

SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Prittlewell Chase, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 0RG
(01702) 606200 enquiries@shsb.org.uk www.shsb.org.uk

Headteacher: Robin M Bevan MA MEd PhD FRSA



7 June 2023

Dear Parent

We welcome all pupils back to school after the half-term holiday, hoping it has been a refreshing break for all.

Examinations and leavers

Earlier in the term, we took time to convey our very best wishes to all our examination candidates. In the region of 6000 scripts will have been completed under timed conditions, by the end of this month. The school owes a debt of gratitude to all the administrative and invigilation staff who have handled the logistics seamlessly. All our pupils will know the extent to which each teacher, in every subject, has provided a sound foundation to enable success and, beyond that, supported and supplied reams of revision opportunities. Nonetheless, the final outcomes rest pivotally on the focussed effort of each pupil and we know, in that sense, that 'success is a choice'.

We also owe thanks to our 'leavers': very many of whom have contributed freely and extensively to the life of the school, as prefects, in leadership, performing, competing, creating and demonstrating themselves to be 'role models' to the wider school community.

In saying 'goodbye' to those in Year 13, I had the opportunity to share three simple thoughts with the cohort (from an unusual source – 'Advices and Queries' – first published in 1738): to "live adventurously", to "let your life speak" and to "respect [the value of] everyone even though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern".

Ice cream: 'the best decision in 100 years'

Following extensive capital works during the last Summer holiday, we have, during the year been able to extend and consolidate our on-site catering offer. There are now multiple outlets with hot/cold cooked options, take-away pasta, fruit, pre-ordered baguettes ... and, now, the addition of ice cream sales to suit the season. The arrival of the ice-cream machine was described by one pupil as the 'best decision the school has made in 100 years'. As Headteacher, I think I might beg to differ(!); but it's certainly been popular.

We continue to encourage all pupils to choose menu options that are balanced, nutritious and appropriate for the extent to which they are all physically active. Parents can view the purchases



made using WisePay cards by logging in, selecting 'My Wise Account' and viewing 'Food and Drink Purchases' in the Account Overview.

Social Media: please follow

Recent posts on social media have celebrated the Spring Concert, the NACE Challenge Award Experience Day and a visit to the school – to talk of her experiences – from holocaust survivor, Susie Barnett BEM. Our 'feed' is intended to feature the breadth and balance of activities and success within the school community: it is a representative sample of our extensive 'good news'. Please do follow on Facebook or Instagram: links are provided from the school's website.

Summer term: dates to note (details to follow)

The school calendar is also viewable from the school's website, but – as an additional prompt – please be aware that 29 June is a non-pupil day (for staff training and in preparation for our annual Year 5 Open Evening). Many pupils will be asked to attend in the evening to help as guides or subject representatives: please keep the evening free and 'thank you' in advance for managing transport arrangements that evening. In recognition of the late finish on the Thursday night, school resumes on Friday 30 June, one hour later than usual, at 09:30.

Planning is well underway for our proposed biennial School Walk on Friday 14 July. All pupils in Years 7-10 and 12 will be taking part. The last school walk took place in 2018 and, ordinarily, alternates with our 'mass bike ride' which will next appear in 2024. Of all the activities curtailed by Covid, the school walk is possibly the last to be reinstated and – given the time that has elapsed – only those in Year 12 will recall the last occasion, when they were in Year 7!

There is also a plethora of individual year group and subject-based activities, for which individual letters will follow.

Behaviour Policy: request for parental feedback

Creating an environment in which every student can flourish is a cornerstone of our culture and ethos at SHSB. This comes in two distinct parts: the recognition and rewarding of achievement, and the management of behaviour; creating a space in which students can fulfil their enormous potential. The document that outlines the approach taken is our 'Behaviour Policy', which is currently being reviewed within the school.

As part of this process, it is essential to understand the views of parents as a key component in the creation of a document that works for all who use it. To capture this feedback, we've created a Microsoft Form which will allow parents and carers to provide their views and inform our review of this key policy. You do not need to have previously read this policy to participate. If you haven't, please do not read it until you are asked to do so within the Microsoft Form.

If you are willing to spare some time to contribute to this process it will be greatly appreciated. The link for the Form is here: <https://forms.office.com/e/SxZ7XRwkxp>

The current Behaviour Policy can be found here: <https://www.shsb.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=27&type=pdf>

The deadline for submissions is midnight on Friday 16th June.

Parent Association: volunteers, fund-raising and thanks

The school is indebted to a small, but dedicated, number of volunteers who assist in planning, leading and facilitating our Parents Association fund-raising and support events. We do ask every parent to consider how they might contribute back to the school in some way and the PA provides a ready opportunity: do volunteer, if you can. They have been busy this year with fund-raising through refreshment sales at concerts, the lower school discos, raffles ... and shortly (but, please keep it quiet!) the sale of Father's Day gifts/cards during the school lunchtimes.

Their sustained efforts have accrued over £5,000 this year and the school is expecting to be able to receive this, alongside a significant gift from an alumni donor, to fund an audio 'refit' in the main hall so that the acoustic for concerts, for speeches and for assemblies is substantially improved as we use more and more recorded audio-visual material in school and public presentations.

Governors: budget forecast uncertainty

The school also benefits from the expert and sustained commitment of our school governors. Each governor brings a blend of their personal, professional and parental perspectives in supporting the school. The biggest challenge facing the governors, at this time, is the reconciliation of the school's budget forecast. I will share further news on school funding in a future letter. Inflation has been above 10% for much of the year and our non-pay costs (for services, maintenance, supplies and utilities) have risen at above this rate. There is the prospect of some respite, as inflation settles closer to 7%. However, at the time of writing, our confirmed public income for 2023/24 is due to increase by less than 1.5%. The scale of the consequent shortfall is considerable and governors, having explored any remaining efficiency savings, may well need to press the case – with parental support – to exact a better settlement from the Department for Education (ESFA).

Governors remain emphatically committed to sustaining the quality of academic education provided by the school, securing the extended opportunities beyond the classroom and investing fully in the level of pastoral care we offer.

Parents can be reassured that these financial challenges will never become a barrier to our vision or our provision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Bevan', followed by a period.

Robin M. Bevan
Headteacher