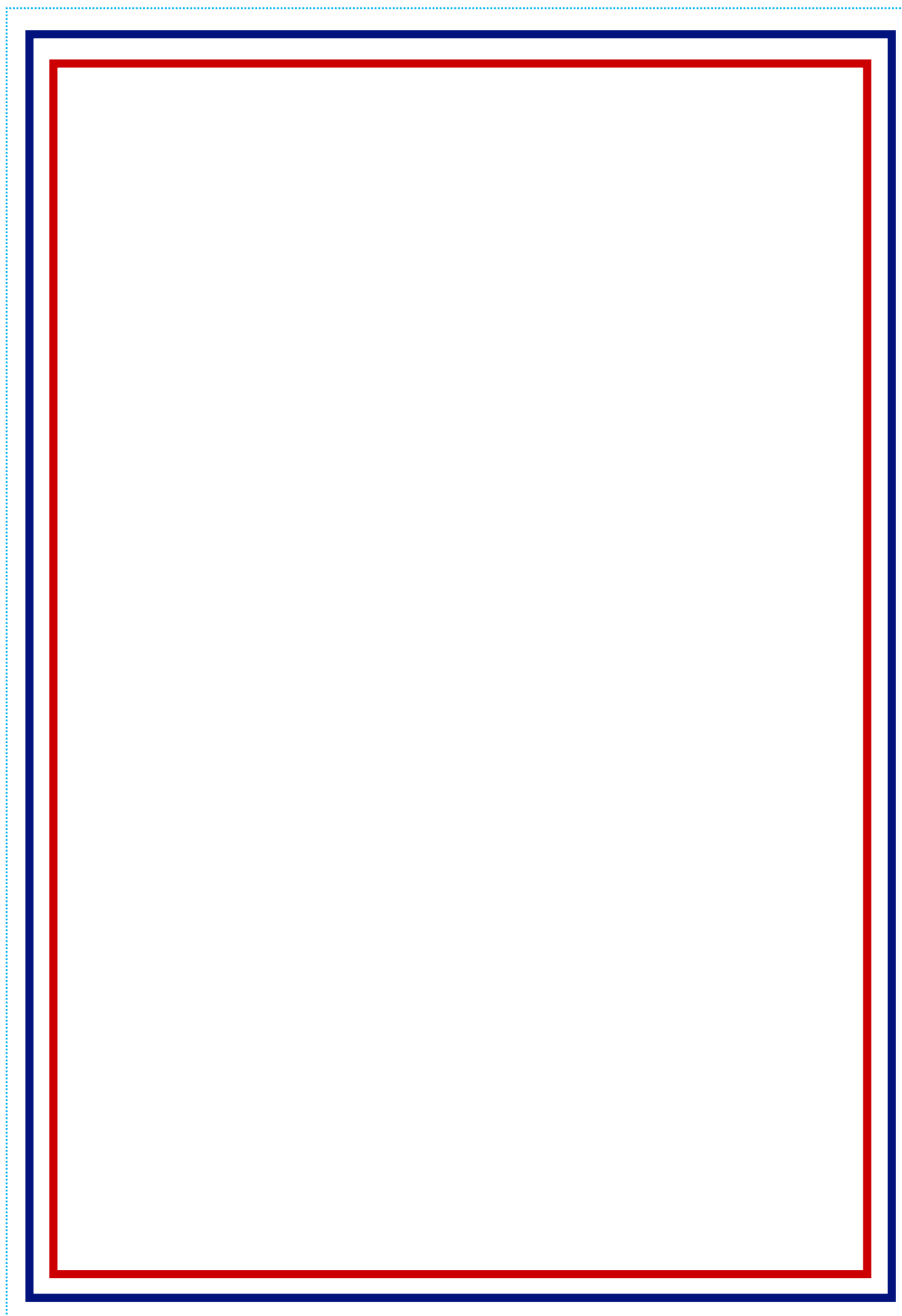




Student/Parent Handbook 2023-24



COMMUNITY • AMBITION • OPPORTUNITY





Contents

	Page No.
Headteacher welcome and BFS values.....	1
Student Support.....	2
SEND and Mental Health.....	3
BFS Promise.....	4
House System and Rewards.....	5-6
Home School Agreement and IT at BFS.....	7
IT Arrangements at BFS.....	8
Uniform and Equipment.....	9-10
Reading and Homework.....	11
Reporting.....	12-13
Dining.....	14
Parental Payments and Free School Meals.....	15
Administration.....	16
Attendance Policy.....	17-18
Behaviour for Learning.....	19
Safeguarding.....	20-21
Term dates and School Day timings.....	22-23



Headteacher welcome and BFS Values

Dear Parent/Carer, Welcome to the BFS Family

Great schools work in close partnership with home to secure strong educational outcomes and personal development for the whole young person.

This handbook has been designed to give you key information about school life at BFS.

It covers logistics, our expectations and important policies and procedures. The aim is for you to find out all the important information from this handbook. The handbook will be supported by regular letters, progress reports, subject evenings, newsletters and Success Together events.

All parents/carers should download and access the [MyChildAtSchool - Login](#) app which will give you access to your child's homework, rewards and behaviour record.

Parents/Carers should also activate their [ParentPay](#) account to receive all communications and download [Studybugs](#) to report student absences.

We aim for young people to be adaptable, compassionate, creative and critical thinkers so they can take a positive role in society and the challenges the world faces.

Our mission is to educate the whole person; we see young people as unique individuals with gifts and talents. We do this through our school values.

BFS Values

COMMUNITY

BFS is rooted in its local community and prides itself on the warm, positive and nurturing relationships it has with students and staff. Individuality is encouraged and celebrated as this diversity contributes to our vibrant dynamic ethos. We expect students to work together, and to show respect and tolerance towards each other.

