This month at SBL Academy

It’s been a busy term at SBL, students and staff have worked incredibly hard to continue to embed the practices we have put in place in order to ensure the students are able to achieve their potential. In particular, we are incredibly impressed by their attendance which sits at over 96% which is well above the national average.

You may remember at this time last year I asked students and parents/carers to send in an email if they had a particular desire to thank a member of my team for their efforts or supporting with a particular issue. I received an overwhelming response which I was able to share with staff during our morning briefings in the lead up to Christmas. Many parents/carers and students commented on the level of support they received from staff and it reinforced to my team that their efforts had not gone unnoticed. I am sure that many of you regularly express your gratitude directly to the member of staff who has supported but I am not always made aware as there is so much that goes on in a large secondary school.

Again, as I did last year, I would like to be able to thank my staff on your behalf, particularly at this time of year and to be able to share this with their colleagues.

The email address: thankyou@sblonline.org.uk is open throughout the year for when you would like to thank a member of staff for their efforts, compassion or support and would like me to share it with them or their colleagues.

I may not be able to respond directly to you, but I will be able to pass on your positive comments to staff. I must stress that this is an opportunity for me to share positives and this email address should only be used in that way. For any issues, concerns or questions, please use the normal communication structure on our website.

I look forward to reading and sharing your positive messages and thanks to staff. I’d like to take this opportunity to wish yourselves and our students a Merry Christmas and a successful new year.

Mr D Anderson, Principal
Our Curriculum Choice

Over the last 18 months or so, we have enjoyed re-thinking our curriculum, in particular, for our Year 7, 8 and 9 students. Developing a logical, well sequenced and challenging school curriculum is essential for good and effective learning. We also want to continue and build on the good work of our partner primary schools and ensure that we have the right level of challenge for every child.

As a result of our work, we have made a significant number of changes to our curriculum which will ensure that there is a logical flow from Key Stage Two and, as a result, an appropriately broad experience in our Key Stage Three programme which will give students the knowledge, skills, experiences and confidence to move onto Key Stage Four studies from Year 10 onwards.

The curriculum we have devised is genuinely broad and balanced and allows for strong progression into Post 16 study and then Higher Education for those who wish to do so. On joining us in Year 7, students enjoy a three year experience which allows them to build on core skills previously developed in English, Mathematics and Science and then broaden into a new range of disciplines in Technology, PE, Arts, Humanities and Languages amongst other subjects.

In Years 10 and 11 we cover subjects which are the same as other Wellsway MAT schools and will also allow a smooth progression into Post 16 study or other routes such as Apprenticeships. One of the benefits of our collaboration with other schools is to develop networks of subject specialist teachers who can support each other and therefore continually improve our classroom pedagogy and more rapidly improve student progress.

We also have a wide variety of visits, assemblies, sports, music and drama as well as additional opportunities to grow and learn outside of the classroom. Many of these can be found here.

We offer a detailed breakdown of our course content via our website. Over the course of the year we will continue to add to this resource so that you can be well informed and so that you can support your child at home and discuss what we learn here at SBL.
Community Christmas Dinner

You may have heard from your child that SBL will again be hosting a Community Christmas Dinner on 18 December. We will be welcoming local Residential Care Homes to enjoy a Christmas dinner followed by carols. We would like to encourage as many student helpers to sign up to volunteer at this event and students who wish to do so can collect a letter from Student Services. Permission slips need to be returned to Student Services by 11 December. All at the Academy are really looking forward to this event and welcoming our local community to enjoy an evening of festive fun!

The Decision: Road Safety Performance to Year 7s

On Friday 22nd November, SBL were delighted to welcome the South Gloucestershire Road Safety Education Team who delivered a powerful performance of ‘The Decision’.

The production engaged Year 7s by using an interactive story featuring a court room to show how failing to think about their actions can have fatal consequences.

Students in the audience learned how distraction and careless behaviour can lead to a fatal accident, and were then asked to vote, as a jury would, on whether the driver or pedestrian was responsible for causing the accident. Road traffic casualties tend to be highest among young people in the 11-16 age group and the theatre in education project is one of a range of measures used by the Council’s Road Safety Education team to encourage youngsters to take greater care on the roads.

Student Council

This month, members of the student council delivered assemblies on environmental issues that we are currently facing and how we can continue our work towards becoming a ‘greener school’. As part of this assembly, reference was made to the beautiful Galapagos islands.

The student council feel very strongly about environmental issues and they shared initiatives that they have already been part of as well as what they are planning to do next.

What we have done:

- Plastic bottles are no longer sold in the canteen
- There are now water fountains around the school and refillable bottles have been given to all students

Next steps:

- LED lights are currently being fitted around the school to save electricity. Many are also on timers so they go out when the building is empty.
- Posters are soon going to be put up reminding students to use their water bottles
- Moving forward, we all have to make sure we drop less litter around the school
- We also have to make sure that all departments recycle their waste paper
What If—back at SBL with Cinderella

Local drama group What If will be back at SBL Academy this Christmas with their pantomime production of Cinderella! With performances from Thursday 12th December—Saturday 14th December, you can purchase tickets from the What If website for their matinee or evening shows. Come and show your support to a fantastic group of local artists.

Disco Dance: SBL Sports Centre

Fancy an early morning disco to kick start your Monday?! Disco Dance will be at SBL Sports Centre every Monday 6:30-7:30am for an hour of dance inspired exercise, led by instructor Roz (who also happens to be a DJ!). Your first class will be FREE, followed by £8 per session. Contact lgaiger@wellswaymat.com for more information.

