This month at SBL Academy

Dear Parents/Carers

As I said in my letter to all parents/carers at the end of our second week back in school I couldn’t be more proud of the start that has been made by students and staff. It has been wonderful to welcome our new Year 7 students and thank you to parents/carers for encouraging them to complete their masks over the summer. I know that the Tutors and Curriculum Teams have enjoyed getting to know your children and this was a great way to gain an understanding and an appreciation of them. We intend to display these in our dining hall over the course of this term so that when things return to normal students will be able to view their work.

Everyone at the Academy has adapted well to the changes that we have had to put in place and have respected zoning. We have had to make very few changes to our operating plan which we are reviewing on a daily basis in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. One of the key components of our operating plan has been the need to limit access to site for parents and carers and I would like to thank you for your understanding and cooperation regarding this. I know this may be frustrating but hopefully the communication structure on the website has ensured that you have received contact from staff.

Parent/carer evenings at this moment will still be conducted as per our calendar but as you will understand they cannot be held on site. We are currently exploring through discussions with staff the best way for parents and carers to receive feedback on the progress their child is making and we will be in touch shortly with arrangements. This is likely to involve an extended remote live meeting with your child’s tutor followed by some calls with curriculum teachers where there are concerns. I know this is not ideal but at this current time we cannot operate in any other way.

Normally at this time of year we will have hosted our Annual Open Evening and Tours of the school for prospective Year 7 students looking to join the Academy in 2021. Unfortunately, this will not be possible so we are preparing a number of video links which can be observed by parents/carers and Year 6 students. I mention this, as you may wish to view these when they are completed as it will give you an insight into our curriculum and what your child is studying.

As well as welcoming our new Year 7 students, our Sixth Form students have resumed their studies with our student numbers again increasing significantly with 60% of our Year 11s staying on with us. This speaks volumes for the confidence they have in their teachers and the school and we are pleased that they have been able to do so. Our GCSE outcomes again improved significantly with 81% of students achieving grade 9-4 in English and Maths and over 60% achieving a grade 9-5. We also saw the percentage of students achieving grades 7-9 double this year.

Student Leadership Team

At the end of last year, we elected our Year 11 Student Leadership Team for 2020-21 comprising of three Student Principals and three Vice Principals.

All of the candidates introduced themselves and shared their ideas for further improving the school via a video assembly. The entire school community then participated in an online vote and interviews were held over Zoom. The successful candidates were then announced and they will soon be presented with their exclusive, limited edition, embroidered ties.

The team have already made an impressive open evening video and they have loads of fantastic ideas that they will be working on over the course of this year. I very much look forward to working with them.

Mr Jones
Assistant Principal
You may remember that we were selected to take part in the Ofsted ‘Pilot’ inspections last year and received some excellent feedback. We were again selected to take part in their most recent pilot and were very pleased to welcome an Ofsted team to the Academy for a visit on Thursday 17 September. This visit gave us the opportunity to celebrate the improvements that have been made in the last 3 years at SBL and the support we have received as part of our Trust.

The team was led by Karl Sampson the Deputy Director of the South West, he was supported by Caroline Dulan, Senior HMI. Bradley Simmons the Director of the South West also attended for the day to observe the process and to see how far the Academy has come since our last inspection.

The SLT were fully involved in discussions around curriculum, attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and remote learning in the context of covid-19 and our return from extended closure. We were very pleased to share with the team the success we have had in returning to school quickly and efficiently. Our approach has always been to make things as ‘normal’ as possible for our students and it was no surprise to us that attendance at the time of the visit was above 95%.

Our students have adapted well to our operational plan and have responded well to being back in normal lessons. Our site is well-suited to ‘zoning’ so we have been able to avoid making any changes to the school day. All of this was discussed with Ofsted who were encouraged by our high attendance rates and well-organised approach to returning to school. The team recognised that this demonstrates the high levels of confidence that our community has in our attempts to make the return to school as safe as possible.

The focus of all conversations was on the impact that Covid-19 has had on our students, families and staff. We were able to assure them that we had planned appropriately to support all parties during the period leading up to re-opening and had communicated all plans effectively. We also focussed on the impact that this has had on student learning and how we have started to address those gaps as part of a Trust wide approach.