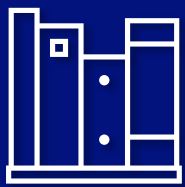
AMBITION

At BFS, we set the highest expectations and academic ambitions to ensure our students make excellent progress from their starting points. Success to us is a broad statement which includes academic and personal development so our students go on to thrive in their lives.

OPPORTUNITY

We aim to prepare students to achieve their best, taking the opportunities BFS offers them to become well educated, active citizens. Students will experience a sense of fulfilment through educational and personal achievement.





Student Support

Student Support

We value building great relationships. Our Tutors are the first port of call if students or parents have any queries or need support. Year Leaders, supported by senior members of staff, are also on hand to give advice –there is always someone to help.

At BFS all students and staff are a member of one of our four houses. Our house system creates smaller schools within one big school, a smaller community of students and staff who have a sense of belonging, shared identity and healthy competition. The house system provides a focal point for awards, events and mixes all ages ranges to enable older students to mentor younger students.

In addition, the School has a variety of support staff including a Safeguarding team, SEND team including mental health support, and Student Services. They work with teaching staff to provide a full range of support for our students' needs. More information is on Page 3, SEND and Mental Health.

Friends of Bristol Free School (FOBFS)

The Friends of Bristol Free School (FoBFS) is a charitable organisation, consisting of a group of active parents, carers and teachers who fund raise on behalf of the school, typically by supporting school and social events. Our core aim is to raise money to be spent on equipment and experiences for students across all year groups, which cannot be easily funded through the school budget.

Facebook: Friends of Bristol Free School
Email: fobfs@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

Year 6 to Year 7 Transition

The move from Primary to Secondary School can be a daunting experience, as well as being exciting and stimulating. Through our transition process, we aim to allay fears and ensure that students start in September with confidence and enthusiasm. We have listed below information which students and parents/carers have frequently requested.

Student groupings

Everyone at BFS is a member of a Tutor Group. Your child's tutor moves up the school with you each year and is the main point of contact for parents/carers. Children work for most of their day in their tutor groups. Students spend time in their Tutor Group at the start of each day. For lessons, students are taught in tutor groups for some subjects and mixed groups for others. This changes according to the curriculum requirements as students progress through the school.

Clubs and activities

We run an extensive selection of clubs and activities at BFS. There are many opportunities to join in, for example, sports, music, drama, nature club, reading, scrabble and many more. Peripatetic music lessons are offered after school through our partnership with Bristol Beacon Musical School.

The LRC is open before and after school to read or complete homework. Our friendly librarians can help with home learning tasks. Further information about extra-curricular activities is available via our [website](#).



SEND and Mental Health

SEND

Bristol Free School SEND Curriculum Offer is designed “To empower all students to be the best they can be”. Balancing an academic curriculum with emotional support is vital and we pride ourselves on putting the needs of our students first, adjusting their curriculum where required.

All students at Bristol Free School receive high quality teaching tailored to their individual needs, providing a wide range of differentiation; pre-learning and overlearning; effective seating plans based on students’ needs; adjustments made to support sensory needs; use of PCs; coloured overlays; Access Arrangements etc. Students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those on the SEND register receive support additional to and different from other students. Interventions are implemented following SEND reviews as part of our Graduated Approach (‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ process). Students and parents are fully involved in this process and progress is monitored regularly.

SEND Curriculum offer

Our SEND Curriculum Offer includes a wide range of support for all four broad areas of need:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

Students are referred to the SEND team by parents/carers, Heads of Year, tutors, teachers and support staff. Students are encouraged to see a member of the SEND team if they are experiencing difficulties with their learning.

To speak with a member of the SEND team, email sen@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

The SEND Team

Mrs Jenkins – SENDCo
Ms Cook – Assistant SENDCo
Ms. Tucker – HLTA



We also have Teaching Assistants who work with students in lessons, small groups and 1:1.

Mental Health

We are aware that some students can experience mental health issues during school, and we offer a range of support in this area. We use a referral process to identify need and appropriate support that can be offered. Students are referred to the mental health team by parents/carers, Heads of Year, tutors, teachers and support staff. Students are encouraged to see a member of the mental health team if they are experiencing difficulties.

We work closely with outside agencies for the benefit of our young people and can refer students to organisations such as:

- School counsellor
- Anna Freud counselling
- CAMHS
- Off the record.



