

HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME NEWSLETTER 2018

Wednesday 12th September 2018

Dear Year 7 Parents/Carers

It has been a delight to welcome all of our newest Balshavians who are settling in well. I hope that they have been coming home tired, but happy with all of their fears of high school allayed, replaced with excitement for the future. If there are any pastoral issues or worries that crop up before our Year 7 Parents' Coffee and Cake evening, please contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance – an e-mail is probably the best approach as teaching staff rarely have the time to get to a telephone. Contact information for form tutors is shown below:

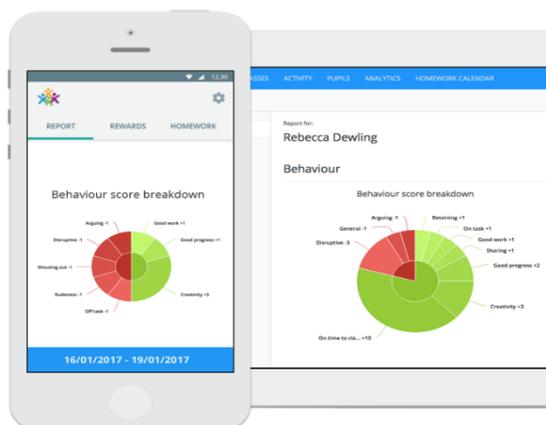
Tutor Group	Tutor	Email
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CL2	Mrs Dudley	l.dudley@balshaws.org.uk
CU1	Mr Bailey	j.bailey@balshaws.org.uk
CU2	Mrs McCutcheon	j.mccutcheon@balshaws.org.uk
FN1	Miss Lockhart	d.lockhart@balshaws.org.uk
FN2	Miss Corner	h.corner@balshaws.org.uk
WN1	Mrs Carr	m.carr@balshaws.org.uk
WN2	Miss Warburton	c.warburton@balshaws.org.uk

We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our Year 7 Parents Coffee and Cake Evening on **Thursday 27th September 5.30 – 6.30pm**. Your son/daughter is welcome to attend this evening with you. This evening will give you the opportunity to meet your child's tutor, head of house, members of the pastoral support team and senior leaders. It is also a chance to meet the parents of others that your child may have made friends with and to network.

There is a lot of information in this first newsletter of the year, so please do take the time to read it carefully. You will find out about:

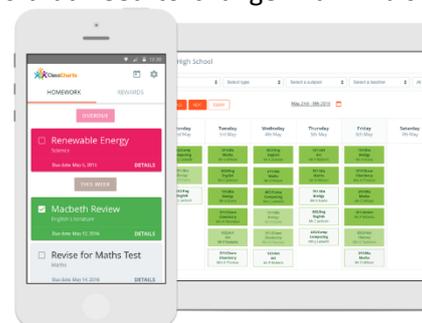
- What the Class Charts Parent App is and how to access it.
- Read about our consultation for changing the times of the school day.
- Learn about our Reunion for all Balshavians on 5th October.
- Read of the successes of our Year 11 examination results.
- Our new school canteen is open.
- We are going to undertake a SIAMS inspection.
- Open Evening...

...and more.



See your child's positives and negatives in real time as they are added.

You recently received a letter from school that contained login details for Class Charts. This is a parent app that you can look at on your phone/tablet/PC. It will show you your child's attendance, positives that they receive from their teachers for things they have done well and also negatives for behaviours that need to change. It will also show you the homeworks that your child has been set so that you don't have to rely on their homework diary for this information!



Check what homework your child has, see attached resources and weblinks as well as when the work is due.

Parents tell us that the Class Charts app is a fantastic tool and really helps them to keep in touch with what their child is doing in school and: it's free for you!

The homework app doesn't replace the need for children to use their homework diaries as these are an important way that we help students to learn how to organise themselves. They are also a useful way to make brief communications to your child's form tutor.

