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Halfway There!

It is officially the halfway point of the academic year for staff and students in Blacon High School.

This year marked the second of our years in our stunning new state-of-the-art building, and it couldn't have gone any better.

So far, we have welcomed two new cohorts of Year 7s and said goodbye to one cohort of Year 11s.

We also opened our amazing 3g pitch this year; this has attracted students and members of the community to take advantage of our facilities outside of school hours.

In addition, we now play host to many other sporting and extra-curricular clubs after school run by staff at Blacon High and outside providers; most recently, the extremely popular Blacon Boxing Club.

In terms of everyday life at school, we have been continuing to work towards

excellent outcomes for all students. Our Year 11s have been a credit to the school due to their conduct and dedication to mock exams and coursework for their subjects.

As the mornings get lighter, more and more Year 11 students are 'catching the worm' and attending earlybird revision sessions before school. Period 6 continues to be a key contribution to students' revision, especially with the added incentive of our Prom Pass where students earn money off their prom ticket for attending Period 6.

Our PTA has continued to drive fundraising for the school, with activities and events raising money to support trips and rewards, most recently the aforementioned Prom Pass system.

Read on to find out more...



Mrs Yates' Comments

It has been yet another successful half-term at Blacon High School. I am continually impressed by how our students are constantly striving to reach their goals, whether that be our KS3 students in their BAS (Blacon Assessment Steps) or our Year 11s for their GCSEs.

Whilst the hard work never stops, we always find time to celebrate achievements and to reward outstanding contributions.

Well Done to students on another amazing half-term!



Year 7 Review

As the halfway mark approaches for staff and students, so does the mark for the halfway point of our Year 7 cohort's first year at high school.

It feels as if they have always been part of us, but it wasn't that long ago that our brand new students were sat in the hall on their first day, waiting to see what Blacon High would have in store for them. We asked some students to review their year so far, and it's clear that they haven't been disappointed! Read on to find out what life is like as a Year 7 student...

Leah Fairbrother's Year 7 Memories

On the first day of high school, I felt very scared and nervous. I kept saying, 'I don't want to go, I don't want to go!' all morning at home.

Eventually of course, I did go. And...I'm so glad! I met lots of new friends and even met some people from my first primary school (I went to two) who I hadn't seen in a very long time.

The one thing I wasn't looking forward to was meeting teachers (I thought they'd be scary) and having to do lots of tests. The teachers are lovely and we are always told about tests in advance so we can revise for them.

In Year 8, I want to continue getting good scores and work towards my ultimate goal



Keisha Williams' Year 7 Memories

I was so glad that I came to Transition Day because, despite my nerves on the very first day of high school, I was reunited with someone I met when I was still in Year 6 but visited Blacon High for the day.

My first two lessons of high school were English and History. When I moved here, I thought I would be in the lowest set for everything. I've always thought I was bad at English, Maths, Science...you name it. But I'm not! I'm in top set for most things (especially PE—my favourite!)

I have got involved in the Netball Club and we have taken part in lots of competitions. I was really quiet in the first few weeks of school but the best thing is that I am really starting to come out of my shell; I have settled in perfectly and made many new

A Place for Quiet (and Reading!)

Blacon High School is constantly striving to be as inclusive as possible. Whilst we want the same successful outcomes for all students, we know that the route to outstanding isn't the same for everybody.

Over the years, staff have developed an understanding of how different students work and learn, and we know that school life needs to be as tailored and personalised as possible for each and every one of us if we are all to reach the same goal.

Part of this big piece of work is the work of Mr Carr who oversees access arrangements for exams and ensures that all students can complete their lessons and exams successfully.

For example, some students work in smaller rooms for their exams to aid with confidence, and some have use of laptops to help with their writing. This all goes towards securing the best outcomes for our Year 11 cohort who deserve the very best.

In light of this, Mr Carr arranged for one of the classrooms in school to be transformed into a tranquil haven for studying.

The Quiet Room features a beautiful woodland motif, mood lighting and even a Heart Maths machine which measures heart activity and helps students control their stress levels.

Students who have tested out the Quiet Room so far have been really pleased with the outcome and it is now available for the whole school to use to support their learning.

We spoke to some students who said, 'The Quiet Room is a great asset to school. So far, we have used it to study and revise in a quiet and productive environment, and other students have used it to help manage any worries that they have. So far, only some of us have been in the Sanctuary to test out the facilities, but we are now encouraging others to join in too!'

The English Department held the annual book fair in the room, giving students who hadn't yet been in the chance to see just how many amazing features it has to offer.

Head of English, Mrs Appleby said, 'In English we are always trying to promote wider reading outside of lessons. Of course, we have the fabulous Learning Resource Centre, but we always like to see new books and give students the opportunity to purchase and keep them. The Book Fair in the Quiet Room has supported reading in lessons too as students are given the opportunity to read for the first five minutes of every English lessons and in Library lessons too.'

Mr Carr and the Sanctuary staff will now be rolling the facility out to the whole school and we are 'quietly confident' it will be a huge success!



Holocaust Memorial

On the 23rd January 20 Year 9 pupils attended Holocaust memorial day at Chester Cathedral.