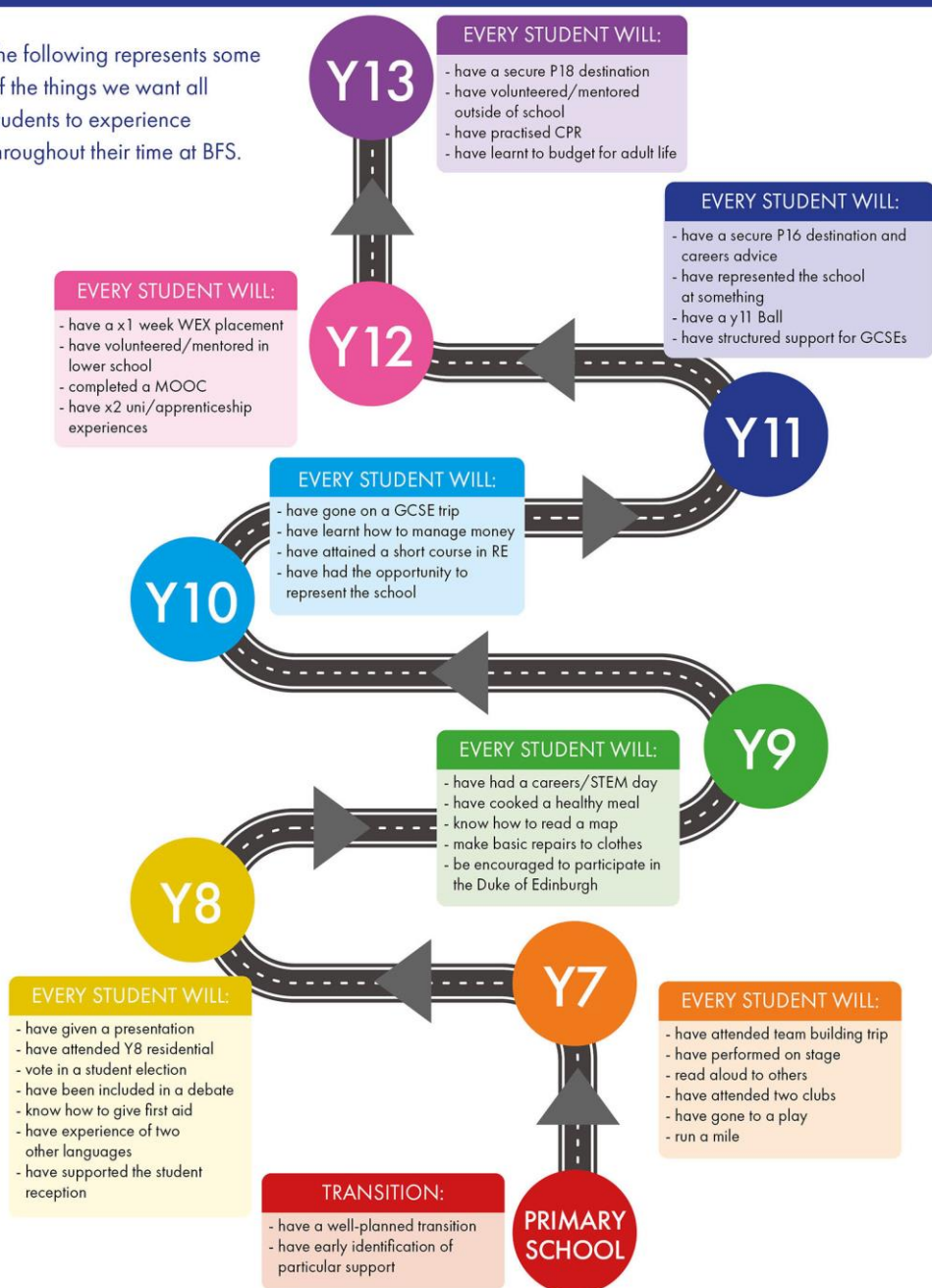
BFS Promise

The BFS Promise is the school's commitment to ensuring that all students have equal opportunity; it brings together the school's pastoral systems, the school Houses, enrichment opportunities and much more. The roadmap shows just a few of the things the school commits to doing for every student during their school journey.



THE BFS PROMISE ROADMAP

The following represents some of the things we want all students to experience throughout their time at BFS.





House System and Rewards

House System

The House system was introduced across the year groups in 2020 to create a vertical community for students to build relationships, support each other, engage in friendly competition and to work together to make positive contributions within their house, school, and local community.

The Houses are named after local parks within Bristol. All students belong to a house, which they will represent at BFS. Students can stand for election as a House Leader or for House Parliament, allowing them the opportunity to take on responsibility and develop their leadership skills. Furthermore, all teaching staff are also allocated to a house as we like to foster as much healthy competition as we can. The structure of the House system means that each student has a chance to shine, to discover their own talents and to make a genuine contribution to their school community.

House assemblies, events and celebrations allow relationships to be fostered and built, not only within but also across, differing year groups and even into our Sixth Form. There are inter-House competitions in numerous academic, sporting and cultural activities including music, poetry, maths and English, science, general knowledge, drama and art. The varying nature of the competitions allow students to come together and meet others they may not otherwise encounter. The houses are also linked to local charities providing students with a wider sense of perspective as to the role the school plays within its community.



ASHTON



BLAISE



CANFORD



DURDHAM

Rewards

At BFS, we pride ourselves on acknowledging and rewarding the wonderful contributions students make to school life. We split our house points into three categories which are linked to our core values of Community, Ambition and Opportunity. Students can earn house points through:

Community – awarded for excellence within tutor period and any other pastoral area of the school

Ambition – awarded for academic contribution within lessons and for homework

Opportunity – awarded for participating in our wonderful extra-curricular offer – this could be after-school clubs or sports teams

Tariff for student house points and accompanying rewards:

House Points	Details	Whom
50	Recognition postcard	Tutors
100	Tutor contact home and free cake	Tutors
150	Free Meal Deal	Year Leader
200	'Jump the lunch queue' pass for a term	Assistant Headteacher
250	Breakfast with the Headteacher and certificate	Headteacher
300	'Be a teacher for a day' / or another term of jump the lunch queue	Year Leader
400	Afternoon tea with the Chair of Governors	Governing body



House System and Rewards

House Cups and the Spirit of Bristol Award

There are four cups that students can compete for across the academic year:

- The Ambition Cup – the student who has performed the best across their subjects
- The Community Cup – the student who has contributed the most to the school and wider community
- The Opportunity Cup - the student who has taken advantage of the opportunities available to them and excelled
- The House Cup – the overall winner across all the houses. This includes all house points collected from Y7 to Y13
- The Spirit of Bristol Award – (Y9, Y11 and Y13) awarded to the student in that year group who has demonstrated the School values consistently across that Key Stage. This is the highest and most prestigious school award, founded when the school was formed.





Home School Agreement and Online Safety

Home School Agreement

When your child joins BFS, we ask parents/carers to sign a Home School Agreement that outlines the role of home in supporting the work of the school.

[Home School Agreement](#)

Online Safety

The School communicates regularly about safeguarding and current news. Families should speak to their children about the various safety risks they may encounter, through their use of IT and mobile devices.

Mobile devices have real benefits but have the potential to be very distracting and can present serious safeguarding risks.

Schools are increasingly drawn into issues raised by social media. There is a limit to the action we can take beyond the school gate. If your child is experiencing issues online, please get in contact so we can direct you to the appropriate support or help.

