

Brakenhale School Parent News

8th September 2017



Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the first parent news of this academic year! What a fantastic first week back we have had. Our new Year 7s arrived on Tuesday morning looking incredibly smart, a little bit nervous but clearly very excited to be starting at Brakenhale. They have made such a positive impression all week with their can-do attitude and their real desire to do well. Well done Year 7! Years 8 to 13 have also made an impressive start and have really shown what great ambassadors they are for the school. They have settled extremely well into their new year groups and tutor bases and seem to have got the hang of their new timetables immediately. Although we are only in the first week back we have already had outside visitors in to support the learning of students. The Sixth Form had a three hour session on Wednesday with a company who dedicate their work to improving the study skills of Post 16 students. Feedback was extremely positive and we are really lucky to be a trial school for this project.

I spoke to all students across all year groups in 6 assemblies on Tuesday morning to make sure that everyone was clear on the very high expectations that we have of them. We have introduced some new 'non-negotiables' this year, which the students have all immediately taken on board. I want to make sure that I share these with you too. The School Improvement Plan will be sent home in the next couple of weeks and all the changes will be documented in here, however, the headlines are as follows:

- All students to stand behind their chairs in silence at the start and end of every lesson – this is to ensure that all learning begins in a calm and orderly manner and that when students leave the classroom they are settled and ready to move onto their next lesson. Students have reported to me this week that this is making a difference.
- The behaviour for learning code has been amended to allow just one warning for any type of low-level disruption before a consequence is given – disrupting the learning of others will simply not be tolerated.
- All classes will now have seating plans arranged in a boy/girl/boy/girl formation; evidence suggests, along with our own trials last academic year, that this leads to greater progress.

I also would like to highlight to you two events that we have coming up that you are very warmly invited to. Firstly, at 6pm on Monday September 25th Dean Beadle, a nationally renowned, highly engaging speaker on autism, will be presenting at the school - more details to follow. Secondly, on October 3rd we will host our first PTA meeting of the academic year and we will be combining this with a cheese and wine reception. We would love to see you there.

Best wishes

Jane Coley, Headteacher



What's on next week

Tuesday 12 th September	Duke of Edinburgh Meeting – 6-6.30pm
Wednesday 13 th September	Year 11 Geography Fieldtrip Year 8 Transition and Information Evening – 6-7pm
Thursday 14 th September	Rome Trip Information Meeting – 6-7pm

GCE and GCSE Results

Over the summer we shared some excellent news regarding our A-Level results.

The continued resurgence of Brakenhale School has been confirmed by the most recent A-Level and BTEC results. In every single measure there has been an increase in attainment and progress on previous years.

Key GCE results

- At A*-B it was at 59% in 2017 compared to 43% in 2015 and 53% in 2016 including BTEC equivalents. A 16% increase in the last two years.
- At A*-C it was at 87% in 2017 compared to 60% in 2015 and 73% in 2016 including BTEC equivalents. A 27% increase.
- The A*-E pass rate including equivalents is 100% for the second year in succession which is particularly satisfying.

It is very rewarding to see our students continuing to do so well, and all the hard work of students, staff and parents paying off. We have been delighted with the way the new systems and structures we have implemented in the last two years have paid off. The Sixth Form team and the student body have responded so positively to our very high expectations and these results bear testimony to this. On results day our sixth form team continue to provide excellent support for students as they make decisions about their next steps.

These results compare incredibly well to other local schools. In fact our students gained the highest A*-C score across all the local authority state schools and we were second in the authority for our A*-B score.

A link to the information released by the local press can be found below:

<http://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/bracknell-level-results-2017-find-13480458>

Key GCSE results

We were also delighted to report our 2017 GCSE results which continue to show clear evidence of the value that we are adding to the educational outcomes of our students and improvements across all measures.

Due to the changing nature of qualifications no school is able to publish a progress figure until the Department of Education releases this in December. However we are able to calculate our Attainment 8 grade which is above the national benchmark of a C or a 4 for Maths and English meaning that on average across all subjects our students achieved the national benchmark of a C/4.

