletter via their MCAS account.
- Follow BFS (@BFS_Bristol) on Instagram for timely updates and insight into what is happening at school on a day-to-day basis.

Communication with Teachers

The easiest and quickest way for communication between parents/carers and tutors/Year Leaders is via email.

Email admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk and we will ensure your email is sent to the appropriate person and is followed up. Please allow 24 hours for a reply. If your issue is more complex, it may take longer as staff are working with students between 8.15am and 4pm.

Most contact with parents/carers will be made through tutors, via email or phone call. If you need to make an appointment to speak to staff, this is welcomed, however they are unable to see you on-site without a prearranged appointment.

Parents Evenings

Subject and Information Evenings provide an opportunity to speak directly with staff. We use a Parent Evening app for Subject Evenings which allows parents to organise their own appointment times with teachers.





Fundraising

Friends of BFS (FoBFS)

We are immensely grateful for all the support we receive through Friends of BFS (FoBFS) which is a charitable organisation comprising a group of active parents, carers and teachers who fundraise on behalf of the School. They are a huge asset to our wider school community, supporting many of our events and running their own social events and activities to raise money. The money raised is then spent on equipment and experiences for students across all year groups, which cannot easily be funded through the School budget.

Visit the School website to find out more and to sign up to *Easy Fundraising*, an initiative which donates to FoBFS every time you shop online at selected retailers.

BFS Fund

The School's recently launched BFS Fund provides extras that make all the difference to school life that we otherwise may not afford, such as extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Initiatives include:

- Organised sports provision at social times.
- Improvement of outdoor social spaces such as providing outdoor furniture and equipment.
- Grounds development projects such as sports spaces and outside environmental gardens.
- Collapsed curriculum days and visiting agencies.
- Special visitors, speakers and authors.
- Performing arts workshops and visiting theatre groups.
- Additional specialist arts, crafts and technology materials.
- Resources for extra-curricular clubs and activities such as Gardening Club.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) activities.

PARENT CONTRIBUTIONS

We suggest £10 a month as a voluntary contribution but if you would like to donate more (or less), we are very happy to receive any amount that parents can afford and think is appropriate. We are also very pleased to receive one-off donations. Any donation is appreciated and will make a difference.

HOW TO DONATE

Please donate via JustGiving by scanning the QR code below. We can then claim Gift Aid on most of the donations which will boost the value.

By donating to the School's BFS Fund and/or supporting FoBFS, you help us achieve numerous improvements and initiatives that would not otherwise be possible. Thank you in advance for your commitment to our school community. Together we can ensure students receive the best opportunities to thrive.





Attendance Policy

Attendance

Attendance matters here at BFS. We encourage our students to be ambitious individuals, and this forms a part of our core values.

Good attendance at school is key to attainment and therefore enables students to achieve at their highest possible level. Evidence shows a link between missing school and performance at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE).

Once a student has a percentage of absences above the government threshold within an academic year, they will be classified as persistently absent. The current 'Persistent Absence' threshold according to Government guidelines is 10% of the school year.

Evidence shows that, in general, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the Key Stage, the lower the level of attainment at the end of Year 11. Specifically, students with no absences are 2.8 times more likely to succeed by achieving five or more good passes at GCSE, including Maths and English (Department for Education).

As parents and carers, we ask you to work with us to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality. We ask all students to be on-site by 8.25am ready to be in their Tutor Period at 8.30am.

BFS sets targets of 96% and above as good attendance. All students and families with attendance less than this will receive appropriate support and intervention. In extreme cases, the School will work with the Education Welfare Service and will consider Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecution should they be required.

The BFS Attendance Policy can be viewed on our website.

Student Illness

In the case of illness, please report your child's absence on the morning of **each and every day** via the Studybugs app. Alternatively, you can telephone the Student Absence Line on 0117 959 7200 (option 1). In cases where there are prolonged instances of illness or repeated periods of illness, we will require medical evidence to authorise absence.



Medical Appointments

Please try to make medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, only remove the child from school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Please try to inform the School of the appointment 24 hours in advance by emailing admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk.

Please provide the School with copies of any medical evidence such as appointment cards, prescriptions, or medication packets so that medical absences can be authorised. If you do not, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Medical absences will not be authorised for a full day unless they relate to hospital or specialist appointments, and we must receive a copy of the appointment letter as evidence.



Attendance Policy

Holidays and Other Absences

We are unable to authorise absence from school except in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, we would ask you to avoid taking holidays during term time.

If absences are unavoidable or due to family circumstances such as funerals, please contact the office for an Absence Request Form and email the form to admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk. It is highly unlikely that term time holidays will be authorised, and absences of four or more days will often result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution if the Local Authority deems it appropriate.