Mobile phones, ear buds and any other smart devices are don't allowed to be used during the school day. Devices can be confiscated. Parental support with this is much appreciated.

[Online Safety Policy](#)





IT Arrangements at BFS

School Network

Students need a password and user ID to get on to the school's network.

User ID: Year of joining school (if student joins late, this will be the year their Year Group joined the school) followed by surname dot initial. E.g. 23bloggs.j Password will be given at school.

Please note, BFS does not operate a Bring Your Own Device policy. Students cannot connect their personal devices to the school's network. This is for safeguarding and to protect network security.



School Email

All students are given their own school-based email. Email addresses will normally be of the form:

23bloggs.j@bristolfreeschool.org.uk Password will be given at school.

Year of joining school (if student joins late, this will be the year their Year Group joined the school) followed by surname dot initial@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

My Child at School (MCAS)

All homework and independent learning is set on MCAS, which you can access on the internet from school or home or via the MCAS app. [MyChildAtSchool - Login](#)

Details of your personal login credentials will be shared at the start of the school year.

Microsoft Office 365

Accessing Office365 resources: using the following URL www.office.com sign in using school username and password (username example – 23bloggs.j@bristolfreeschool.org.uk)

The next screen is the school's access screen with school username already displayed. Enter your school password to complete login.

Once access is completed, you will find all the Office 365 resources available to you.





Uniform and Equipment

See full information and links on our [website](#)

The school uniform at BFS is designed to be smart as well as practical. Students are expected to wear school uniform while at school and adhere to the dress code. We know that our students take pride in their uniform and that feeling good about what they wear to school helps them be at their best. You can find full details of our uniform and sportswear policies below and in the student handbooks for Years 7-11. All items of uniform should be clearly named.

The school acknowledges that parents may from time-to-time request variations to the school's dress code on grounds of religion or belief, race, disability, or other special considerations. Any such requests will be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. The school may occasionally relax uniform requirements, for example in particularly hot weather.

Daywear

- Blazer: Navy blue blazer with Bristol Free School badge on the pocket (fitted and straight-cut available). Blazers must be worn at all times.
- Shirt: Pale blue, long or short sleeved with a collar and top button done up, worn with a BFS tie. Shirts must always be tucked in, and ties worn smartly.
- NEW September 23 House Ties: BFS is introducing House ties. This will initially be for Year 7 only. New Year 7 students should buy a house tie and not a school tie.
- All other Year Groups continue to wear their current school tie.
- Jumper (optional): Navy blue V-neck long sleeve with BFS logo. Navy blue V Neck jumper with no logos also allowed.
- School trousers or school skirt: Charcoal straight leg school trousers (not light grey or black) or a pleated charcoal skirt. The skirt should be worn no higher than 5cm above the knee with either tights or socks. No skinny trousers or tight skirts, tracksuit bottoms, leggings, jeans or jean-type trousers.
- Socks or tights: With trousers, black or charcoal socks with no patterns. With skirts, short white or knee length charcoal socks. Plain/neutral or opaque black/navy tights without any patterns or no socks/tights at all.
- Headscarf (optional): Navy blue.



Outwear

- School shoes: Traditional, flat, sensible and polishable black school shoes with distinct heel - lace up shoes to have black laces - no trainers, boots, sandals, kitten heels, platform shoes and no white or coloured laces.
- Coat: Sensible winter coat in plain colour without overt logos. No denim or leather. No extreme commercial logos. No hooded tops. Coats are not a replacement for blazers and should only be worn outside, not inside the buildings.
- School bag: Rucksacks only. They should be able to carry a minimum equivalent of 2 A4 ring-binder files, pencil case and water bottle.





Uniform and Equipment

PE kit

Compulsory

- Polo shirt: Short sleeve, navy/red with BFS logo
- Shorts or skort: Plain navy blue
- Socks (1 pair): Plain navy blue knee length
- Trainers: Sports trainers with non-marking sole.

As an alternative, smart, plain navy PE kit is also allowed as follows:

- Plain navy sports top with collar
- Plain crew neck sweatshirt
- Plain navy shorts, skort, sports leggings or tracksuit bottoms
- Non-branded PE kit must NOT include hoodies or any garments with zips

Compulsory for Extra-Curriculum Sport:

- Shin pads – Football
- Gum shield – Rugby
- Boots – Football and Rugby with plastic/moulded studs for grass

Hair, Jewellery and Make-up

- Hair: Standard school style. Colour must be a natural shade. No extremes in hair dye or style. We have signed up to the Halo Code for Afro textured hair.
- Jewellery: Watch (optional). Maximum of one plain silver or gold stud (of no more than 5mm diameter) per earlobe. No rings, necklaces, chains or bracelets, including charity bands. No other forms of body piercing.
- Make-up: Discreet foundation is permitted. No nail varnish, lip stick, artificial nails, eye shadow, mascara or heavy black lines etc.

School Bag And Essential Equipment

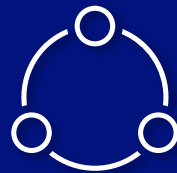
All students need a school bag (rucksacks only) that contains the essential equipment and is strong enough to carry schoolbooks and a water bottle. We expect students to hydrate regularly in the many water foundations around the school and we do not sell or promote buying bottled water in school.

Essential Equipment - Be Prepared for Learning

Students must have the following equipment in every lesson.

- ☒ Black biro
- ☒ Red biro for DIRT
- ☒ Pencils
- ☒ Ruler
- ☒ Eraser
- ☒ Sharpener
- ☒ Protractor 180° or 360°
- ☒ Pair of compasses
- ☒ Scientific calculator
- ☒ Glue stick
- ☒ Reading Book





Reading and Homework

Reading at BFS

BFS is proud to be a Reading school. This means we positively encourage, track and give dedicated time in the school day for students to read. In Year 7 and Year 8, we use the Accelerated Reader Programme that helps us track children's reading ages and their development. We have a wonderful Learning Resource Centre with a wide range of books to encourage all young people to read regularly.



