

JHY/SHY

15th December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

As the end of term is in sight, I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on the strategic developments and progress within the school.

Developments

Our new toilets which were open for all students to use after October Half Term have been very well received. All students were informed of our expectations for their use, and the new layout has provided students with easy and speedy access which ensures they feel more comfortable.

Plans are underway to develop an all-weather sports pitch later this academic year, which will provide fantastic opportunities for our students to enjoy outdoor activities throughout the seasons. This is in the preliminary stages, and I will be in touch to update you when we know more.

October Half Term proposal

I wrote to you back in November to seek your views on the proposal to move to a 2-week October Half Term in the new academic year 2026-2027. Parents provided feedback, with over 70% of parents/carers agreeing with the proposal.

After careful review from the school, Governors and Trustees, it has been agreed that we will move to a 2-week October Half Term in 2026.

Benefits of a Two-Week October Half Term;

The move to a two-week break offers a number of important benefits, including:

- **Improved wellbeing:** A longer break in the autumn term allows students and staff to rest and recharge, helping to reduce stress and fatigue.
- **Better attendance:** Evidence suggests that a longer half-term can lead to improved attendance, as students and staff return to school more refreshed.
- **Enhanced learning:** Well-rested students are better able to focus, engage, and achieve their best in lessons.
- **Family time:** The extended break provides more opportunity for quality family time and activities.
- **Flexibility for travel:** Families can benefit from greater flexibility and potentially lower travel costs by avoiding peak holiday periods.



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To ensure that the total number of school days remains the same, we will be:

- Adding two days onto the summer term, which is likely to run until Friday 23rd July 2027 instead of Wednesday 21st July 2027, which will still ensure a lengthy summer break.
- Pooling three INSET (staff training) days into the October half term break

This means your child's overall learning time will not be reduced, and the change will not affect the curriculum.

Next Steps

- The two-week October half term will be introduced from the start of the 2026-27 academic year. It will run from Friday 16th October 2026 at 2.55pm 2026.
- We will publish exact term dates for the rest of 2026-27 on our website and in our communications as soon as they are finalised.

Thank you again for your engagement and support as we continue to improve our school community.

Values

I have recently presented our whole school Values in assemblies to all year groups. The values (detailed below) originated from a student questionnaire on which we asked our student body 'What would you like our school to look and feel like?'. We then asked the same of our staff body and crystalised this information into our three values.

We have added these values to our reward system and we will now begin developing these within our PSHE programme and whole school curriculum.

Ambition

We strive to pursue the best possible outcomes regardless of any barrier. We collaborate and aspire to be the best possible version of 'ourselves'.

Respect

Through our actions we treat everyone and everything in our school community, with fairness, understanding and care.

Kindness

We actively consider the feelings and thoughts of others. We intentionally conduct ourselves in a way which contributes to happiness in our school.

Assessment

We Launched our new school-wide assessment model which is designed to provide a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of your child's academic journey.

This new and proven assessment model will enable you as parents/carers to be better informed regarding your child's Current Working at Grade as well as the journey they are on ready for their KS4 out comes.

Please review the helpful guide on our website for more information.
<https://www.tbcsbasingstoke.org/progress-reports>

Enrichment

We have now completed the auditions for our production of Mary Poppins. The cast which comprises of 35 students from across the school, are busy rehearsing. They are complimented by 15 students in the design and stage crew. We will update all parents/carers ready for the ticket release date.

Staff and students enjoyed a recent theatre trip to see the Lion King. There were 6 students from across the year 8 who attended the amazing production in London. There was also a Drama trip whereby 18 students from across year 10 and 11 GCSE Drama attended.

We currently offer 33 after school clubs across the school week and 30 revision sessions for yr 11. The after-school clubs are run by staff to provide additional opportunities for students to engage with their friends and develop their interests and hobbies. Please do review the extra-curricular offer on our website.

Recruitment

We will be saying goodbye to some of our teaching staff this term and I would like to take the opportunity to thank them for their commitment and efforts with our students. Mrs Pearce, Mr Bartel and Miss Shaw who will be leaving at the end of the term.

The role of Head of Year is essential in supporting the progress for our students and as such Mr Boateng (Deputy Headteacher) will be taking over the role of Head of Year 10 in the short term.

I am pleased to say that we have successfully recruited more new staff for January including an additional English teacher as well as a new Head of Computing. These appointments reflect the high standards and ambitions we have for high quality Teaching and Learning.

Year 7 Tutor Evening feedback

We welcomed our year 7 parents to their first 'meet the tutor' event' where staff provided feedback to parents/carer on the progress their child has made since joining us. We welcome the feedback we receive at these events which enables us to refine our working practices.

How useful did you find the meet the tutor evening? – **96%** replied useful / very useful

How do you feel your child has settled into the Blue Coat School – **94%** replied well / very well

If your child has been given additional support, how would you rate this – **92%** replied good / very good

How would you rate communication between school and home - **76%** replied good / very good

This is an excellent reflection of the work we have undertaken to support students in their journey into secondary school life. There are some developments needed in our school-home communication and we will be reviewing your comments to identify specific areas to improve.

End of / start of term arrangements

A reminder that the last day of the Autumn Term for students will be Friday 19th December, all students will be dismissed from school at 1.30pm.

As per our school calendar Monday 5th January is a school INSET day and as such no students are expected to attend school on this day.

The start of the new term for all students will be for 8.40am on Tuesday 6th January.

Lastly, I would like to wish you a restful holiday.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Halsey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right above the letters.

Miss J Halsey
Headteacher