All of our students know the **BALSHAW'S** behaviours for learning guidance which is the means through which we offer positives and negative (see right). We hope that this information will help you to support your child's learning and progress in school. One of the biggest changes from primary to secondary is that parents don't get to see their child's class teacher at the end of each day. The ClassCharts App will help staff to capture for parents not only the small positives that students do, such as always being prepared and focussed on their progress, but also low level disruptive behaviour which would not be enough to contact home about. All of this information is now available to see in the Class Charts app (for example, repeated talking, being off task, not having the correct equipment etc.)

Be your best
Attitude
Look after
Stay safe
High aspirations
Attend
Working together
Smart

Please follow the instructions below to download and login to see updates on your child's behaviour and homework.

Mobile devices:

From within the Apple AppStore or Google Play Store, download and install the ClassCharts Parents app (make sure it is not the Students or Teacher app!) Open the app and you will be presented with an account creation page. From the Sign Up tab enter your details and enter your parent code (this will be given to each student in a separate letter) in the Access code field. Please note: your Access Code is not the same as your password, the access code is only required for the initial setup.

Website:

Log onto <http://www.classcharts.com/parent/login>. Select the "I don't have an account yet" option. Fill out the form and enter your parent code (given to each student in a separate letter) in the Access code field. Please note: your Access Code is not the same as your password, the access code is only required for the initial setup.

You will be presented with a breakdown of behaviour and achievements within a customisable timeframe. Click the Calendar icon at the top to select a range of timeframes. You can also swipe along or click the Homework tab to see what homework has been set, the details and timeframe.

Proud of our Examination Success

GCSE Results day is always a fantastic day as it is when we get to see our students achieve the results that they have worked for. 2018 has been one of our most successful years to date. It has been a time of huge change in education with nearly all GCSEs converting to a 9 to 1 grade system. If you are still unsure about how these work, the table to the right should help you to understand how the new grades equate to the old A*-G grades.

We were delighted that almost 15% of our grades were 8, 9 and A* making Balshaw's students amongst the highest attaining students in the country. However, we are also proud of the progress that students made from their starting points who may not have gained the highest grades but who met or exceeded their target grades. We are looking forward to the publication of our Progress 8 score when it is confirmed by the Department for Education in October.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
	8
A	7
B	6
	5 STRONG PASS
C	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	
G	1
U	U

Some other key figures that will be of interest to you will be:

- 74.2% pass in English and Maths
- 87.6% pass in English
- 79.8% pass in Maths
- 38.2% of students gaining Ebacc passes

It is great to see our students moving on to the next stage of their education. The vast majority of students have taken up a place at Runshaw and some at Cardinal Newman. Growing numbers of students are taking on apprenticeships this year which we are pleased to see as we have worked closely with apprenticeship providers in providing Careers Information Advice and Guidance to our students. We also have a close working link with Lancashire Chamber of Commerce who help us to organise a bi-annual careers fair.

Consultation on the times of the School Day

We are launching a consultation in changing the timings of the school day for September 2019 this year which we hope to be complete by Christmas. Our current school timetable has two hours of teaching in the afternoon. This is a long afternoon for students and all of our research suggests that students' level of focus and concentration is much higher in the morning. This also means that incidences of low-level behaviour issues following lunch are reduced.

We are one of the only local schools that finishes after 3.00 which makes inter-school sporting competitions more difficult to arrange. It also means that after school practises and activities in winter time are in much darker conditions. Therefore we are proposing to change the timings of the school day as in the table to the right. The consultation will involve all parents, students, staff, governors and stakeholders such as our catering providers.

To see full details of the case for changing the school day and for putting forward your views, please visit our online consultation form: <https://goo.gl/forms/TwRRJB2031CQDAik1> Have your say in this consultation by **Friday 19th October**.

Proposed New School Day	
08:35	School opens to students
08:40	AM Registration / Act of Worship / PSHE
09:10	Period 1
10:10	Period 2
11:10	Morning break
11:30	Period 3
12:30	Period 4
13:30	Lunchtime
14:10	Period 5
15:10	End of school day

Opening of *The Restaurant*

Over the summer break the builders were in to conduct major work on the school kitchen and dining area to create *The Restaurant*, our fantastic new dining facility which students are now enjoying. We now have a bright, open and modern space for our students to sit, eat and meet in. Mike Atkinson, catering manager for Chartwells said “It’s fantastic to provide high quality food in an environment that students feel comfortable in whose design has been led by the young people themselves.”