Did you know that children who read for pleasure go on to outperform their peers at GCSE and A level? It improves concentration, widens their vocabulary and encourages curiosity and creativity. Parents can help at secondary school by talking about books they are reading and showing an interest in the genres that interest their child. We often send suggested reading lists and updates to parents/carers through newsletter and letters.



Reading Aloud

We are excited to be building our reading culture at KS3 with the reading aloud initiative. Twice a week during tutor time students will read the same book together, further building their reading confidence, comprehension and knowledge.

Homework and Independent Learning

All homework is set using our [MyChildAtSchool - Login](#) system. Parents can view their child's homework through their account, and we expect all parents to set this up to support their child at BFS. This system is also used to communicate rewards and sanctions such as detentions.

We have a fantastic Learning Resource Centre, which we encourage students to use to support their learning. Homework club runs Monday – Thursday for Key Stage 3.

For Key Stage 4 students, the Study Hub runs Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Students have exclusive access to the ICT suite and are supported by teaching staff.





Reporting

Year 7 to Year 9

How Students are Assessed

Teachers assess students' work continuously and at the end of units of work as well as at the end of each year. The continuous assessment is often referred to as formative assessment, whereas assessment that takes place at the end of a piece of work is usually referred to as summative assessment.

End of Unit and Year (summative assessment)

In Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), we use Stage Ladders for end of year summative assessment. In all subjects this will consider their learning throughout the year. In subjects where there is an end of year examination or equivalent then we also use Stage Ladders to feedback on this.

Subject leaders across the Russell Education Trust have worked collaboratively to draw up these Stage Ladders which set out clear descriptors for what students know and can do as their attainment improves in each subject. Some subjects may use these descriptions of learning during the year and some will assess units of work using marks out of a total.

There is one Ladder per subject, although there are multiple strands within the ladder for different skills (e.g. in Modern Foreign Languages where students are assessed on their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills).

Reporting Progress

Progress towards end of year Stages targets is reported during term 3 and at the end of the academic year where a final holistic Stage is agreed by the class teacher. Parents will also receive one full written report and be able to attend a subject evening to discuss their child's progress.

Continuous, Ongoing (formative) assessment

The purpose of formative assessment is to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback to staff and students. It is sometimes called assessment for learning. It helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses, enable them to improve their self-regulatory skills so that they manage their education well and provides information to staff about the areas students are struggling with so that sufficient support can be put in place.

Formative assessment can be teacher led, peer or self-assessment. Formative assessments have low stakes and usually carry no grade.

Feedback from formative assessment may be in the form of marks, comments or discussion and these may be communicated in writing or verbally.



Reporting

Year 7 to Year 9 continued

What progress are students expected to make?

We would expect students to make one stage of progress per academic year.

This means that students will be progressing well if they move from Stage 2 on entry to Stage 3 at the end of Year 7, Stage 4 in Year 8 and Stage 5 at the end of Year 9. The attainment described in Stage 5 of the ladders represents good progress for most students in Key Stage 3 and readiness to continue the subject to a good GCSE pass in Key Stage 4.

Stages do describe attainment at higher levels than this (up to Stage 7) and many of our students will make more than one stage of progress in some years and move into Key Stage 4 having reached Stage 6 or 7. These students will be well placed to achieve very high grades in their GCSEs. Typical stages that the majority of students will reach are summarised below.

Year 10 to Year 11

How students are assessed

Teachers assess students work continuously and at the end of units of work and at key points during the year. In Year 10, students have a full internal summative exam series in early May. Year 11 students undertake two sets of mock examinations in November and late February

Reporting progress

Progress towards end of year Key Stage 4 targets are reported from the summative assessments outlined above. These are sent to parents as interim reports. Parents will also receive one full written report and be able to attend a subject to discuss their child's progress.

Typical progress stages

Stage	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
7				
6				High
5			High	Typical
4		High	Typical	Support
3	High	Typical	Support	
2	Typical	Support		
1	Support			



Dining

Innovate Catering

Innovate

We are delighted to partner with the students, teachers, and staff at Bristol Free School.

Our aim, along with the school, is to provide all students with an exceptional catering experience. Our very talented Executive Chef and the fantastic catering team will be serving exciting menus packed with healthy ingredients, that are full of variety, and with loads of interesting new things to try. It's important that the food tastes as good as it looks, and we're sure you won't be disappointed.

What's on the menu?

Innovate has long been considered the most inventive school caterer and that's because we're very clear about our food. All our dishes are prepared every day using quality, fresh and seasonal ingredients that are responsibly sourced. As well as ensuring the food on the plate is healthy, we want our customers to understand the importance of eating the right foods and help them with their food and nutrition journey.

Here's a taste of what's to come:

- A huge selection of 'grab and go' items including baguettes, paninis, burritos and salads to name a few, all now using our barcode system to help speed up the queues.
- A variety of healthy, tasty main meals prepared fresh every day from carefully selected ingredients. The menu will follow a similar weekly pattern, so you know what to expect, providing over 35 choices each day in addition to the ever-popular chef specials, fortnightly themed events and loyalty schemes.
- Our Street Vibes range, global street food that tours the world. It's always changing; from Korean fried chicken, Chinese bao buns, to Greek souvlaki, there's always something new to try!
- A salad bar bursting with homemade healthy salads such as pomegranate quinoa, roasted sweet potato and rocket, or chilli, orange and beetroot. All pre-boxed and ready to be collected.
- Theme days: Chinese New Year, American Drive-Thru, BBQ Beach Party, Harry Potter and Love British Food Fortnight, and many more.

What meal deals are available?

