

19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**End of Autumn Term 2023**



Dear Parents and Carers,

As the autumn term draws to a close, I would like to thank all parents and carers for your ongoing support. School will close for the Christmas break on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December with students being dismissed at the earlier time of **12.00pm**. We return on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Students may wear their own clothes on Wednesday, with a Christmas theme or Christmas jumper for a suggested donation to school of £1.00 which can be paid via ParentPay.**

This term has seen students achieve so much both in lessons and beyond the classroom. Our drama team performed a truly tremendous performance of *Annie* at the Storyhouse in Chester, creating magical moments for the school, followed by a superb music concert, which included outstanding performances from our dancers and musicians.

Highlights from the term can be found in my latest report to Governors, which can be found on the school website. Part 1 provides an update on our progress towards the 2023 Strategic plan and part 2 includes highlights from the autumn term. A new 5 year strategic plan for 2028 will be launched in January.

Part 1 – <https://www.blaconhighschool.net/attachments/download.asp?file=248&type=pdf>

Part 2 – <https://www.blaconhighschool.net/attachments/download.asp?file=249&type=pdf>

As you will be aware, Blacon High School was visited by Ofsted on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November. The report will be published in the New Year and I will share more on this in January. I am proud of the way that students conducted themselves throughout the Inspection.

**Winter Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)**

We want to let you know about some of the FREE activities available across West Cheshire throughout the holidays. Edsential, on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester council, have coordinated a whole host of Holiday Activities, funded by Department for Education, which are completely free for eligible Free School Meal children.

This Christmas there are a diverse range of activities on offer from trips to the pantomime, ice skating, graffiti art workshops, sports and much more. There will be free healthy meals provided throughout the programme, ensuring that children and young people stay nourished and energised throughout the holidays. To find a full list of the Christmas holiday activity clubs available to book, visit the Edsential [website](#).

There is also a leaflet attached with details of activities available for children with special educational needs, throughout the Christmas period. Please note that places need to be reserved for children with SEND. However, places can be opened to support siblings in families with SEND children.

### **Free School Meals**

As a school we are conscious of the current cost of living pressures, and in relation to this, we are also aware from our records that a number of parents who may be eligible to claim Free School Meals for their children do not submit a claim to the Local Authority. I urge you to check [eligibility](#), and make a claim if you believe you may be entitled.

### **Household Support Fund payments for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)**

The Government Household Support Fund helps support those most in need due to rising living costs, particularly around the need for food and fuel. Payments for households in receipt of Free School Meals will be made by the end of term in the usual way. Each eligible family will receive £15 per week, per child, so in total £30 per student for the two-week December holiday.

### **Measles and MMR Call to action**

Due to an increase in measles cases across the country this year, including some recently in the North West, we are encouraging everyone to check that they and their children have had two doses of the MMR vaccine. The MMR vaccine is a free, safe and effective way to protect against measles, mumps and rubella. If you are unsure about your vaccination status, or need to book a vaccine, you can contact your GP practice to check and book an appointment.

### **Cost of living support**

Whatever money worries there may be, the Council has shared a wealth of information including the Household Support Fund, the Council's HELP Scheme, Warm Welcoming Spaces and much more. Visit here for [cost of living support](#).

### **Key dates for spring term 2024**

- 10/01/2024, Year 7 and 8 Reward Assembly
- 11/01/2024, Year 9, 10, and 11 Reward Assembly
- 25/01/2024, Year 11 Progress Evening
- 15/02/2024, Year 10 Progress Evening
- 07/03/2024, Year 9 Options Evening
- 14/03/2024, Year 9 Progress Evening

School enrichment continues to flourish with lots of clubs on offer both after school and during lunchtime. Whether your child enjoys sport or being on the stage, enrichment can have a positive effect on the mental health and wellbeing of all students. We will republish the enrichment offer at the start of next term and I encourage you to share and discuss them with your child, and for them to identify clubs and activities that they would like to attend and benefit from during the spring term.

The spring term begins for students at the usual time of 8.40am on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024** (Breakfast Club will be open from 8.00am). Please use this time over the holiday to refresh any uniform that needs replacing, adhering to the uniform policy detailed in the attached letter. Furthermore, please support school in upholding our high expectations and avoid sending your child to school with piercings, false nails or extreme hairstyles in the New Year.

If your child cycles to school, please can I urge you to ensure that they wear a safety helmet. School promotes that, for their own safety, all students cycling to and from school should wear appropriate head protection.

If you haven't already done so, I would like to invite you to download the school app or log-in via the [EduLink One](#) website to ensure that there is effective communication between school and home.


Finally, from all staff and governors, we wish you all the best for the festive season and a Happy New Year. We look forward to returning on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to a New Year and a new term with refreshed enthusiasm and hope for the future. I finish with a Christmas message from one of our students that was included in a Christmas card sent to a resident in a local care home.

*Christmas is approaching, a time of love and giving,  
lots of festive cheer, celebrations and singing,  
but it often brings sadness and times of feeling alone,  
when loved ones have departed, or the nest of family flown.*

*To give the gift of kindness in everything you do,  
and be the kind of Christmas you wish to come to you.*

*With best wishes  
Blacon High School*

Regards,



Rachel Hudson  
Headteacher