Our students are able to enjoy breakfast, a range of breaktime foods including toast, waffles, pancakes, bacon and egg muffins, bagels and hash browns. At lunchtime there is a wide variety of choice. In addition to the regular sandwiches, pasta pots, pizza, paninis and baked potatoes there is always a choice of two specials - for example, lasagne, curry, chicken and ham pie, fish and chips (on a Friday!). These are supplemented with vegetarian and halal alternatives such as halloumi and roasted vegetable kebabs. All dietary requirements can be catered for if required – just contact Mike, the Catering Manager.

Reunion of Former Balshavians – Reconnect with your old school

There are a number of former Balshavian networks and this year we hope to draw as many of them together as possible with our reunion. On **Friday 5th October** school will open its doors to welcome back all former students from **4.00 – 9.00pm**. There will be a classroom for each decade to sign into and former students will be able to leave messages for others from their decade and leave contact details to become part of a mailing list and wider alumni group. We are hoping that as many former Balshavians as possible will reconnect with their old school and become part of the Balshaw’s Alumni Association. If you know of anyone who used to come to Balshaw’s and would be interested in coming back to see what has changed and what hasn’t, please spread the word.

Programme:

4.00pm onwards	Registration in decade rooms.	<u>Throughout:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tours of the school with current students.• Archive material and memorabilia available to view.• Networking.
6.00 – 7.00	Pre-booked buffet served <i>The Restaurant</i> .	
8.00 – 8.30	Service of thanksgiving and short presentation by the Headteacher.	
9.00	Close	

If you were a Balshavian, or you know former Balshavians who may be interested, please pass on word of the Reunion via your networks. We hope that we will get as many Balshavians here as possible so that we can plan an even bigger event for the next Re-union.

Celebrating our Christian Ethos and Values

Sometimes our students forget that many of the features that make Balshaw’s distinctive are borne out of the fact that we are a faith school. This year we expect to have the chance to celebrate these strengths when we undertake a SIAMS Inspection. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. We will be working with our students to help them to understand that the range of things that we do at Balshaw’s are not typical of all schools!

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.

(Psalm 119, vs 105)

Lighting the path to excellence through Christian vision and values.

Just some of the things that mark Balshaw's out as a school that is distinctively Christian are:

- The school employs a youth chaplain to bring the message of Christ's love to all young people in the school and provide spiritual wellbeing as well as support for mental health and academic progress.
- All meetings in school begin with a prayer.
- Staff meet weekly to pray for the school community.
- All students begin the day with a Prayer for the Day and a Thought for the Day – normally a piece of scripture.
- Students take part in two acts of worship per week (in year groups and in house groups).
- Students attend church for Remembrance, Easter and Christmas.
- The school has Foundation Governors whose role it is to ensure that Balshaw's maintains its foundations in the Christian ethos.
- Staff celebrate Eucharist together seven times each year.
- We have a Memorial Garden Service each year for members of Balshaw's and the wider community to remember loved ones no longer with us.
- Every policy in school is supported in its vision by scriptural reference.
- Pastoral care and guidance is framed by the Christian values that Balshaw's follows:
 - Love
 - Respect
 - Kindness
 - Truth
 - Humility
 - Forgiveness
 - Friendship
- All students carry a copy of The Lord's Prayer with them at all times.
- Lower school pray The Lord's Prayer together at the end of each Friday before going home for the weekend.
- A number of our Acts of worship are led by clergy from the local community and representatives of other Christian organisations such as the Gideon Society.
- Wherever possible within the curriculum learning will refer to Christian principles. For example, when looking at environmental issues in Geography or Science, the role of humans as stewards of God's creation will be provided as a context.