The most popular meal deal is the Blue Dot meal deal for £2.50. Students can choose any 4 items (usually 80p each) displaying a blue dot sticker. Items include selected rolls, sandwiches, drinks, cakes and tray bakes, fruit bags, and more! The Blue Dot meal deal is also available to students who have an FSM allowance.

I have a free school meal allowance, what can I have?

The FSM allowance provides for a selection of any items up to the £2.50 daily allowance. We strongly encourage healthy eating and recommend that the allowance is used for a hot main meal, hot wrap, baguette or other nutritious snack plus either a hot pudding, fruit pot or freshly-made cake.

Once you've tried our service, let us know what you think. Drop us an email at hello@impactfood.co.uk to tell us about your dining experience. We look forward to welcoming you.





Parental Payments and Free School Meals

Pupil Premium

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals and you register them for this, the school receives extra funding called Pupil Premium. We use this extra money to improve the educational provision and resources at the school.

Pupil premium funding from the government is given to schools to help pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. It's provided for pupils who:

- Are registered for free school meals
- Have been registered for free school meals at any point in the past 6 years
- Are, or have been, in care
- Have parents in the armed forces

Payments – ParentPay only

BFS is a cashless school. All payments for catering and other items including trips are made using ParentPay. You will be provided with details of how to set up your ParentPay account when your child enrolls.

It is imperative that you create your account and keep it topped up with a cash balance as debt is not allowed, so students will not be able to buy food if there is no money on their account.

Important communications are also shared via ParentPay, such as weekly newsletters and letters.

Free School Meals

To find out if you are eligible to claim free school meals for your children, please click [here](#) to access Bristol City council's online checker. You will need to input your National Insurance number and date of birth. This is a quick online form that takes no more than 5 minutes to complete.

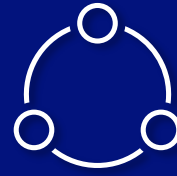
Is my child eligible for free school meals?

You can apply for free school meals and Pupil Premium if you get any of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (if you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit: if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get. This is also called the 'minimum income floor'.) If your child is eligible for free school meals, they will be eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they are in on 31 March 2023.

As well as receiving Free School Meals, any child registered can access financial support for other resources and school activities, such as trips and music lessons.

See full information and links on our [website](#)



Administration

Parent Communication

Parent/Carer communication is extremely important to us.

- Weekly bulletins and newsletters are emailed to all students and parents/carers, giving updates on activity in the school and forthcoming news. Letters will be emailed to parents/carers and posted on the school website.
- The [BFS School website](#) is a good source for all school information including all letters sent, previous newsletters and curriculum information.
- [ParentPay](#) is our communication system used to send school communications to parents/carers. It is also used to manage dinner accounts and access the weekly newsletter. It is very important that you activate your ParentPay account at the earliest opportunity.
- Parent/Carer Subject and Information Evenings provide an opportunity to speak directly with staff. We use a virtual Parent Evening app for subject evenings which will allow parents to organize their own appointment times with teachers.
- [MyChildAtSchool - Login](#) is the online platform teachers use to set homework and award house points. Families will be able to view these through a parent app, alongside any other announcements and detentions.
- You can follow BFS via [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).
- [Studybugs](#) – where there is an illness or medical appointment parents can report directly to the attendance team through the Studybugs app. The alternative to this is to call the attendance team.

- Some parents have created a BFS Facebook page. This is not used or moderated by the School, but can provide regular informal information about the school.

The easiest and quickest way for communication between parents/carers and tutors/Year Leaders is via email. Email admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk and we will ensure your email is sent to the appropriate person and is followed up.

Most contact with parents/carers will be made through the Tutor, via email or phone call. If you need to make appointment to speak to staff, this is welcomed, but they are unable to see you on site without a prearranged appointment.

Please allow 24 hours for a reply. If your issue is more complex, it may take longer as staff are working with students between 8.15am to 4pm.

Trips

We offer a range of residential and non-residential trips. A schedule of residential trips is prepared each year.

If your child qualifies for Free School Meals, you can apply for a contribution towards the total cost of trips. Details of how this is accessed will be explained in each trip letter.



Attendance Policy

Attendance

Attendance matters here at BFS. We encourage our students to be ambitious individuals; this forms a part of our core values.

Good attendance at school is key to attainment, and therefore enables students to achieve at their highest possible level. Evidence shows a link between missing school and performance at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE).

Once a student has a percentage of unauthorised absences above the government threshold within an academic year, they will be classified as persistently absent. The current 'Persistent Absence' threshold according to Government guidelines is 10% of the school year.

Evidence shows that, in general, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the Key Stage, the lower the level of attainment at the end Year 11. Specifically, students with no absences are 2.8 times more likely to succeed by achieving five or more good passes at GCSE, including Maths and English (Department for Education).

As parents and carers, we ask you to work with us to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality. We ask all students to be on-site by 8.25am ready to be in their tutor session at 8.30am.

BFS sets targets of 96% and above as good attendance. All students and families with attendance less than this will receive appropriate support and intervention. In extreme cases the school will work with the Education Welfare Service and will consider Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecution should they be required.

[BFS Attendance Policy](#)

Student Illness

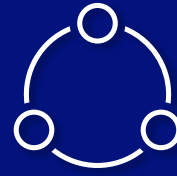
In the case of illness please report your child's absence on the morning of **each and every day** via the Studybugs app. Alternatively, you can telephone the student absence line on 0117 950 8157. In cases where there are prolonged instances of illness or repeated periods of illness, we will require a medical note. In cases of prolonged illness, we will require medical evidence to authorise absence.

Medical Appointments

Please try to make medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, only remove the child from school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Please try to inform the school of the appointment 24 hours in advance through [Studybugs](#) or the attendance absence line.

Studybugs

Please provide school with copies of any medical evidence such as appointment cards, prescriptions, or medication packets so that medical absences can be authorised. If you do not, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Medical absences will not be authorised for a full day unless they relate to hospital or specialist appointment, and we must receive a copy of the appointment letter as evidence.



