

SECTION TWO



SCHOOL LIFE

SCHOOL LIFE

The timetabled curriculum is only a part of school life. Our youngsters must learn to be a part of a much larger community than they have been used to, to have responsibility for themselves and their possessions and respect for all others. Developing personal relationships is never easy in year 7: our young people are at an age when they will squabble easily while in the process of establishing friendships with new people and sometimes weakening ties with those with whom they have spent their primary school years.

The information which follows addresses many of the day to day issues which will arise, and is intended to give you a fuller picture of what happens at BRGS.

Absence

If your child needs to be absent because of illness, please ring us to advise us of their absence in the morning on the day of their illness. Please ring in on every day of absence so we know why they are absent. **This is a part of our safeguarding procedure – as so many of our students travel significant distances to school – the telephone call tells us that they are safely at home.** However, you can also use the **INSIGHT App** (daily) to electronically inform us of an absence. If you use the App then you don't need to phone. Upon your child's return to school please send in a letter of explanation for our records. If you have used the **INSIGHT App** you don't need to send in this letter. If your child is incapacitated but feels capable of doing some schoolwork, the Head of Year will arrange for work to be collected together and sent on. Please read our Attendance Policy, included later.

Assemblies

Students attend a main school assembly once a week. The themes within the assembly programme address spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. One week we may be focussing on a specific religious festival, the next we may be considering mental health awareness or men & women who have had an impact in society.

Breakages

We expect all pupils to behave responsibly around school and to be respectful of their environment.

School has to operate under tight budget constraints and ideally BRGS aims to funnel as much of its income as possible towards educational resources; therefore we would expect pupils and parents to be financially responsible for any breakages caused by the pupils and BRGS will notify parents of any reported incidents and will invoice accordingly at whatever it costs to undertake the repairs.

Charges and Remissions

School has a detailed policy available but it can be summed up by saying that education provided by BRGS during school hours is free of charge. Some instrumental music tuition is an exception. BRGS may invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school as in support of any activity

organised by the school. Obviously no charge is made for exam entries at GCSE and A level but if a student wishes to resit an exam or has an unauthorised absence from an exam then the fees will be charged to the parents. If the school provides materials e.g. in food technology and the pupil wishes to take the finished product home then a charge will be made to cover the ingredients. Please read the school policy on charging, which can be found on our website.

Clubs and Societies

We want all our young people to become as involved as possible in the full life of the school. Many represent school on the sports field or in other areas. We hope your child will engage in some of our lunchtime or after school clubs, an opportunity to meet others and have fun.

Communications

Communicating with parents is important, but can be costly in terms of paper and postage costs, and we are seeking to be as efficient as we can.

We have a text messaging system which we will use to pass on short messages – e.g. “your child is coming home with an important letter.” It is important we have an up to date mobile phone number from you in order for you to benefit from this system.

Longer communications will come via email so having an email address for you is also very important.

We also use INSIGHT (see later) to communicate. Being a regular user of INSIGHT is vital.

Disciplinary Procedures

We need to maintain good discipline in school so that all children will achieve their true potential in a safe secure environment. School rules are made clear to the pupils and any infringement will be treated with a sanction. For ‘first offenders’ and minor infringements a ‘telling off’ may suffice. Serious problems are dealt with by school detention.

It is assumed that your acceptance of a place at BRGS confirms your agreement to accept this disciplinary sanction. Please review our Behaviour for Learning Policy, included later.

Eid and Ramadan

School will allow 1 day of authorised absence for the religious observation of Eid. Parents should inform school of the date of the absence in advance and we will then not telephone home to check on the safety of a missing child. Our attendance officer usually telephones home if a student is absent and we haven’t been informed why. This is to check that the child is safely at home. To avoid having Eid celebrations upset by a telephone call from school, please inform your child’s head of year in advance of the day you plan to take to celebrate Eid.

During Ramadan, the advice we follow concerning PE is that the majority of pupils who are fasting are able to take part in most physical activities without putting themselves at risk or danger. Although we are aware fasting can make some children feel tired, drowsy or have headaches due to dehydration, we plan alternative, less strenuous activities during Physical Education lessons

with pupils encouraged to participate with minimal exertion. All students are required to wear PE kit during this time.

Governors

The governors are responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality education. They set the school aims and policies together with the Headmaster. Every school has a governing body. Our governing body comprises:

- Parent governors
- Staff governors
- The Headmaster, Mr A B Porteous
- Community Governors

Holidays

Holidays taken in term time cannot be condoned, because of the effect the absence has on the individual and on the group. Work missed is difficult to 'catch up'.

We are only able to authorise non-medical absences in exceptional circumstances. Please write to the Headmaster if there is an absence request you wish him to consider. Please read our attendance policy for further information.