We have had further success with our 4 plus in English and Maths, with the English results being 12% higher than last year. This is a significant achievement against a backdrop of huge changes to GCSEs. Furthermore there have been some outstanding achievements across a range of subjects, as outlined to the right.

Subject	% A*-C
Music	96
PE	92
Catering	92
Further Maths	89
ICT	79
Dance	75
Graphics	75
Computer Science	71
Geography	70

In addition there have been some exceptional individual student outcomes highlighting the impact of our high expectations and challenge agenda. We are absolutely delighted that hard work, dedication and fantastic teaching has enabled our students to achieve the very best grades across the board. The students below have achieved 5 or more A and A* grades or the new equivalency (7-9), never before have so many students achieved so many top grades.

Student	A*/A Achieved		Student	A*/A Achieved
Jordan Penn	10		Robbie Harrison	6
Abitha Mahabakkalage	8		Chantelle Fannan	6
Jamie Brazier	8		Ewan Gennery	5
Heidi Cracknell	9		Andi Kelly	5
Benjamin Thomas	8		Emily Hughes	5
Ella-Rose Brigden	9		Viktoria Petrova	5
Freya Brodrick	7		Jodie Leivers	5
James Walford	7			

Our GCSE results along with our A Level results show clearly the rapid progress that Brakenhale continues to make. We would like to congratulate all our students on their well-deserved success and thank the teaching staff and of course the parents who have guided and supported them.

Ms Coley, Headteacher

PTA Stall at the Bracknell Lions Bracknell Show

Although the summer almost seems such a long time ago now, the PTA hosted a stall at the Bracknell Lions Bracknell Show on the first weekend of the summer holidays. Unfortunately it was probably one of the wettest weekends of the whole year so our Bat-a-Rat and Bottle Hoopla stall didn't do as well as previous years but we would like to thank all those who came to help on the day.



A very warm welcome to our school PTA



All parents and members of the school community can get involved in the PTA. Even if they only have a small amount of time available, all parents are automatically members when their children join our school.

The PTA exists to provide closer links between home and school. It is a fun way to bring staff, parents and students together in support of a common goal. We run events such as School Discos, a Christmas Market, Summer Fair stall, Bingo Evening and Race Night, and support school events and evenings with refreshments.

We meet on a Tuesday once every half term from 7.00 pm. If you think this is something you would like to know more about, please come along to our next meeting. Alternatively, if you would like further information, please contact the school.

Our first meeting this year will include a **CHEESE & WINE EVENING**, including light refreshments, on **Tuesday 3rd October 2017**

This will be a chance to see how the PTA runs, meet our Senior Leadership Team, key people in the PTA and other parents.



Year 12 – Stepping Up

On Wednesday, all of our new Year 12 students attended a workshop entitled “Stepping Up”. This workshop, delivered by ‘Made Training’, was positioned at the very beginning of the Sixth Form experience and focused on some of the key fundamental skills the students will need, to make the successful transition from Key Stage 4 to Post 16 studies. These skills included reading quickly, drafting and rethinking ideas, time management and analytical thinking. The students found the work on effective note taking and the Cornell system particularly useful. It was both an informative and engaging workshop.

It was wonderful to see the feedback sheets filled in so positively with well over 90% of the 70 students in attendance confirming they would use the ideas and strategies from the day and that they found the day useful. We all hope this bodes well for the next two years of hard focused yet successful study!



Mr Hartley, Deputy Headteacher

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is both a legal requirement and crucial to a student's success - there is a clear link between a high rate of attendance and high achievement. I am sure that you are already aware of the 95% attendance target that we are working towards. If students are not in lessons they cannot learn! Every lesson really does count! Statistics show missing 8.5 days or 5% of school in any school year can reduce the success level of a student by 1 GCSE grade.