Wacky World coming to Wellsway!

On Saturday 21st December Wellsway Sports Centre will host Wacky World for a day of inflatable fun! The nationally renowned company will be joining us with their inflatable total wipeout, assault courses, gladiator duels and more! It is suitable for all ages. Buy your tickets online now.
## Extra-Curricular Activities for Term 3

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<th>Monday</th>
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### Parking outside the school

Please can parents/carers ensure that when they are collecting their children from school at the end of the day that they park appropriately and do not obstruct pathways or park on the yellow zig-zags. We have received a number of pleas from local residents who recognise that it does get busy but would like us to remind parents/carers to consider where they park.

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### School Nurse Information

The school health nurse for SBL is Alli Fry who runs a confidential drop-in clinic for young people every Wednesday lunchtime (no appointment is needed). These sessions can be useful for seeking advice and support around many issues including mental health, emotional wellbeing, healthy relationships, sexual health and healthy lifestyles. Parents are able to contact the school nursing service for advice and information on 01454 862202.
Year 12 Fine Art

During Term 1 the Year 12 A Level Fine Art students have been working on the theme of ‘Being Human’. They have created fantastic portraits influenced by the street artist Triston Eaton exploring people from different cultures. Students have also produced some experimental biro drawings after research into the illustrator Vince Low.
**Dance Performance and Workshop**

Foundation degree Dance students from the Bristol Institute of Performing Arts (SGS College) will be visiting SBL next term. The students will be performing a dance piece from their current repertoire to the Year 10 Vcert Performance Skills group and members of the SBL Academy Dance Club, followed by a practical workshop based on the performance.

The event has been coordinated by SBL Alumni, Luke Read, who is Higher Education Student Experience & Outreach Officer at SGS. Luke studied Performing Arts at SBL, before moving onto SGS to study Musical Theatre at level 3 and then later, at degree level. He now uses the skills and knowledge he gained through his studies in his current role.

The Year 10 Performance Skills students will have an invaluable opportunity to widen their experience of live performance as well as finding out what life is like as a dancer. Luke Read will also be running a Q&A session sharing details of his experiences studying and working in the performance industry. Dance Club members will be working on elements of the performance piece in a practical way, further developing their own dance skills.

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**Instrumental Lessons**

Would your child like to learn to play a musical instrument? Do they currently play an instrument and want to further their skills? At SBL we offer a range of instrumental lessons for our students at very competitive prices. Research has shown that learning to play a musical instrument has numerous benefits such as: improving memory, relieving stress, developing confidence, improving patience, increasing discipline and time management, improving creativity, and it’s fun! Many of our students have become regular performers in our Christmas and Summer Concerts as well as opting for examination courses in Music.

We currently offer lessons in: Piano, Guitar, Drums, Violin, Keyboard and Jazz Piano.

Lessons are booked in blocks of 10 every 2 terms and students can have either individual or shared lessons with our experienced peripatetic teachers. The lessons take place during the school day on a rotating timetable; this ensures that students are not missing the same subject lesson every week. Where appropriate, students can be entered for formal examinations in their chosen instrument. The cost of lessons is very competitive when compared with private tuition:

- SBL 10 x individual 30 min lessons: £135
- SBL 10 x shared 30 min lessons: £70
- Private 10 x individual 30 min lessons: £150-£180

Financial support may be available for those students who are eligible. Further details can be found on the application form. If you are interested in finding out more about instrumental lessons, application forms for Terms 3 & 4 lessons are now available online. All applications for Terms 3 & 4 must be received by Wednesday 11 December.
Christmas is coming...

...and students are rehearsing hard for our annual Christmas Concerts on Wednesday 18th December. This year we have a stocking full of musical and theatrical items to entertain our audiences over the course of the day.

In the afternoon SBL students will be performing to over 130 pupils and staff from our local primary schools. This is a fantastic opportunity for our students to demonstrate the creative skills they have developed at SBL and provide our younger visitors with a taste of what they may be able to achieve in the future. Some of our students will also be performing carols as part of our Community Christmas Dinner later the same afternoon.

The evening concert begins at 7pm and will be a mix of solo and ensemble musical items, as well as some Drama performances. The Year 10 Vcert Performance Skills group will be performing a variety of pieces as part of their unit on Planning and Performing. Over the course of term 2 the students have been learning what is involved in the planning and rehearsal stages of putting on a performance using industry practices. For many of the group this will be their first public performance at SBL. This experience will be invaluable preparation for undertaking the coursework element of the course in Year 11.

Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

All students are welcome to take part and join in with the festive cheer on Friday 13th December by wearing their Christmas jumper for the day. Any participants are asked to donate £1, with the money going to Save the Children. Of course, any other donations will be gratefully received.

For over a century, Save the Children have led the way on tackling problems like pneumonia, hunger and protecting children in war, while making sure each child’s unique needs are cared for. They find new ways to reach children who are most in need, no matter where they’re growing up. More information about the charity and the event can be found on the Save the Children website.

Many staff will also be wearing their Christmas jumper for the day! Did Mr Anderson find a new England rugby Christmas jumper? Will Mr Lyle’s robot cardigan make a comeback?
SBL ACADEMY’S CHRISTMAS CONCERT
TICKETS £3 ADULTS £2 CONC
WEDNESDAY 7PM 18/12/19