Insight

As you are aware, communication between schools and parents is a key factor in your child's attainment, progression and engagement. At BRGS, we have long been proud of the effective links we have forged between home and school but are always keen to explore ways we can make this communication more effective.

We now have a parental portal (a way for parents to access information) called INSIGHT. This provides parents with the ability to gain timely, accurate information using a secure live link to the database where we store student data. Insight is a web application hosted in school and works on most popular browsers and Windows mobile devices. Access for parents will be via a link on the school's web site. This will enable parents to log in to access individualised student contact information, subject timetable, attendance, attainment data and exam timetables. Additionally, parents will also be able to receive individualised notices according to specific criteria (year group/form/subject) and notify the school of changes to addresses/contact details. You will receive Insight login details early in September, once your child has joined the school.

Insurance

The school has a comprehensive cover including public and employer liability, UK school trips, etc. However, parents should ensure that their own insurance policy covers for personal possessions taken away from their home, (for P.E. kit, uniform, jackets, books etc and any valuables such as mobile phones, MP3 players etc). The school cannot possibly afford to pay an insurance premium to cover all the pupils' belongings; the lockers are a service offered by the school but the establishment does not accept any responsibility for any item becoming missing.

Internet use for students

Our Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) has been drawn up to help your son/daughter understand their responsibilities and to explain our expectations when they are using school computers and they should read and ensure they understand it. Failure to keep to the agreement could lead to access to the school computer system being withdrawn for a period of time.

The Acceptable Use Policy can be found in the additional booklet in Section 5.

Late Arrival

If your son or daughter arrives late, s/he must go to the General Office and sign in. If the lateness is because of a medical, or similar, appointment, we should be grateful for prior warning or they must produce their appointment card or a letter from parents when they come to sign in. We are unable to authorize absences for medical/dental reasons without supporting evidence. The same expectation is applied to pupils leaving school early. They must sign out at the general office and produce an appointment card or letter, or school should have received prior warning from parents.

Lockers

Each Year 7 pupil will be given a locker for the storage of books and equipment. We ask that pupils bring in a padlock to ensure security. The staple bar on the padlock must be at least 5mm thick and the metal box approximately 4 x 3 cm e.g. Abus code 65/40. To combat forgetfulness, we recommend that a label bearing your child's name is attached to the spare key and that this is handed in for safe keeping to the Form Tutor.

Lost Property

Lost property is kept at the back of the main hall and valuables in our Pastoral Manager's Office. At some times of the year we have mountains of it, most of it unnamed. Year 7 pupils are particularly good at losing their belongings: one or two will report each week that something has been 'stolen'. It very rarely has; the missing item can usually be traced back to the last room they were in.

Please ensure all your child's belongings are named.

A bag for carrying belongings around is essential (any colour), but it should not be so big as to create a problem in itself.

Please discourage your child from bringing into school inessential items, for example jewellery or large sums of money.

Displays of unnamed lost property will be held in the hall on a half termly basis. Lost property that is named will be reunited with its owner.

Mobile Phones

We appreciate the usefulness of mobile phones, but pupils must use them responsibly. Phones must be switched off during lessons, and must be left in bags or lockers during tests and examinations. Please see our mobile phones policy included later.

ParentPay

We have introduced a more convenient way to pay for school meals, trips, and much more online, using a secure service called ParentPay.

ParentPay offers you the freedom to make payments whenever and wherever you like, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - safe in the knowledge that the technology used is of the highest internet security available.

You will have a secure online account, activated using a unique username and password; you will be prompted to change these, and to keep them safe and secure. If you have more than one child at our school, you can merge their accounts to create one login for all your children.

Making a payment is straightforward and ParentPay holds a payment history for you to view at a later date; no card details are stored in any part of the system. Once you've activated your account you can make online payments straight away.

Pastoral Care

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, are concerned for the welfare of your child. On a day-to-day basis your child will relate mostly to the Form Tutor, who will be responsible for registration at the beginning of morning school, and who will get to know your child and monitor his or her progress.

The Form Tutors are supported by the Head of Year, Mrs S. Bowdler, who should be notified of any problems or concerns and, indeed, of any out of school achievements! Mrs Bowdler will remain with your child through to year 11. Mr. J. Johnstone is Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) and, as such, has overall responsibility for years 7 - 11.

At lunchtime a team of Welfare Assistants who are stationed at various strategic points through school will ensure that all runs smoothly.

Photographs

As parents I am sure that you are aware that there are times when the press want to join in celebrating the success of BRGS. If we have achieved something special they like to publish photographs of the students.

We need to have a policy because it is possible that some parents do not want pictures of their children published because it would make it easier for a 'parent' without access rights to trace their whereabouts.

Please see our policy on taking photographs of students, which can be found in Section 5.

PTA - BRGS Parent Teacher Association

Welcome, as a parent, to BRGS. We would like to give you a flavour of what the PTA does, and how you can benefit from taking part.

