Biddenham
International School & Sports College
Principal: Mr David Bailey Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

11th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Back to school update

It has been wonderful to see our returning students back in school, and we extend a particularly warm welcome to our new Year 7 and Year 12 students who have joined the Biddenham International School and Sports College community. The school feels lively, focussed and connected, with a strong sense of shared community already evident. It has been a purposeful start to the year, and we are excited about what lies ahead.

As the term gets under way, this is a timely opportunity to highlight some of the key processes and expectations that support the smooth and successful running of the school.

The importance of attendance and punctuality

Good attendance is crucial for exam success. Every year on results days we see students with good attendance achieving on average **at least a whole grade higher** than their peers with lower attendance. However, it's about so much more than academic performance. When students attend school regularly, they develop a sense of belonging and feeling valued as part of our school community. Daily attendance allows students to spend time with friends, reinforces routines and builds resilience. While we recognise that technology has its place in education, there is simply no substitute for learning alongside a teacher who can guide, support and respond to each student's individual needs in real time.

Why punctuality matters

Every minute of learning time counts. When students arrive late, they miss valuable teaching that cannot be fully recovered. Beyond the immediate impact on learning, punctuality is an essential life skill that will serve our students well in their future careers and personal lives. Arriving in time also demonstrates respect - for our teachers, who have prepared engaging lessons, and for fellow students whose learning can be disrupted by late arrivals. The school gates close at **7.55am** on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and at **8.45am** on Tuesday. Students will be late for school if they arrive after this time. Please remember that all communication about your child's attendance should go through the **MCAS (My Child At School)** app, and will be monitored closely by the school.

School uniform expectations

We believe in a 'Look smart - thinks smart' approach to school uniform, and all students are expected to wear full school uniform each day. To keep costs manageable for families, we have limited the number of school-branded items to three, plus the tie, across both our standard uniform and PE kit. You can review our complete uniform requirements on our website here.

- **Compulsory items:** School blazer, PE top and school tie (branded)
- **Optional items:** School jumper (branded)
- **Generic uniform items:** Black trousers (not leggings) and black shoes (not trainers). Head coverings, where worn, must be in our school uniform colours of navy or black.
- **Jewellery:** Students may wear one item only of each of the following: watch, small ring, bracelet, small necklace (worn under the shirt), and one simple stud earring in each pierced ear. No other body

or facial piercings are permitted. All jewellery must be removed for PE and Games activities, and for other practical lessons where appropriate.

- **Hair:** Hair should be of a natural colour, as detailed in our uniform code.

Equipment

At Biddenham, students are provided with a chromebook, chromebook bag and charger to support their learning. Please ensure that they are looked after carefully and that students come to school with their chromebook fully charged and ready to learn.

Travelling to school

Walking and cycling: the healthier choice

We actively encourage students to walk or cycle to school wherever possible. Regular active travel helps students develop independence, improves their physical and mental health, and sets positive habits for life. Students who walk or cycle to school arrive more alert and ready to learn.

For students who cycle, please ensure they wear a cycle helmet and reflective clothing for safety. For additional cycling safety tips, follow this link.

If you need to travel by car

To reduce congestion and improve safety around our school site, we ask that you consider dropping students off on the road outside school rather than entering the school grounds. This allows students to walk the final part of their journey and helps keep our site safer for everyone.

If it is essential to enter the school site, please:

- Drive carefully with consideration for pedestrians and other road users
- Follow the one-way system around the turning circle (do not drive across the traffic flow)
- Park only in designated areas
- Use the marked drop-off and pick-up points

Working together, we can create a safer, healthier environment for all our students.

Please note: Road closure on Gold Lane coming into Biddenham from 14.09.26 - 06.10.26 Weekdays 08:00am - 18:00pm

Mobile phones

Biddenham is a 'mobile-free' school. You can view our full mobile phone policy here. The government has mandated that all schools should be a mobile phone-free environment by default, meaning "pupils should not have access to their mobile phones throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime."

This reflects our commitment to creating a focused, safe, and positive learning environment for all students. This expectation to be mobile-phone free is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, and

research consistently shows that mobile phones can be a significant distraction, contribute to anxiety and social pressures, and, at times, lead to safeguarding concerns.

Since implementing this policy in the summer term, we have observed significant benefits across our school community. Our classrooms are noticeably more focused, with students engaging more deeply in their learning and participating more actively in lessons. Perhaps most encouragingly, we are seeing healthier social interactions during break and lunchtimes, with students talking face-to-face, playing together, and building stronger friendships without the distraction of screens.

We're incredibly grateful for the strong partnership between home and school. Working together, we create a supportive, positive environment where every student can flourish. Thank you for everything you do to support your child's education.

Yours faithfully,





Mr D Bailey
Principal

Ms E Grylls
Head of School