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Dear Belper Families,

Belper School May Newsletter

As we head into the final half term before summer, school continues to be a busy, positive, and purposeful place. Over the past few weeks, our students have represented Belper School and Sixth Form Centre brilliantly, whether through examinations, enrichment opportunities, sporting events, work experience, or simply through the kindness, resilience, and maturity they show every day. It has been lovely to see so many students getting involved in school life, supporting one another, and making the most of the opportunities available to them. Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It makes a huge difference and helps us maintain the strong sense of community we are proud of here at Belper.

Dinner Money Reminder

At present, the school has a number of unpaid dinner money debts. Unfortunately, the school budget is unable to continue absorbing these costs, and we are no longer in a position to fund meals where there are insufficient funds on a student's account.

With effect from Monday 1 June 2026, school meals will only be provided where there is sufficient credit available. If an account is in debt, a meal will not be supplied until the balance has been cleared or arrangements have been agreed with the school.

We understand that families may experience financial difficulties, and we are keen to work with parents and carers to find a solution. If you are experiencing hardship or believe you may be eligible for free school meals, please contact the school as soon as possible so that we can offer guidance and support in confidence.

We kindly ask that any outstanding balances are settled promptly to avoid disruption to your child's meals at school.

If your child already qualifies for free school meals, they will continue to receive their daily allowance of £3.55, although additional funds can still be added to ParentPay should you wish them to purchase extra items.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us ensure that this system operates fairly and sustainably for all families.

Enrichment Opportunities at Belper School and Sixth Form Centre

Duke of Edinburgh

Yesterday, 117 of our students set off on their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Expedition. This is a two-day expedition, which tests resilience, independence, and teamwork. We look forward to hearing all about their experiences when they return later today. It is great that we have such a large cohort of students who choose to take part in this enrichment opportunity that forms part of our personal development offer here at Belper School and Sixth Form Centre.

Year 8 Work Experience

Meanwhile, 12 of our Year 8 students have been taking part in a fantastic work experience placement this week, supported by Vaillant at the Derby Museum of Making. The placement began on Monday and finishes today. The students have approached the opportunity with great enthusiasm and maturity, and we are proud of how well they've represented the school throughout.

Mini – Marathon

On Monday, the PE department hosted our annual mini-marathon. The 2.6-mile (4km) mini marathon was a fantastic display of resilience and spirit. Starting in bright sunshine before turning into a torrential downpour, the weather tested everyone, but all 36 students, from Year 7 to Year 12, pushed through without giving in.

Standout performances included Kieran H (Year 12), who finished first male in an outstanding 14:49, and Joyce L (Year 8), first female in an excellent 15:09. A special mention also goes to Year 7's Oscar W, who ran an impressive 15:05. These performances were anchored by a lovely group of Year 7 girls who came and walked.

Overall, a brilliant event showcasing perseverance, teamwork and some exceptional running. Well done everyone, and thanks to the PE staff that helped me to run the event.

Farewell (for now), Year 11!

Last Friday marked the final full day in school for our Year 11 students as they started their study leave. They have been exceptional throughout the examination period so far – focused, respectful, and clearly well-prepared. We are immensely proud of their efforts and wish them all the very best for the final stretch after half term. Keep going – the finish line is in sight!

Of course, this isn't goodbye just yet. We still have a few important weeks ahead, including the all-important Prom – a well-deserved celebration of all they've achieved. And for more than half of our students, this is not the end of their journey with us, but simply the start of a new chapter, as they return to us in the Sixth Form.

A reminder that our Sixth Form Induction Day will take place on Friday 3 July. This day is a great opportunity to explore subject choices further and prepare for the exciting transition into post-16 study.

Year 10 Mock Exams

As our Year 11 students complete their exams, our focus will shift to Year 10. Their mock exams begin shortly after half term and are an important checkpoint at this stage of their GCSE course. The results will help us identify where support may be needed and guide their thinking ahead of post-16 choices. We'll be running visits to our Sixth Form later in the term and look forward to helping them take those next steps with confidence.

Changes to PE Kit

Earlier this week, families received a letter outlining changes to our PE kit which will come into effect from September 2026.

The updated kit has been designed to simplify the current uniform, modernise the design, and make expectations clearer for students and families. The revised kit moves to a unisex model and reduces the number of compulsory items, while still providing suitable clothing for both indoor and outdoor activities throughout the year.

Importantly, all current PE kit items will continue to be accepted indefinitely, meaning there is no expectation for families to purchase new items immediately. Students may continue wearing existing kit and handed-down items between siblings and friends, this is perfectly acceptable.

The new kit has been designed with practicality and affordability in mind, using lightweight sports fabrics that are durable, quick-drying, and suitable for a wide range of activities. The core PE kit remains centred around royal blue tops with plain black shorts, socks, and shin pads as before. We are grateful to the PE department and to students who contributed ideas and feedback during the redesign process, and we hope families will welcome the simplified approach. Further details, including the full kit list, are available on the school website.

Mobile Phone Changes

Thank you to the parents and carers who have contacted us following the letter sent earlier this month regarding changes to our mobile phone procedures from Monday 8 June.

As outlined in the letter, mobile phones brought into school will need to be switched off and stored securely in student lockers throughout the school day. Phones will no longer be permitted in bags or pockets and may not be used during break or lunchtime.

We are very fortunate that mobile phone misuse is already rare at Belper School, and the overwhelming majority of our students manage technology responsibly. Because of this, we are confident that the transition to the revised procedures will be smooth and successful.

A frequently asked questions section will be added to the school website after half term in response to some of the queries we have received. We have also received a number of requests regarding alternatives such as MP3 players or handheld devices. At present, these will not be permitted unless they form part of an existing agreed provision, such as within a student passport or EHCP. We will review this position in the future once the new procedures are fully established.

Thank you, as always, for your support and partnership as we introduce these changes.

Warm Weather Reminder

After what feels like a very long wait for sunshine, we are finally beginning to see some warmer weather arrive!

As temperatures rise, please encourage students to bring a refillable water bottle to school each day so they can stay hydrated. Bottles can be refilled at designated times during the school day.

A quick reminder also that students should continue to dress appropriately for school and that aerosols are not permitted on site for safety reasons. Roll-on deodorants may be brought instead. Students spending time outside during breaks may also wish to bring sunscreen, while supervised indoor spaces remain available for anyone preferring to stay out of the sun during particularly warm days.

Message from the Chair of Governors

As Chair of Governors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at Belper School and Sixth Form Centre for their continued hard work and commitment to our students. Parents and carers will be aware of the financial pressures currently facing schools across the country, and I would like to recognise the excellent work of school leaders and staff in managing the budget carefully whilst continuing to prioritise students' education and wellbeing.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the many staff who have gone above and beyond to ensure that lessons are covered by teachers with subject-specialist knowledge wherever possible. This has required considerable teamwork, flexibility, and dedication, and it is greatly appreciated by the Governing Board.

We are extremely proud of the professionalism, care, and commitment shown by colleagues across the school, and I am sure parents will join us in thanking them for everything they do for the young people of Belper.

Jon Martin, Chair of Governors

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We wish all our students and families a relaxing and enjoyable half term break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back soon for the final weeks of the academic year.

With best wishes,



Matilde Warden

Headteacher, Belper School and Sixth Form Centre