With this in mind it, I would like to reiterate the expectations that we have with regards to attendance:

- Students are expected to be in school and in registration or assembly at 8:35am.
- Should your child be unwell please call the attendance line on 01344 465050 or email attendance@brakenhale.co.uk to inform us of the illness and the expected date of return.
- Should you need to arrange a medical or dental appointment can I encourage you where possible to arrange these after 1:30pm as this will reduce the disruption to your child's learning (they will only miss one lesson).

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss any issues that may be preventing regular attendance or causing lateness, please do not hesitate to contact me.

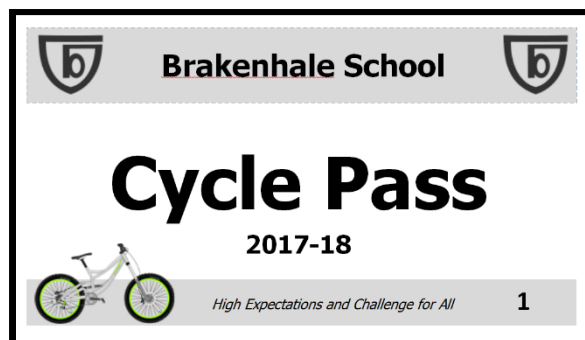
Mrs Evans, Attendance Officer



Cycling to School

Can we please remind parents that to cycle or scooter to school students need a permit and helmet.

We have had a very good start to the compulsory helmet scheme, can parents please keep reinforcing the message. Remind students that the helmet must be worn securely and has to be put on before they leave the bike area at the end of the school day.



Cycle safety

Cycling needs to be encouraged – it's green, healthy and fun and it helps children to become independent.

However, in 2014, 85 cyclists aged 8-11 were killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads, so it's vital that 8-11 year olds learn how to stay safe on a bike.

Helping your child stay safe

- Ask your school or Local Authority about cycle training in your area. Your child shouldn't cycle on roads until they have been trained.
- Check your child's bike to see if it's roadworthy; look at brakes, tyres and lights/reflectors (when riding at dusk or at night you must have white front lights and red back lights and reflector)
- Make sure the bike is the right size for your child
- When out driving, teach your child about roundabouts, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings
- Find out where local cycle paths and lanes are
- Make sure your child wears a helmet which fits and is worn correctly, it should not be pushed too far back on the head
- Ensure your child wears some high-visibility clothing when cycling
- When out and about with your child look at cyclists and talk about how easy they are to see

Remember that if you cycle yourself you should set a good example!

The basics of cycling safety

These are all covered in detail in the Tales of the Road booklet which your child should have a copy of.

- Look behind before you turn, overtake or stop
- Use arm signals before you turn right or left
- Obey traffic lights and road signs
- Do not ride on the pavement unless there is a sign saying that you can
- On busy or narrow roads do not cycle next to another person
- When overtaking parked cars, watch out for car doors opening suddenly
- Do not listen to a personal stereo while cycling

These are just some of the rules children who ride on roads should know. Young cyclists need to learn what road signs mean, how to deal with roundabouts and understand when to give way. If you have time, read through the Tales of the Road booklet with your child.

Find out if **cycle training** is available at your child's school – this is the best way to learn the skills and knowledge needed to stay safe on the road. You can learn more about cycle training in your area at www.bikeability.org.uk - [new window](#) or contact your local Road Safety Officer through the Local Authority.

Please be aware that the police have alerted us to local cycle thefts:

Cycle Thefts in Bracknell area

This is a message sent via Thames Valley Alert. This information has been sent on behalf of Thames Valley Police

(Please do not reply or forward this email directly; please use the Reply, Share buttons at the bottom of this message)

Message sent by

Jon Morris (Police, Administrator, Bracknell)

There have been several reported thefts of cycles from across bracknell during the last week, with the thieves targeting bike shelters at the Leisure Centre, local supermarkets and at private apartment blocks. CCTV recordings and witness accounts confirm that the thieves are equipped with bolt croppers that they use to cut the cycle lock chains. Thefts have occurred in broad daylight in reasonably busy areas as well as in the middle of the night. The thieves are not fussy with how expensive the bike is, its colour or whether its a gents or ladies model, they appear to simply attack bikesthat were only secured with a weak lock or chain.