The visit went very well and we received some excellent comments from the team concerning how we had our students at the heart of our planning. We enjoyed the dialogue with experienced inspectors and hope to see them for a full inspection soon in order for us to demonstrate that SBL is once again a school that provides a high quality learning experience for its students.

Thank you again for the work that you are doing to keep people safe within our community and for reminding your children of their responsibilities at this difficult time. In order to keep everyone at the Academy safe it is vital that parents/carers inform us of any issues as quickly as possible so that we can act to keep your children safe.

Please remember HANDS, FACE, SPACE.

D Anderson
Principal

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**Careers**

Students are enjoying weekly careers education lessons every Friday in their tutor session. We have launched a competition to design a careers logo. The winning logo will be placed on all careers literature both internally and externally to highlight more clearly and explicitly the great work we do within SBL Academy for Careers. There have been some fantastic entries so far! There is a prize for the winner and will be brilliant for their CV. The deadline for entries is Friday 9th October so get designing!

In tutor, we have covered the excellent help available for Careers education both within the academy and through external agencies. All students have been re-introduced to Careerpilot which we are proud to be a Super User of! Careerpilot is a fantastic free online resource for all age groups Students register themselves and build up their own portfolio by saving searches and key jobs etc within the site. We encourage everyone to sign up and use!

Please remember to check out our Careers website which has lots of information to help students and parents/carers. We also have a twitter account @SBLCareers which highlights local opportunities and much more so give us a follow!
Virtual Work Experience

Despite the Imperial College Medical School experience only being run virtually, I learnt about important skills needed for a medical degree and how the life of a doctor is extremely different behind closed doors. The workshops were informative, educational and inspiring. My favourite workshop was the interview with a brain oncologist because I was able to deepen my knowledge of the brain and ask questions to a professional. From this experience I was able to decide that I would like to become a neurosurgeon in the future.

The course also informed me on the application process of medical school and the tests I am required to take. At first they seemed really daunting but with the help of my mentor, I can now say I feel prepared to take them next summer. A list of books, YouTube channels and podcasts were given to me so that I can further my studies and also enjoy medicine as a whole.

My journey into the medical field has only just begun but it has already been exciting and I feel prepared and informed about what will be thrown at me in the future.

Chloe Fear (Year 11, 2019/20)

COVID-19

For the latest information on COVID-19 symptoms, If your child has these recognised symptoms, you must inform the school immediately and then arrange for them to be tested. Please notify us of the result of the test as soon as possible.

If you have been instructed to self-isolate because you are a contact of a confirmed case, or in quarantine following return from foreign travel, then a negative test result does not mean you can end isolation early. The virus can take time to develop and so a test early on does not prove that you won’t go on to develop the virus. That means you could still be at risk of spreading the disease to other people. Please keep us updated so we are able to keep our school and community safe.

Please go to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for the most up to date government guidance for social distancing and self-isolation.

See also Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Centre

Current vacancies

Please check out all WMAT vacancies on our careers page.

School Nurse

The school health nurse for SBL is Alli Fry. Parents are able to contact the school nursing service for advice and information on 01454 862202 for support around many issues including mental health, emotional wellbeing, healthy relationships, sexual health and healthy lifestyles.

Please have a look at the school nursing video.
SBL Academy On the Radar

Soccer Shooters Back at SBL
We are really pleased to announce that Soccer Shooters will be back with us this October half term, offering Football Fundays on the Tuesday and Wednesday. Perfect for football loving 5-12 year olds and run by FA qualified coaches. Visit Soccer Shooters Fundays for more details.

New Tennis Coaching Programme Coming to SBL
TT-Tennis are our new tennis coaching provider and will be based at SBL Sports Centre, offering one to one and group coaching sessions to children and adults of all ages! Headed up by Tom Therrien of TT-Tennis, they already have several successful programmes running at other venues across Bristol and Bath. Tom and his team will be running junior taster sessions on the 3rd, 10th and 17th October, 9.30-12.30pm. For more information and to book your place, visit tt tennis website details.