Meetings

The PTA meets six times a year and the meetings last an hour and a half. See the website www.brgs.org.uk for details of our first meeting in September.

Fundraising

There are two main fundraisers

- 200 Club
- Annual Raffle

Benefits

In the last 10 years the PTA has raised about **£75 000** plus given **£50 000** as 200 club prizes.

The money has been used in school to benefit students: new lockers; subsidised events and trips; a new sound system; sports hall equipment; the library and much more.

IF YOU ATTEND PTA MEETINGS YOU CAN HAVE A SAY IN WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT.

Benefits of the PTA for you as a parent to the secondary sector:

- You are able to meet other parents and are able to discuss the life in school that you never hear about from your child!
- You get to know the school layout and staff very well
- You receive information from senior staff about school developments
- You are better informed
- You make new friends
- You can influence/assist/develop fundraising

Pupil Post

We don't use it as students tend to leave loose letters being sent home. All communications will be via text message, e-mail or INSIGHT.

Rewards

We seek to reward pupils when they perform well and achieve. You can read more about rewards in the Behaviour for Learning section that appears later.

School Day

School is open from 7 am each morning, although there is no direct supervision of students at this time. Some students arrive early and sit in their form rooms reading or talking. While there are staff on site, formal supervision doesn't begin until 8.25 am Morning registration begins at 8.45 am and the school day concludes at 3.15 pm. each day and homework club runs until 4.15 pm. Unless students are involved in an after school club, they should leave the school site at 3.15 pm.

School Nurse

Our school nurse is Mrs S. Baines, who can be contacted at any time in school.

School Trips

We are committed to providing all students with the opportunities to learn and develop through participation in school trips and other off-site activities. Some schools collect a single consent at the start of a child's school career. We prefer to seek consent for each individual activity and in doing so ask parents to review any medical information we have on their child so it is completely up to date at the point of the activity. The school trips consent form in the "Consent" section of this handbook is a starting point and allows us to collect some basic medical information.

Relationships and Sex Education within PSHE

At BRGS, we strongly believe that the Relationships and Sex Education is part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum is an essential part of the education we provide to our students, enabling them to develop into well-rounded adults. Please see the additional information about Relationships and Sex Education Policy and Practice in Section 5.

Sickness

(see also note on **ABSENCE**)

If your child is taken ill during the course of the day, or first aid has to be administered, s/he should report to the Nurse. Your child may spend a little time recovering in the Medical Room and will return to class when appropriate. If we feel a student should go home, we ring you (please note, we cannot send a sick child home unaccompanied). It is important that the emergency contact numbers are kept up to date. On no account should your child ring you to be asked to be taken home.

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness please contact the school office on the day of sickness.

Please keep us informed of any allergies, medication etc.

Target Setting and Monitoring of Progress

In Year 7, your child's target will be a projected numerical GCSE grade. This grade indicates the minimum grade which your child should be working towards in Year 11 in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills that he/she will be learning over the next 5 years.

Although we do not explicitly talk to Y7 students in depth about GCSE grades as the focus is on their progression, we do assess and monitor their progress against the Government's estimate of their likely Year 11 GCSE grades.

To make these estimates, the Government uses your child's level of achievement at the end of Year 6. We then create minimum projected GCSE targets for your child. This helps us to ensure that your child is making good progress and to know whether he/she is meeting expected progress to eventually meet or exceed his/her projected GCSE grades.

For example: if your child's projected grade is 6+, his/her Key Stage 2 achievement will have suggested that he/she should eventually achieve GCSE grades 6-9 in Year 11.

Twice a year in Year 7, and three times for Year 8 & 9, you will receive information about your child's progress towards his/her estimated grade range reported as 'Exceeding Expected Progress', 'Meeting Expected Progress' and 'Working Towards Expected Progress'. You will also receive an 'Attitude to Learning' grade (ATL).

During the school year, each subject teacher will also set individual curriculum targets for your child to guide them on the next steps in their learning, called 'Statements for Action' (SA).

Travelling to and from School

While travelling to and from school, our students are our representatives and ambassadors and should behave in a responsible and courteous way. School uniform must be worn to and from school.

Students may enter school immediately upon arrival but parents should note that close pupil supervision does not begin until ten minutes before the start of school and as such the pupils are not insured if they enter school earlier.

Uniform

The official uniform list is included. We do insist that all pupils wear the make and model specified and that a plain outer-coat, dark blue or black, is worn. All clothing and equipment must be named. A catalogue showing suitable school shoes is enclosed. Parents do not have to purchase shoes from the catalogue supplier. Uniform checks are frequent. We do ask for your support in this area.

Visits

School visits range from fieldwork outings, theatre visits to much longer school holidays such as trips to the U.S!