Attendance Policy

Holidays and Other Absences

We are unable to authorise absence from school except in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, we would ask you to avoid taking holidays during term time.

If this is unavoidable or due to family circumstances such as funerals, please contact the office for an Absence Request Form and email the form to admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk. It is unlikely that term time holidays will be authorised, and 4 or more days will often result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution if the Local Authority deems it appropriate.

BFS and Bristol City Council work together to issue warnings and Penalty Notices under Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) for students with high levels of absence.

A Penalty Notice is a fine up to £120. It is £60, if paid within the first 21 days but then £120 past the 21st day / within the 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will instigate Court Proceedings and the outcome of a prosecution could be up to £2,500 per parent/adult.

This is an alternative to the prosecution of parents/carers/guardians for failing to ensure the regular attendance of a compulsory school age (age 5-16 years) student where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Other criteria for Penalty Notices include where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable explanation or following a truancy call.

Religious Observance

We will authorise absence for legitimate religious observance for one day per observance. They will be authorised on dates set by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Any additional days taken will be classed as unauthorised and may incur a penalty notice.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Please contact us at the earliest possible opportunity if you require any support with your child's attendance. We have interventions on offer for support and we will also be able to signpost external support services.



Behaviour for Learning

Behaviour Expectations

We have very high expectations of student behaviour, as we know that this creates the conditions that young people need to learn and thrive.

This poster is displayed around the school and is the BFS expectations for all students. We also expect students to arrive to lessons on time and move around the school in a calm and orderly way.



All staff are trained in how to adapt their approach to meet the needs of SEND learners. We believe in having clear consistently applied expectations which supports all learners.

If behaviour is serious or persistently not meeting our expectations, then the school may look to place the student within our behaviour support room or may consider possible suspension from school.

[Exclusion Policy.](#)

Behaviour Procedures

Teachers may issue a 1-minute detention. This would take place immediately after the lesson has finished and will allow for the issue to be resolved there and then.

If a student is placed in a partner classroom to work after a formal warning, they must take themselves there immediately and complete the work that has been given to them. Being placed into a partner classroom will also result in a 30-minute detention after school that day.



Detentions

Detentions are set as a result of the following behaviours:

- Late to school. Students should be on-site by 8.25am. After 8.30am will result in detention
- Repeated lateness to lessons
- Use of mobile device during the school day
- Failure to complete homework
- Ongoing concerns in lessons - 1 min detention, possible escalation to whole school 30 min detention
- Any referral to partner classroom
- School Leadership Team Behavioural Call Out
- Uniform breach



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in any school and is central to all aspects of school life at BFS. The school's safeguarding policies and procedures can be found here: [Bristol Free School](#)

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, and all BFS staff are regularly trained on the various elements of safeguarding and child protection. All students are regularly reminded of what to do and who to speak to if they are worried or have any concerns. The school has robust procedures for behaviour and anti-bullying which work alongside safeguarding to ensure the smooth and safe running of the school.

The Dedicated Safeguarding lead is our Deputy Head, Dan East, pictured below.



For low level pastoral concerns or issues families should contact their child's tutor in the normal way. If there are any safeguarding concerns then families should contact the safeguarding team through the school admin office. The school also has an anonymous email address for students or families to use should they find this an easier method of communication: tellsomeone@bristolfreeschool.org.uk



Safeguarding

Anti-bullying

Bullying is not tolerated at BFS – we have an anti-bullying policy (please see the Policies section of the website) and work hard to ensure everyone feels safe and valued in our school. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time.

Bullying could be:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, racist, homophobic, sexist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
- Cyber bullying (defamatory or threatening behaviour by e-mail, mobile phone, or social networking)

We use a Restorative Approach to improve relationships after any incidents of unkindness or bullying. Tutors and pastoral support workers work with anyone involved in an incident of bullying to change behaviour, given the opportunity to apologise and explain and agree actions to prevent it happening again.

We will inform parents/carers of any incidents where students participate in unkind behaviour or bullying. By working together, we can help young people develop healthy, respectful, tolerant relationships with their classmates. If your child is being bullied, knows somebody who is being bullied, or is unhappy about the way another student or students are treating them, please encourage them to tell someone as soon as possible.

If someone makes a racist, disablist, sexist, or homophobic comment, please report it to a member of staff as soon as possible. We are committed to equal opportunities at BFS. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect for who they are.

Please help to keep BFS fair by:

- Speaking to and about everyone with respect
- Reporting any disrespectful comments to a member of staff.

We will take this seriously: racism, discrimination or prejudicial behaviour will not be accepted or overlooked.



Term dates and timings of school day 2023-24

The School Day

The school day has six 50-minute lessons. In addition, the day begins with a 30-minute tutor session, which starts at 8.30am. Students should arrive at school no later than 8.25am. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have separate break and lunchtimes. Whilst lessons end at 3pm, we expect students to take advantage of the many extra-curricular activities on offer.