The day involved listening to the story of a Holocaust survivor called Joanna Miller from Germany. As a child she had lost her father and grandparents who were killed in Auschwitz. Her mother had passed away from Tuberculosis due to the conditions in Tezemin Concentration camp. It was extremely moving listening to this incredible lady, and it really brought the horrors of Nazi Germany home as students could see the effects of the Holocaust in front of their eyes.



Despite the difficult subject matter, this was a fantastic opportunity for students to listen to Joanna's story as they are currently studying life in Nazi Germany. After this talk, students were split into different groups to complete reflective workshops. These workshops involved reflective work based on the power of words and forgiveness; something that is, of course, important to all of us.



Well Done to the students involved in this trip; you were a credit to the school.

Super Scientists

Earlier this month, we had an introduction to the amazing world of policing and forensics.

Year 10 Science Crest Award Students took a day out from usual learning to find out all about how the police use science and technology to solve difficult crimes.

To begin with, we were taught about what policing students have to learn to take on this difficult job. It sounded like hard work but several of us were interesting in going into this line of work, so it was really useful to find out more!

We then looked at a crime scene in a house and provided theories as to what might have happened to the victim. Linking to this, we played a game where we distributed different emergency services depending on priority and type of need.



In addition, we found out how to collect evidence without contaminating it, read witness reports without being biased and even made keyrings of our own fingerprints.

My favourite part of the day was the 'murder' scene—it felt so realistic and I got really involved in trying to figure out exactly what had happened.

Thank you to the Science Department for organising this brilliant trip!

by Gabby Porter, Year 10

Sports Successes

As always, the PE Department have been extremely busy inside and outside of school. Read on to find out about the various successes achieved by our incredible sporting students...

Firstly, congratulations to the Year 8 Boys Team for Athletics: they are officially Chester and District Champions! These students will go on to represent Chester Schools in the County Finals; this is a first for Blacon High School in District Athletics.

Mr Cairns (Head of PE) said, 'In my twelve years of teaching we have never come close to the top 3 teams in Athletics but the PE Team and I were so pleased to announce that the boys were winners. The girls team finished sixth and had many pleasing track and field performances—this is an outstanding achievement for all students involved. Not only this, but Year 9 and 10 Sports Leaders were amazing ambassadors for the school. Well Done to all!'



On the pitch, the Year 8 Boys Football Team marched into the Quarter Final of Schools Football Small Schools Cup earlier in the month, beating Walton Priory in a thriller match.

After drawing 4-4 after extra time (featuring an incredible hattrick from Leo Evans and a great goal from Jayden Stark-Rigby) we won 4-2 on penalties thanks to Conah Ward O'Neill saving two spot kicks.

Football has really been the centre of sporting attention at school with our Year 11 Boys Team beating the Catholic High School 2-0 in a competitive friendly game with both teams having chances to score. Bradley Broadbent scored a stunning free kick during the first half and an own goal from a corner during the second half sealed the win for our boys.

Great work, Year 11—you are continuing to be excellent sporting role models for your younger peers.

Don't forget to keep up-to-date with all of our sporting achievements on @BlaconPE on Twitter!



Lovely Lunches

Whilst we place the utmost importance on lessons and after-school revision/clubs, no-one at school can deny that one of there is one part of the day that we all love: lunchtime!

We are extremely fortunate to have a group of kitchen staff who are bucking the trend of 'typical' school dinners, and even Jamie Oliver himself would be proud.

Head of the kitchen, Kelly Broadbent, cooks up a storm every day and provides an array of stunning, healthy meals. There is the everyday option of salad, sandwiches and jacket potatoes for creatures of habit, but for those who love to experiment with their choice of cuisine there are always a range of options to tantalise their tastebuds.

From traditional cottage pie with vegetables to the extremely popular 'Nandos Day' (fresh chicken, spicy wedges and corn on the cob!) there is something for everyone!

£1.80 for a meal
£2.40 for a meal and fizzy drink
£2.40 for a meal, cake and a small carton
£2.40 for a meal, fruit and a small carton



Knife Crime Week

Operation Sceptre took place between 12th and 18th February, and Cheshire Police are encouraging the community to support this national initiative to reduce knife crime and the harm it causes.

Our police officer, Sally Malone, has been informing students during tutor time of the dangers of carrying knives in public. Students learned that you can be arrested if you are caught with a knife and Sally has been encouraging everyone to think about the consequences and ensure that staying safe is a number one priority.

She also showed images of the National Monument Against Violence and Aggression: a sculpture made of surrendered knives which have been used in crimes, including murder.

It is a stunning sculpture which provoked a lot of thought and discussion from students.



Finally, PC Malone advised students on where to go if they felt concerned about knife crime. If you want to hand in a knife, you can go to any police station and hand it in anonymously. Alternatively, you can call the local police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800555111.

Of course, students can always speak to PC Malone in person, or any member of staff at school.

PTA Update

Blacon High School's Parent Teacher Association has been working in partnership with each other to ensure success for students at our school.

A selection of staff and parents assemble regularly to discuss fundraising activities and decide where the money raised should be distributed.

