

Dear Parent/Carer

We are now halfway through the first half term at Bilborough College and students seem to be settling back into college well. We look forward to working with you again this year to ensure that all our students have a positive experience at Bilborough College and use their potential to the full to prepare themselves well for the future.

College calendar

The college calendar can be found on the website in the parents and carers section (<https://bilborough.ac.uk/for-parents-and-carers/term-dates/>). As you will note, we have a staff INSET day on Friday 15th October so college is closed to students on that day. This is a good opportunity for students to take stock of work done so far, get up to date with homework and work on their areas for development.

Student outcomes – Summer 2021

Bilborough had a 99.8% pass rate last year as part of the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) process. We have just received guidance, about the revised arrangements for exams in summer 2022 which we will share with you in a separate email.

As you know Bilborough College, unlike some other post-16 providers, remained fully open to all students last year when this was possible (outside of full lockdowns). As a consequence, we feel that although learning was more challenging last year, our students were able to keep on track with the specifications thanks to the live remote lessons through lockdown and the work they did when we were able to open. We therefore expect them to perform well in next summer's exams.

We have planned a series of mock exams (currently planned for January) where students will sit papers in exam halls as we are acutely aware that these students didn't get this chance at GCSE and want to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Depending on the new guidance, the timing of these may be subject to change, but we will guarantee an exam hall experience before final exams.

Core Expectations

The Bilborough core expectations include steps students need to take to give themselves the very best chance of success.

- Attendance in lessons is vital – we ask students to target 100% and, while we know that anyone can get ill, we get concerned and will start supportive intervention if attendance falls below 95%.
- Attendance in tutorial and at tutor 1-1s is equally important.
- Homework is set weekly on TEAMS on all courses. Students are expected to do an average of 5 hours work a week per course – essential to be fully prepared for final exams and assessments.
- Formal Assessments take place every half term. Students will be given feedback and directed improvement tasks (sometimes called DIRT work) which will help them get to the next grade up.
- Students will be given an individual grade for each Formal Assessment as well as an "On Course To Achieve" grade (OCTA grade) which will be updated after every assessment point and shared with parents. UCAS grades will be based on evidence of assessments and work completed.
- Students who complete Enrichments develop great skills, on average get higher grades and have better personal statements and CVs so we encourage everybody to do 1 per term.
- Every course has a 'subject support' timetable which indicates when students can get extra 1-1 or small group support from a teacher. Use these if you are struggling or to go up a grade higher.
- Have a growth mindset – students need to truly believe that if they act on the feedback and study hard, they will see their grades go up.

Most students established good study habits last year and are already complying with these expectations and any support that parents can give to keeping students on track with these is appreciated.

Personal Tutor Contact details

In most cases your young person's tutor is the same as last year but in some instances the tutor changes either because the member of staff has left college or subject timetable slots meant that they could no longer stay with the same tutor. Tutors have emailed students and parents where this is the case. Please email their personal tutor should you have any queries or concerns.

Tutor email: firstname.surname@bilborough.ac.uk

Year 13 Consultation Evenings

Following positive feedback from last year's Remote Consultation Evenings, we will be using SchoolCloud again this year. The consultation evenings will run remotely on Thursday 4th, Monday 8th and Tuesday 16th November. The booking system will open on **Monday 11th October** and can be accessed on the college website or using this link <https://bilboroughcollege.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/>. The appointments are only 5 minutes so immediately after half term you will be sent generic information regarding the course along with your young person's current grades which you may find useful to access before the appointment takes place.

For queries regarding Consultation Evening booking please email reception@bilborough.ac.uk

If you have immediate concerns about progress, please contact your young person's tutor or the relevant subject teacher as soon as possible.

Year 13 University Applications

The internal deadline for UCAS applications is **Monday 22nd November** (apart from Oxbridge / Medical / Veterinary which have already been sent off). The official UCAS deadline is January 26th, but early applications are encouraged. Tutors have a high number of applications to process and at busy times it can take 10 working days to turn a form around so the internal deadlines must be respected. Currently, students are working on progression plans and personal statement writing during tutor group sessions. Ailsa (our careers adviser) is regularly sending details to students of virtual events and open days offered by universities. We will also encourage students to sign up for other relevant virtual events advertised in the weekly careers bulletin.

Year 13 students progressing into apprenticeships and / or employment.

Over the coming months we will be continuing to provide opportunities for students to explore apprenticeships, employment and gap year opportunities. Students took the opportunity to engage with employers during the WREP week in May, and we will continue to support students in making informed choices with a range of bespoke and general virtual and face to face sessions offered by a wide range of providers. We will be inviting employers in for our careers fair in March and will host our annual apprenticeship evening early in the spring term. Many opportunities for fact-finding about apprenticeships are also advertised in the weekly careers bulletin.

Students are now able to take part in in-person work experience but need to see Joanna Zielinska in the careers office to discuss this and complete the relevant paperwork in order to have the placement authorised by the college. There are also virtual work experience opportunities advertised in the bulletin on a regular basis. Work experience is an invaluable way to find out more about different professions and develop employability skills. We also think it is important that students continue to enhance their employability skills by taking part in enrichment activities in year 13.

COVID-safe one-to-one appointments with our careers and work experience team are available for all students. They can drop into the Careers Hub just behind the main entrance to request appointments and/or email joanna.zielinska@bilborough.ac.uk (work experience) and ailsa.boa@bilborough.ac.uk (careers adviser). If you have any queries about student progression generally, please email alison.lardi@bilborough.ac.uk

We shall also be using the Parent Advantage and the website to provide parents with general information on College events such as Parents' Consultation Evenings as well as publishing copies of any bulletins or important information. We will use the website to communicate and inform parents and students of any extraordinary events, possible college closures due to adverse weather, etc.

We have high hopes for our students this year and we want to make sure that for each and every one of them we get the balance right between the support they need and the challenge that will help them to achieve to their full potential. I hope you can use the information contained here to help support us in this aim.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Personal Tutor if you have any concerns re your child's progress. Also feel free to contact either Michelle Harvey (Director of Student Support Services) or David Shaw (Principal) if you need to. Our email addresses are as follow michelle.harvey@bilborough.ac.uk / david.shaw@bilborough.ac.uk.

With best wishes

David Shaw
Principal

Michelle Harvey
Director of Student Support Services

Bilborough College

2021-2022

Academic Year Calendar

August 21						
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February 22						
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August 22						
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September 22						
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- Holidays
- Last day for Year 13 (provisional)
- Last day for year 12s
- Return Yr 13
- Return Yr 12
- INSET