

Dear Parent/Carer,

I very much hope you had a great summer break and that your child/ren are looking forward to returning to, or joining, SMRT next week.

The purpose of this correspondence is to remind you of our start of year arrangements and to provide a few updates.

Start of Year Arrangements

Here is a reminder of what will be happening at the start of September:

Monday 2 September - INSET Day and **school is closed to students.**

Tuesday 3 September

- **Induction Day for Year 7** (all Year 7 students need to arrive at school by 8:30am). **School is closed to students in Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11.**
- **Year 12** - All Year 12 will meet in the Main Hall at 9:00am for an assembly. Year 12 will then be meeting with a member of the tutor team before leaving at 11.30am.
- **Year 13** - All Year 13 will meet in the Sixth Form Common Room at 11:00am for an assembly and for enrolment. Year 13 will leave at 12.30pm.

Wednesday 4 September - **All students return** (all students need to arrive at school by 8:30am).

A Level Results

We are very pleased with the results achieved by our A Level students which have continued the improvement that we saw last year and remain well above pre-pandemic levels.

For example, the percentage of A and A* grades this year is 26.2% up from 25.6% last year and from 23.6% in 2019. The percentage of grades awarded at B or above is 57.8% up from 54.3% in 2023 and from 49.5% in 2019. The percentage of grades awarded at C or above is 79.3% compared with 78.1% in 2023 and 75.2% in 2019. We will provide a further update in due course as we have seen several increased grades during the last fortnight or so.

5 of our students have confirmed places at Oxford or Cambridge University, and a further 3 at medical schools across the country.

Every set of results represents a significant achievement for the young people in our community. They are a testament to the hard work of teachers, support staff, parents and carers, and most of all our fantastic students of whom we are very proud

GCSE Results

We are delighted with the achievements of our Year 11 students who have produced a fantastic set of GCSE results which suggest we are on course for one of our highest ever Progress 8 scores, when this measure is published.

Over half our students achieved at least five strong (L5+) passes and the percentage of students achieving a Level 7 or above in both English and Maths rose by more than 5% to 20.7%. 52.6% of our students achieved a strong pass (L5+) in both Maths and English and for the standard pass (L4+) the figure was 72.3%, which is higher than the pre-pandemic figure from 2019. We will provide a further update in due course as we have seen several grades being increased on appeal during the last week or so.

This group of students joined us in Year 7 just as the pandemic was beginning and it is to the immense credit of their parents and carers, their teachers and of course the students themselves, that they finish Year 11 with such a great set of results.

School Site and Resources

The summer holiday has been a particularly busy one for us. In addition to our annual programme of painting, maintenance, and refurbishment, significant projects have been undertaken:

- Refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Lower Dining Hall, including fresh rebranding, a new layout, new dining tables, and an additional serving point to increase the speed of serving times.
- Reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Sixth Form entrance lobby, Sixth Form Staff Room, and Welcome area, to improve accessibility and aesthetics.
- The IT Network Team have been busy installing a range of new Apple hardware and requisite software to enhance learning in our Music, Photography, and Art departments.

My sincere thanks to Mrs Farwell (Interim School Business Manager), Mr Toogood (Premises Manager), and the wider premises team, and to Mr Jackson (Network Manager) and his team for all they have achieved during the summer break.

Expectations

Behaviour and Uniform

We are looking forward to a positive and successful year for everyone connected to SMRT. It is vital that we start the year as we mean to go on. Please ensure you and your child are familiar with [this](#) letter about the end of year assemblies, and the [assembly slides](#) that Mr Morgan (Deputy Headteacher) shared with all students and parents/carers in Term 6.

Student Planners

In September we will be introducing student planners to support student organisation, punctuality to lessons, independence, and wellbeing. Heads of Year and Tutors, supported by Mr Hare (Assistant Headteacher), will be instrumental in helping you and your child get the most out of the planners.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Anxiety and Concern

We know that for some students the anticipation of returning to school after a long break can cause anxiety or concern. If you have significant concerns prior to Monday 2 September, please contact our Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk and they will ensure messages are directed to the correct staff. From 2 September staff will be able to pick up any direct queries you have.

Attendance

We offer a significant level of support for students who are struggling with attendance for whatever reason. Please contact your child/ren's Tutor if you have any concerns or need support. Please view our attendance page [here](#) for more information. Please do contact us

as soon as possible so that we can support in the context of the new school attendance legislation that came into effect on 9 August 2024. The two documents below from Bristol City Council summarise the **same** changes in different formats:

[Absence information for September 2024](#)
[Attendance information for September 2024](#)

Far Right Riots

On Monday, 26 July, in Southport, three young girls - Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar - lost their lives in a senseless act of violence during what should have been a joyful, Taylor Swift-themed dance class. This horrific incident has left a deep scar on the families of these innocent children and the broader community. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who have experienced such tragic loss and their local community. The racially motivated far right riots that followed the tragic events in Southport are a stark reminder of the dangers that lay 'beneath the surface'.

We have seen mindless attacks on the homes of those seeking refuge as well as on mosques, businesses, and community venues. We have heard threatening, hateful, and intolerable abuse directed towards refugees, people of colour, and Muslims, as well as others of different faiths.

Most egregiously, we have witnessed deplorable violence on defenceless people peacefully going about their lives, simply because of the colour of their skin and how they choose to worship – and on the police officers dedicated to protecting them.

What has been particularly concerning is to see some children and young people on the streets taking part in the ugly chanting, mindless looting, and awful violence on others. Most of our students will have witnessed these horrible scenes on TV, in their social media feeds, or some even first hand – traumatising some, triggering others, and perhaps even radicalising some. We know that for several of our students, the threat was withing touching distance of where they live.

I am indebted to Sir Hamid Patel who has shared insightful reflections on the implications of these events for our school community and schools throughout the country. When our students return to school, we will need to make time (at an appropriate time) to have meaningful conversations with our students in an appropriate manner. We must let our young people talk about how what they have seen and experienced has affected them, and the way they see themselves and their place in our society and the future of our country.

As a school we will utilise expertise within the school, our Alive Curriculum, and the external resources available to us, to reflect and plan meaningful discussion. It is important that through their lessons and the wider experiences we offer, we continue to equip our young people to:

- Be critical consumers of the information they come across online.
- Be literate, articulate, and numerate.
- Secure the skills and qualifications to have a plausible stake in the economic prosperity of our country.
- Understand people and communities very different to their own and have an empathy for those who are the most vulnerable in our world.

We must also teach our young people about the abject poverty and hopelessness that blights our working-class communities of all colours and backgrounds. It is also important that they learn about the struggles of the most helpless on the margins of our society: refugees desperately fleeing war, the elderly suffering from loneliness, those ravaged by the misuse of drugs, and those experiencing serious mental health issues.

Positively, across the country we also saw people coming together to sweep up the debris and make their streets safe again, the simple kindness of strangers repairing looted shops, and the courage of those who stood silently and stoically to protect the homes and places of worship of others. Within walking distance from our school, we saw people stand in between far right groups and refugees.

We have long known that our schools are microcosms of wider society, reflecting the ills and challenges of the communities we serve at any given time. However, we should not fall into fatalism after these events. Our schools are also drivers for change, the pioneers of a better future, and the hope of a more peaceful, more caring world. I witness this from so many of our students daily.

I wish you an enjoyable weekend and I very much look forward to welcoming our new and returning students to SMRT next week.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Del Planter', written in a cursive style.

Del Planter
Headteacher