However, you as parents know that it is the feeling that you get in the relationships at Balshaw's between members of the school family which reflect Christian values in practice.

Open Evening – early school closure

Our open evening this year is Thursday 4th October. **School will finish at 2.30pm** on this day to allow the school to set up for the evening and for the many students that are involved to have the chance to do homework/get tea etc. before returning to school. Please note that school buses will still arrive at the normal time.

Other Changes

We welcomed a number of new staff at the beginning of the new school year:

- Miss Waring and Miss Duffy join our team of talented and highly committed Teaching Assistants who provide invaluable one-to-one and small group support to students across the school.

- Mrs Dolman started as Curriculum Leader for English and the English department is also joined by Miss McCutcheon. We are also pleased to welcome back Mrs Carr following her maternity leave.
- Miss Corner joins our Maths department.
- Mrs Filler joins our RE department and also teaches History. I hope that your son/daughter will keep an eye out for her “All you need to know about...” group at lunchtimes. Each week there is a different theme or question. For example: “All you need to know about... how to stay calm when you are feeling anxious.”
- Mr Bailey joins us permanently in the Science Department and as a skilled rugby player will be contributing to our sporting successes.

In addition to the building work in *The Restaurant* we also had some additional security fencing installed at the bottom of the Boys’ drive that ensures that the whole frontage of the school is now secure behind fencing. This has also enabled us to crack down on lateness to school as the gates are monitored by senior staff and locked promptly. Students arriving after 8.50am will be marked late by their tutors. Students arriving after 8.55am will be placed in a lunchtime detention that same day.

Respecting our neighbours

Balshaw’s enjoys a good relationship with its neighbours (some of whom are former Balshavians themselves). We expect our students to behave in a respectful manner towards our neighbours on their way to and from school. However, each year I appeal to parents who collect/drop their children to park respectfully. Parking across driveways, on double-yellow lines or reserved disabled spaces causes a great deal of distress to residents on surrounding streets and I hope that as parents you too will model Christian behaviour of treating others as you would wish to be treated yourselves.

Dates for your Diary

There are lots of ways to get involved with activities at Balshaw’s and below are just a few key dates for your diary that take you up to Easter:

- Thursday 27th September Year 7 Parents’ Coffee and Cake evening (5.30pm in the Hall)
- Saturday 29th September: Quiz Night (7.30pm in the Hall)
- Wednesday 3rd October: Balshaw’s PTFA (Parents, Teachers and Friends Association) Annual General Meeting. The PTFA meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm.
- Friday 5th October: School is closed (INSET day)
Reunion for former Balshavians: 4.00pm – 9.00pm
- Wednesday 7th November: Balshaw’s PTFA 7.30pm
- Thursday 17th November: Quiz Night (7.30pm in the Hall)
- Monday 26th November: Memorial Garden Service (6.00pm)
- Saturday 1st December: Balshaw’s Winter Wonderland Event – details to follow...
- Wednesday 5th December: Balshaw’s PTFA 7.30pm
- Wednesday 12th December: Christmas Concert
- Thursday 24th January: Year 7 Parents’ Evening (4.00pm – 7.00pm)
- Saturday 2nd February: Quiz Night (7.30pm in the Hall)
- Wednesday 6th February: Balshaw’s PTFA 7.30pm
- Wednesday 6th March: Balshaw’s PTFA 7.30pm

- Saturday 23rd March: Quiz Night (7.30pm in the Hall)
- Friday 29th March: Easter Bingo (7.30 in the Hall)
- Wednesday 3rd April: Balshaw's PTFA 7.30pm

Our aim, as always, is to create happy, successful students who will make a positive contribution to our community and society founded on the Christian principles which underpins school life at Balshaw's.

I have attached to this letter a copy of a booklet called "7 Days of Praying for Parents" which I hope you will find helpful. You will also find the contact details for all staff below if you need to make contact with any members of staff.

Kind regards



Mr Steven Haycocks
HEADTEACHER

"Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path." (Psalm 119, vs 105)

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