



Dear Parents/Carers

It is a myth, I think, that as schools approach the last half term of the year life becomes less hectic and busy. Certainly as we hurtle towards the end of the year the next six or so weeks promise to be anything but quiet.

We are of course close to finishing GCSE exams; I am confident the students will do well but urge you to continue to support them in their efforts until the last exam. Staff will be running revision classes and extra sessions throughout the remaining exam diet. There is then a long wait until results day on August 24th when students will be able to collect their results from school at 10.00am. We look forward to celebrating their success with them.

Before then however we have lots going on. On 29th June we are holding a day investigating the culture and festivals of Islam. Though the day is part of our long term program of religious education and has been planned for some time it is something which is particularly poignant and important given recent events in London and Manchester. I recognise this is a sensitive issue, and would welcome comments and questions if you have any concerns about this.

We are also looking forward to this year's Bike Challenge – the Castles and Coast ride – which will take place from 15th - 17th July. Intrepid cyclists from Beacon Hill and Solway will set out from Carlisle Castle on the morning of the 15th and we hope as many parents as possible will be there to give them a good send off. Bike club members from both schools are furiously fundraising to support their challenge and would like to thank everyone who has supported them in their adventures.

Another big adventure is a French trip which will see students from Beacon Hill travelling to celebrate Bastille day at Workington's twin town in France, Val-de-Reuil. This will be a fantastic experience for the students and we are delighted to be able to offer them the opportunity to engage with not only French students, but also German and Polish students from other twin towns.

On that note, collaboration between Beacon Hill and Solway continues to work well. Staff and students are finding opportunities to share resources and experience to improve outcomes for all. This half term sees the first Beacon Hill students joining History and Geography GCSE classes at Solway; Maths staff from Solway have delivered joint revision sessions for Beacon Hill students; PE and Art teachers from Beacon Hill have run Art projects and sports fixtures across the two schools, including a hard fought rounders tournament at Solway, and we are looking forward to cycling together in July.

This is the time of year where thoughts turn to holidays; can I remind you that I am unable to authorise holidays taken in term time, and ask you to please avoid taking your children out of school as this has a clear detrimental effect on their education. This is a serious issue for schools, and students with low attendance records will come to the attention of the attendance officer at school and within the local authority. I understand this can be a difficult issue and again, please contact me at school if you wish to discuss it.



Parents and carers of Y7 students are invited into school for the Y7 parents' evening on the 27th June between 16.00 and 18.00. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress with their subject teachers and form tutors and where possible I would encourage everyone to attend.

I would like to draw your attention to a fantastic evening planned in order to raise money for the Bike Challenge. Celebrity Chef John Crouch will be delivering a full cookery demonstration followed by a three course meal for all who wish to attend our pre-Castle ride Medieval Banquet! A limited number of tickets will be on sale shortly for £12 and include the three course meal. Please watch out for details coming soon. Students will also be selling raffle tickets over the coming weeks to win one of dozens of prizes kindly donated by local businesses.

Though we consider many trips and visits to hold a great deal of value and benefit to the students, may I please remind you that we are unable to authorise term time holidays in all but the most serious of exceptions. Given the heightened profile of term time holidays and the Local Authority's stated intention to prosecute I would urge you to only book holidays during the school holiday dates. These are on our website and I have attached them below to avoid any confusion. I understand this can be disappointing and thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

So, another busy few weeks beckons. If you would like to get involved, we are looking for parent Governors to help lead the school forward through these interesting times; being a Governor is challenging but very rewarding, influencing the strategic direction of travel of the school in a time of change, and having a say in our students' experiences. If you are interested in talking about becoming a Governor, please arrange a meeting with myself through the school office – I'd be delighted to meet you!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Schafer".

Judith Schafer
Interim Executive Headteacher

2017-18 Term Dates

Autumn Term

Wednesday 6th September - Wednesday 20th December

Half Term Monday 23rd - Friday 27th October

Spring Term

Thursday 4th January – Thursday 29th March

Half Term Monday 12th - Friday 16th February

Summer Term

Tuesday 17th April – Friday 20th July

Half Term Monday 28th May – Friday 1st June