Bradley Stoke Community School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your family are well and settled back into the routines of term time. It has been a pleasure welcoming back students and getting to know our new Reception, Year 7 and Year 12 learners. We've been really impressed with the start they've made – and it was lovely to receive an email from an external visitor this week to say the school's "calm, positive atmosphere was immediately apparent".

Start of term
A new addition to our transition programme for Year 7 is our 'Supporting Your Child at BSCS Year 7' information evening - thank you to everyone who was able to attend. I hope it was useful having Miss Denton and Mr Randall available to explain our online systems and the live demo of the Arbor parent app by Mrs Willcox.

Year 6 Open Evening this week was a real boost for staff and our student helpers who loved the responsibility of helping out and telling our prospective students and parents all about BSCS. We are aware that two local schools were on Year 6 camp, but we look forward to welcoming those learners on our Open Morning later this term.

Our assembly programme is used to deliver key messages to students, as well as to reinforce our values and expectations. My assemblies in the first week of term reflected on the legacy of Dave Baker on BSCS - I talked to the students about his commitment to ensuring they had the best experiences at school, including the Olympus Cup that many of them have had great enjoyment from. Other assemblies have considered what 'belonging' means at BSCS and practical ways to keep yourself safe. Next week Year 7 and 8 will be attending sessions on road safety, especially important at this time of year as the mornings and evenings begin to darken.

Attendance
There is a lot in the news at the start of each academic year about the importance of attendance and I would like to stress that this is not just about targets and soundbites. Our own school data backs up national research evidencing the impact of missing school – missing lessons means missing learning, and there is a clear correlation at BSCS as well as other schools. Year 11 learners with near perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve a Grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar learners missing just 10 extra days a year. We understand this is complex for some families and there are often barriers for learners, and we are working hard this year to ensure that all staff are focused on not only improving attendance but also understanding and helping to tackle barriers where they exist. Well done to everyone who has had a strong start so far this term – keep it up!

Staffing Update
Our new staff have settled in just as well as our new students – it gives me great pleasure to formally welcome the following staff who have joined in September:

Caitlin Godwin, who has taken over from Hazel Bartlett who retired from Head of Drama; Tom Probert and Jenny Wright who have joined the maths team; Lauren Papworth as teacher of science and psychology and Caera Coleman who is teaching Year 4 in Matt Draper's absence. We have also had an additional cover supervisor join us, Lois Ward. One of the benefits of being part of Olympus Academy

Trust is staff moving across schools, and it's great that many of our new staff have worked previously at other trust schools.

Our pastoral and learning support teams have a lot of new faces – Lewis Paterson as Head of Year 9, Kelly Moss as Head of Year 10, Zara Tobin as Lunchtime Supervisor and Lucy Quick as Pastoral Administrator. Holly Wynne-Hughes has started as our Learning Support Administrator and Joanne Sia as a Teaching Assistant in secondary. I'm delighted to also announce that we have appointed to the Head of Year 8 – Ellie Wilson who has pastoral secondary school experience and a keen rugby player!

You may have also spoken with some new support staff: Sarah Grimwood as Receptionist; Aeron Westlake as Administrator, and Thomas Millington as Data and Exams Manager who takes over from Leigh White who retired last year.

Road Closures and Webbs Wood Footbridge update
We have been reminding students about being road aware and the dangers of not using the diversions in place, especially with the many road and footway diversions in place – thank you for the parents who have been in touch about this as I have passed on concerns to local councillors.

We have been sent an update on the pedestrian diversion whilst the main carriage way is closed to pedestrians and cyclists. Webbs Wood Footbridge, Bradley Stoke, has reopened after being totally rebuilt due to serious structural issues. All elements of the bridge have been replaced and anti-slip strips installed on the deck boards to ensure the safety of all users. This will be welcomed by parents concerned about young people going through the nature reserve in the darker/wetter months.

Behaviour in community
I always enjoy picking up shopping locally as I have so many positive interactions with current and past students, and I often receive emails commending their behaviour in public. I do, however, sadly receive occasional contact about disappointing behaviour in the community, and we always look into any such reports. It's difficult to police outside of the school site and so thank you to parents as so many of you support us with this.

School calendar and key dates
A reminder of some upcoming events:

- Tuesday 7th October: **Open Evening for Reception entry 2025/26**
- Thursday 9th October: **Meet the Tutor Evening (Years 7-11)**
- Wednesday 15th October: **Welcome to Year 10 Evening (6 pm)**
- Wednesday 15th October: **Welcome to Year 11 Evening (6:45pm)**
- Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th October: **INSET Days** *(school closed for students)*
- Monday 27th – Friday 31st October: **Half Term**

And finally, please do remember that our school calendar is available on the school website - which includes parent/carer evenings and key dates.

Kind regards,

Mrs Sophie Francis
Headteacher