



23 October 2023

OCTOBER UPDATE

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope everyone is well and the recent floods haven't caused you any significant difficulties. It was a tricky end to last week to say the least. Closing early is always something we want to avoid, but on Friday we started to receive information about the travel difficulties caused by the heavy rains, especially around the River Derwent and towards Duffield. I made the decision to close early to give extra time for students to travel home safely. It was a complicated process to manage, with no easy solutions, and I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

These extreme weather events seem to be becoming increasingly common, so we are going to be revising our early closure procedure, taking into consideration the additional traffic early closures cause in the local area and the school car park. I will send out the new plans in the coming weeks once we have had a time to fully work through them.

One issue I do want to address is what happened in school during the heavy rains. There is a picture on social media of a flooded classroom from "Belper School". It isn't from us! I think we all know how misinformation on social media spreads, and this is a prime example.

There were several leaks through the roof and so we did need to have to have lots of strategically placed buckets, although there were no flooded classrooms. Also two polystyrene type square roof tiles broke due to leaks. No one was hurt and those small areas were cordoned off.

I am pleased to say that these site problems are being fixed with a £2 million project which started in September 2023. Half the roofing is being replaced over the next 12 months and most of the ceiling in the main building is also being replaced as part of the rewiring project. This should sort those problems out in the longer term. Unfortunately, some of the roofing work does seem to have made the leaks worse than usual because it is not yet complete, but this will be resolved. As the saying goes, it never rains but it pours!

Please note that the weather forecast for this week is for more rain most days, which may be heavy at times, so please take care when travelling.

Just a quick reminder that school finishes at the end of the day on Friday 27 October 2023 for half term and we re-open on Monday 6 November 2023 (which will be timetable week 1).

Parent App

Unfortunately we have had a few minor teething problems introducing the new student database (called Bromcom). All the core functions work well, but there are still some bugs to iron out before we can release the app to parents/carers. I expect it to be in place by the end of November 2023 and apologise for the delay.

Cashless Catering

The new cashless catering system is up and running and working well. Now that the base system is in place, we are going to look at what we can do to further develop the parent app and will let you know more when we can. Thank you for your support with this and I hope you are finding it helpful.

Energy Efficiency

On the theme of climate change, I am pleased to inform you that the project to replace our lighting with energy efficient LED lights and energy efficiency controllers is well under way. The first classrooms have been finished and the work on the next classrooms begins on Monday 23 October 2023.

The project is split into 4-5 week blocks, with each block involving around 4-5 classrooms. Unfortunately, there will be some disruption, however we are ensuring that this does not affect students in Years 11 and 13 (as these students are in exam years). We will do what we can to manage the project to keep disruption to a minimum.

The project will last until next autumn but will, in the longer term, save a considerable amount of money and reduce our carbon footprint. We are also looking at expanding our use of solar panels with similar aims.

Lateness

Following a review of our attendance and behaviour systems, late detentions for students being either late to school or late to lesson, are 30 minutes after school the following school day (unless students already have a detention that day, in which case, the detention will be scheduled for the next available day).

The expectation is that all students need to be through the school doors by 8.35am each morning or they will receive a late mark in their planner and a 30-minute detention the next day. We do appreciate that those students travelling to school on the bus are not in control of their arrival times, therefore if the buses are late students will not be marked as such. We have not issued any late marks for last Friday (20 October 2023), due to the travel difficulties which many parents/carers/students were already experiencing due to the rain.

Car Park in front of Leisure Centre

May we remind our parents/carers that the car park directly in front of the Leisure Centre (cobble area) is for Belper Leisure Centre users only.

Reminders

- We would ask for your help in supporting your child to be fully prepared for their day at school to ensure that there is no need for you to be dropping items off for them. It is always good practice for students to get their bag ready the night before to ensure that they have everything they need to avoid any last-minute panic in the mornings.
- Please note that the use of electronic scooters (e-scooters) is not permitted on pavements, footpaths or public roads by law. We would ask parents/carers to ensure that students do not use this mode of transport for travel to/from school.

MFL News

We've had an exciting start to the school year in the Languages Department. 28 Japanese students from Toyota City schools joined us in school for 2 days, where they attended lessons, performed a song for us and overwhelmed us with their friendliness and generosity. Two online sessions to connect Belper students and Japanese students are planned for this month to further develop our partnership with schools in Toyota City.

In the same week, 11 GCSE students took part in a Business Language Champions competition, which involved designing a space hotel, delivering a group engineering presentation in English and a marketing presentation in French or German. They experienced problem solving, managing a budget, working to tight deadlines, honing presentation skills and developing their teamwork skills. We are very proud of the students, who were a credit to Belper School with their professional approach to the day.

I hope you have a great half term break and that the weather improves!

With my best wishes



Nick Goforth
Headteacher