Join Active October
Sign up to Travelwest’s Active October to give you more motivation to stay active and use sustainable travel this October.
Replace your car journeys to school with a walk, cycle or a scoot to have a chance at winning prizes!
Sign up for FREE participation in Active October.

However you travel... join Active October
Log your journeys, win fab prizes!
Pop-Up Library

Whilst we are sad that students can’t currently visit the library for library lessons and book browsing, we have enjoyed taking our pop-up library out and about to students in year 7.

Mrs Richards has visited year 7 students in their English lessons and has also been outside at lunchtime where lots of students have eagerly come over to look through the shelves and borrow books to take home. We issued 135 books to year 7 students last week!

Students can borrow books for up to two weeks at a time, and the books can now be returned to the library book return box in the year 7 office, or to Mrs Richards at the pop-up library on Friday lunchtimes (weather dependant). Books will be quarantined for 72 hours before being made available for others to borrow.

The pop-up library will be visiting other year groups soon, with a different selection of books.
SBL Academy On the Radar

Bookbuzz for Year 7

This is the fourth year running that SBL have taken part in BookTrust’s Bookbuzz reading programme which gives all year 7 students the opportunity to choose and keep their own book from a list of 17 specially-selected titles.

Students have watched a video of the Bookbuzz authors talking about their books and have had a chance to explore the options before selecting the book that they would most like to keep. Their chosen books will arrive at school some time before Christmas.

This year’s titles are shown in the image below. The most popular book so far has definitely been Crater Lake by Jennifer Killick, a spooky thriller about a school trip gone wrong...

The aim of Bookbuzz is to encourage students to read for pleasure and get them excited about books and reading. We hope that year 7 students enjoy their Bookbuzz books and that they are inspired to continue reading and discovering new books and authors.

Library book returns

Please can we have all library books returned to school that were borrowed before the summer (or over a year ago!).

We currently have almost 400 books that need to be returned to us so that they can be borrowed by other students. Please check under beds, on bookshelves, and in bags for any books with school library labels on.

There are no fees for late books but we would really like to have them all back! We have placed returns boxes in each year group area where books can be dropped off.

Where can I return my books?

- Year 7: next to the year 7 entrance doors
- Year 8: just inside the Library doors
- Year 9: in Main Reception as they enter school
- Year 10: in M63
- Year 11: in Student Services as they enter school

For more news and events from the library, follow @SBLLibrary on Twitter and Instagram

Mrs Richards is currently reading Margot and Me by Juno Dawson
Maths

The Maths Department would like to congratulate this year’s Year 11 and 13 students for their amazing outcomes.

While they didn’t get the opportunity to sit their exams in the end, cross-trust analysis of mocks showed that the results we awarded them were very fair.

- Over 70% of students achieved a grade 5 or higher in their GCSE
- Almost 30% achieved a 7+
- Over 10% achieved the top grade of a 9

We know that we help our students to achieve this not by “teaching to the test” but by providing a challenging curriculum that both deepens and accelerates students maths learning, and brings together different areas of maths so that students’ confidence in problem-solving becomes exceptional.

An example of some work linking together two areas of maths is shown below, where solving equations is linked with trigonometry, pushing students to consider many mathematical skills all at once and helping them to see maths as a holistic group of related concepts.

**Task 3 Challenge: Find x.**

**LO: To find missing sides using Trigonometry**

1. \(5x - 3\)  
   \[\frac{60^\circ}{x + 3}\]
2. \(x + 2\)  
   \[\frac{30^\circ}{x - 1}\]
3. \(2x - 1\)  
   \[\frac{45^\circ}{x + 2}\]
4. \(x + 2\)  
   \[\frac{60^\circ}{x + 3}\]
5. \(2x - 7\)  
   \[\frac{60^\circ}{2x + 3}\]
6. \(3x + 1\)  
   \[\frac{30^\circ}{2x}\]
7. \(x + 1\)  
   \[\frac{45^\circ}{10 - x}\]
8. \(x - 2\)  
   \[\frac{60^\circ}{9 - x}\]
9. \(x - 2\)  
   \[\frac{55^\circ}{9 - x}\]
10. \(x^2\)  
   \[\frac{30^\circ}{3x}\]