Religious Observance

We will authorise absence for legitimate religious observance for one day per observance. They will be authorised on dates set by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Any additional days taken will be classed as unauthorised and may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice.



Penalties and Prosecutions

BFS and Bristol City Council work together to issue warnings and Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) for students with high levels of absence.

From September 2024, the first Fixed Penalty Notice issued to a parent is a fine up to £160. It is £80 if paid within the first 21 days and £160 if paid 22-28 days past the date of issue. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will instigate Court proceedings and the outcome of a prosecution could be up to £2,500 per parent/adult or 3 months' imprisonment.

If a second Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to a parent within a 3-year rolling period, this will be £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will instigate Court proceedings and the outcome of a prosecution could be up to £2,500 per parent/adult or 3 months' imprisonment.

A third penalty notice within a rolling 3-year period cannot be issued so action such as legal intervention and prosecution will be taken.

Regular Non-Attendance

Please contact us at the earliest possible opportunity if you require any support with your child's attendance. We have interventions on offer for support and we will also be able to signpost external support services.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in any school and is central to all aspects of school life at BFS. The School's safeguarding policies and procedures can be found on our website.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone and all BFS staff are regularly trained on the various elements of safeguarding and child protection.

All students are regularly reminded of what to do and who to speak to if they are worried or have any concerns. The School has robust procedures for behaviour and anti-bullying which work alongside safeguarding to ensure the smooth and safe running of the School.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is our Deputy Head, Mr East.

For low level pastoral concerns or issues, families should contact their child's tutor in the normal way. If there are any safeguarding concerns, then families should contact the Safeguarding Team through the School's admin office. The School also has an anonymous email address for students or families to use should they find this an easier method of communication:
tellsomeone@bristolfreeschool.org.uk.

Anti-Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated at BFS. We have an anti-bullying policy and work hard to ensure everyone feels safe and valued in our school. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time.

Bullying could be:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal - name calling or racist, homophobic or sexist remarks.
- Indirect - spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups.

- Cyber bullying - defamatory or threatening behaviour by email, mobile phone or social media.

We use a restorative approach to improve relationships after any incidents of unkindness or bullying. Tutors and pastoral support staff work with anyone involved in an incident of bullying to change behaviour, give the opportunity to apologise and explain, and agree actions to prevent it happening again. The School will also make use of its behaviour procedures and sanction system as appropriate.

We will inform parents/carers of any incidents where students participate in unkind behaviour or bullying. By working together, we can help young people develop healthy, respectful and tolerant relationships with their peers. If your child is being bullied, knows somebody who is being bullied, or is unhappy about the way another student or students are treating them, please encourage them to tell someone as soon as possible.

If someone makes a racist, disablist, sexist or homophobic comment, please report it to a member of staff as soon as possible. We are committed to equal opportunities at BFS. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect for who they are. Racism, discrimination or prejudicial behaviour will not be accepted or overlooked.

Please help to keep BFS fair by:

- Speaking to and about everyone with respect.
- Reporting any disrespectful comments to a member of staff.



The School Day

The school day begins with a 30-minute Tutor Period followed by six 50-minute lessons. Tutor Period starts at 8.30am and students should arrive at school no later than 8.25am. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have separate break and lunchtimes. Whilst lessons end at 3pm, we expect students to take advantage of the many extra-curricular activities on offer.

The School Day	KS3 and Y12
Tutor period <i>Warning bell at 8.25</i>	8:30 - 9:00
Period 1	9:00 - 9:50
Break KS3 and Y12	9:50 - 10:10
Period 2	10:10 - 11:00
Period 3	11:00 - 11:50
Lunch KS3 and Y12	11:50 - 12:30
Period 4b	12:30 - 1:20
Period 5	1:20 - 2:10
Period 6	2:10 - 3:00

The School Day	KS4 and Y13
Tutor period <i>Warning bell at 8.25</i>	8:30 - 9:00
Period 1	9:00 - 9:50
Period 2	9:50 - 10:40
Break KS4 and Y13	10:40 - 11:00
Period 3	11:00 - 11:50
Period 4a	11:50 - 12:40
Lunch KS4 and Y13	12:40 - 1:20
Period 5	1:20 - 2:10
Period 6	2:10 - 3:00



Term Dates 2025-2026

Sep-25							Oct-25							Nov-25							Dec-25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				
Jan-26							Feb-26							Mar-26							Apr-26						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4							1							1			1	2	3	4	5
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
														30	31												
May-26							Jun-26							Jul-26							Aug-26						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
																					31						



Inset Day



Red Week



Holiday



Year 7 and Year 12 Only - Induction Day



Blue Week



Half Day



RUSSELL EDUCATION TRUST