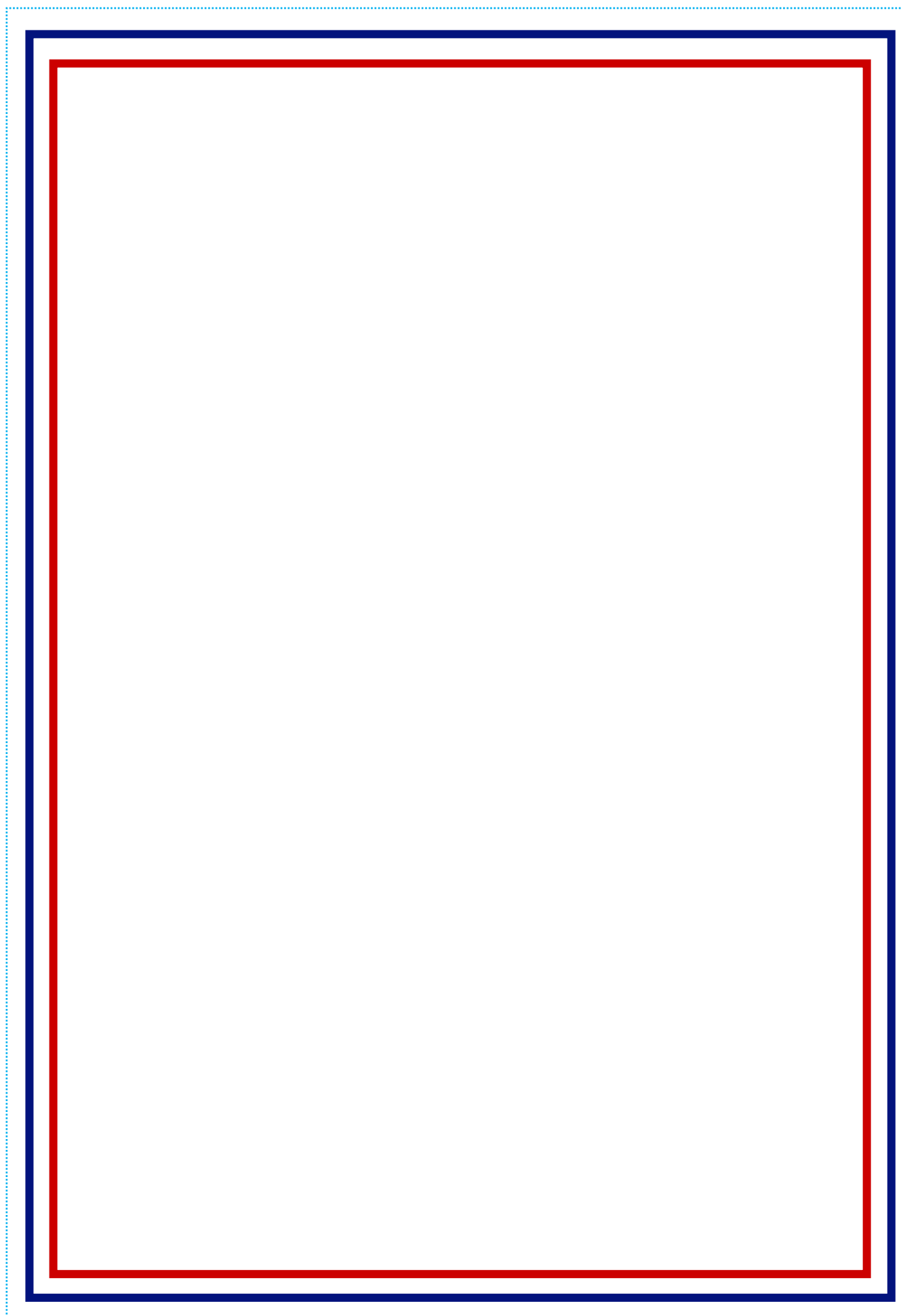
The School Day 2023 – 24	KS3 and Y12	The School Day 2023 – 24	KS4 and Y13
Tutor period <i>Warning bell at 8.25</i>	8:30 – 9:00	Tutor period <i>Warning bell at 8.25</i>	8:30 – 9:00
Period 1	9:00 – 9:50	Period 1	9:00 – 9:50
Break KS3 and Y12	9:50 – 10:10	Period 2	9:50 – 10:40
Period 2	10:10 – 11:00	Break KS4 and Y13	10:40 – 11:00
Period 3	11:00 – 11:50	Period 3	11:00 – 11:50
Lunch KS3 and Y12	11:50 – 12:30	Period 4a	11:50 – 12:40
Period 4b	12:30 – 1:20	Lunch KS4 and Y13	12:40 – 1:20
Period 5	1:20 – 2:10	Period 5	1:20 – 2:10
Period 6	2:10 – 3:00	Period 6	2:10 – 3:00



Term dates and timings of school day 2023-24

Bristol Free School - 2023/2024 Term Dates																											
Sep-23							Oct-23							Nov-23							Dec-23						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10							1			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
25	26	27	28	29	30		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
							23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
							30	31																			
Jan-24							Feb-24							Mar-24							Apr-24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					26	27	28	29				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
May-24							Jun-24							Jul-24							Aug-24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30		

Inset Day	Red Week	Holiday
Year 7 and Year 12 Only - Induction Day	Blue Week	Half Day





RUSSELL EDUCATION TRUST

The Russell Education Trust (RET) is made up of five high-performing 11-18 secondary schools in the south of England. Member schools work together and with RET expert advisers to deliver the very highest standards of teaching and learning; and to support the achievement and happiness of every student across the Trust.

The success of the Trust's schools has been recognised by Ofsted, the Department for Education, and by the communities they serve. The RET family of schools includes:



St Andrew The Apostle School

The religious ethos in the school provides a strong base for the support of pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils speak with pride about their school and relationships in the school.

Ofsted 2018



Becket Keys Church of England School

The headteacher's inspired leadership has quickly established a vibrant, orderly community which enables students to thrive. He ensures that a family atmosphere is fostered across the school in which all students feel cared for and valued.

Ofsted 2014



Kings School

Pupils are confident, articulate and aspiring. They are proud to be part of the school community.

Ofsted 2022



Turing House School

The school has many strengths. Leaders have established an open culture at the school where there is a clear sense of teamwork and community across staff and pupils alike. Everyone takes pride in the school. It is a welcoming and vibrant place.

Ofsted 2018

Bristol Free School Partners



St Monica Trust



Bristol Free School Concorde Drive Bristol BS10 6NJ

T 0117 959 7200 • E admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk • www.bristolfreeschool.org.uk

[Study Bugs](#)

[My Child at School](#)

[ParentPay](#)

Absence line: 0117 950 8157