One of the most popular events held by the PTA was the Christmas Fair, followed closely by the regular School Discos. These two events, plus several others, managed to raise over £2000 last year alone.

This is, of course, a large amount of money to have in the 'pot' and the PTA needed to decide where it would go and who it would support.

The decision was taken that the majority of the money would go to support our current Year 11 students; they work hard to attend Period 6 and half-term revision sessions to support their learning and their eventual outcomes in their GCSE examinations. Whilst their results will be a huge reward, the PTA wanted to show their admiration for the Year 11's dedication to their studies.

It was then that the 'Prom Pass' was born—students in Year 11 receive a sticker for every Period 6/revision session attended (much like a loyalty card). Once these cards are full, they can exchange them for either a discount from their Prom ticket or for high street vouchers. Essentially, if students attend enough sessions, they could get their Prom ticket for free or afford a brand-new outfit!

If you are interested in supporting our school and students and joining our PTA, please contact Mr Stockdale on dstockdale@blaconhigh.cheshire.sch.uk

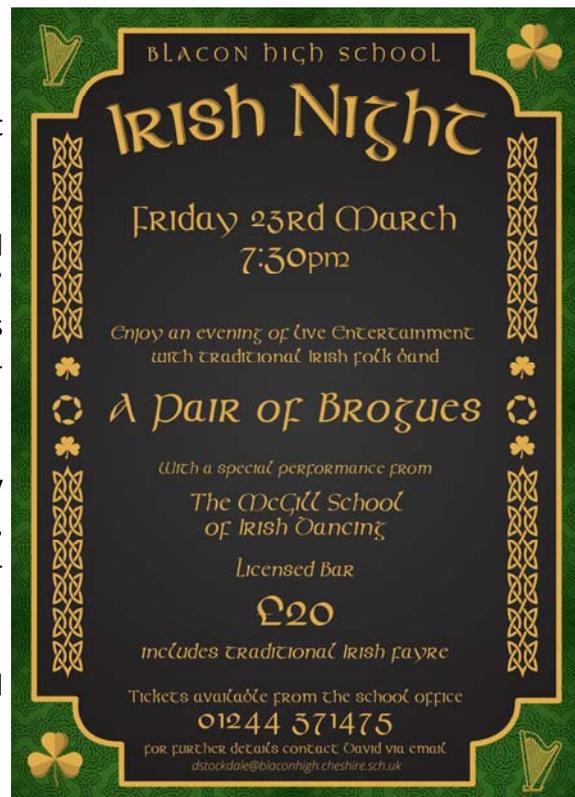
Irish Night

It's finally here: the most recent of our event nights at Blacon High School!

Following the hugely popular Mediaeval Banquet and the stunning Dinner Dance which marked 'Goodbye' to our old building, Assistant Head Mr Stockdale has been working hard to arrange another eventful evening.

The Irish Night (Friday 23rd March) promises an array of entertainment, from an Irish band to Irish dancers, traditional Irish cuisine to a licensed bar, this will certainly be a night to remember.

Tickets are just £20 and available now from the school office. Don't forget to wear something green!



Dates For Your Diary

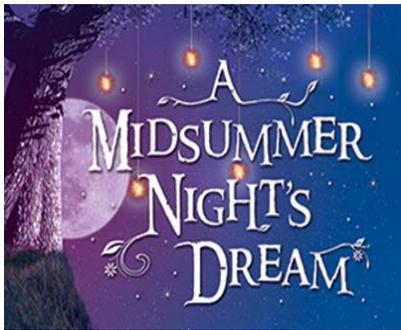
We have had yet another busy half-term, and it doesn't stop here! There are some very important events taking place after the holiday; read below to find out more...

Jekyll and Hyde/Blood Brothers—English Trips

In support of students' key texts for GCSE examinations, the English Department have organised two trips to see two amazing theatre shows. The performance of *Jekyll and Hyde* takes place on Thursday 29th March (£20) and *Blood Brothers* takes place on Thursday 17th May (£25). See English teachers for more information.



Shakespeare
SCHOOLS FESTIVAL



A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Performing Arts Department's latest spectacular show is Shakespeare's fantastical *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Drama students will once again be bringing the Bard to Blacon and making Shakespeare exciting. Tickets cost just ** and the show takes place on **. Don't miss out—tickets are available now from the front office.

Barclays Life Skills—KS3

Year 7 and 8 students will be taking part in a Life Skills day run by Barclays Bank. These link to other workshops in the past where KS4 students have learned all about job applications, career goals, finances and interviews. These important skills are key to success in life after Blacon High School, and our students are sure to leave knowing some very valuable information. The Life Skills workshop takes place on 20th March.



Half-Term Revision Timetable

As always, school is open to Year 11 students over the half-term and teachers are providing extra revision sessions to support studies and preparation for GCSE exams. See below to find out when your subject is taking place...

Feb Half Term Revision Sessions

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Am 9-12	Maths Yr 11	Food Yr 10 Science Yr 11		Art Yr 11	Graphics Yr 11
Pm 12-3	Food Yr 11	Food Yr 10 Physics Yr 11		Art Yr11	English Yr 11