To prevent your bike been targeted,

- Secure it to a solid post with a decent cycle lock, preferably a solid "D" lock plus a robust cable threaded through both wheels.
- Remove quick release front wheel and padlock to the frame (thieves want to be able to make a quick get away rather than having to rebuild a bike before they can ride off)
- Remove the saddle if it is quick release.
- Have your bike's details registered.

Young Interpreters Club

We are looking for young people to join our Young Interpreters Club on Thursdays!

We also have the Culture Club on Fridays and an EAL (English as an Additional Language) Homework Club on Mondays and other days if needed.

All clubs run after school between 3.05pm and 4.05pm in the LRC/Connection room.

Miss Cmok, EAL Coordinator



PE News

Welcome back

Here is the extra-curricular timetable for this term. Please can I remind students that they do not need to sign up to a club they just need to turn up! Clubs will start at 3.10 and will finish between 4.15 and 4.30.

Fixtures are coming in thick and fast so make sure you are at clubs to be selected to represent the school.

Miss L Willimott, Lead Coordinator of Girls PE and Teacher in Charge of Health and Social Care

The poster is titled 'PE EXTRA CURRICULAR' in large, stylized red letters. Below the title is a box for 'MONDAYS - STAFF MEETINGS'. The main content is organized by day:

- TUESDAY:** CROSS COUNTRY/FITNESS- ALL YEARS - EJA; RUGBY - YEARS 9+10 - JBO+MKI; NETBALL - ALL YEARS - LWI +LRU + THA. Images show netball and cross-country runners.
- WEDNESDAY:** BADMINTON - ALL YEARS - LRU; FOOTBALL (INVITE ONLY YEAR 10+11) - WYE +EJA. Images show badminton and football.
- THURSDAY:** TRAMPOLINING -ALL YEARS- JBO + LWI; RUGBY - YEAR 7 + 8 - RBE + WYE. Images show trampolining and rugby.
- FRIDAY:** GCSE REVISION; BTEC CATCH UP; YEAR 10 +11. A word cloud includes terms like 'support', 'grammar', 'notetaking', 'exams', 'revisio', 'guidance', 'essay', 'skil', 'plannin', 'help', 'an', 'academic', 'to describe'.

At the bottom, there is a Twitter logo and the handle '@BRAKENHALEPE'.

Future Diary Dates

Monday 18 th September	Year 13 UCAS Evening – 6-7pm
	Year 9 Parents' Information Evening – 6-6.45pm
Thursday 21 st September	Early Close for students at 1.05pm
	Year 6 Open Evening – 6-8.30pm
Friday 22 nd September	Late School Start – 9.40am for students
Monday 25 th September	Autism Presentation for Parents – 6-7pm
25 th to 30 th September	Sixth Form Walking Talking Mocks

Term Dates

AUTUMN TERM 2017

Inset Days: Friday 1st and Monday 4th September
Inset Days: Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th December

Term dates for students:

Tuesday 5th September – Friday 15th December 2017

Autumn Half Term – Monday 23rd to Friday 27th October

Christmas Holiday for students – Monday 18th December to Tuesday 2nd January 2018

SPRING TERM 2018

Term dates for students:

Wednesday 3rd January – Thursday 29th March

Spring Half Term – Monday 12th to Friday 16th February

Easter Holiday – Friday 30th March to Friday 13th April

SUMMER TERM 2018

Term dates for students:

Monday 16th April – Friday 20th July

Inset Day: Monday 23rd July

Summer Half Term - Monday 28th May to Friday 1st June

Summer Holiday for students – Monday 23rd July to (date to be confirmed)

Bracknell Forest term dates can be found on their website:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schooltermandholidaydates>

#challengeforall

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High Expectations and Challenge for All