



# Newsletter: April 2023

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## Message from the Principal:

I would like to firstly thank all of our students, families and staff for making me feel so welcome at Bankside College. It has been a pleasure to meet almost all of our parents/carers and I would like to thank you for your support and feedback during meetings and when you are visiting the college. Since my arrival at the start of March, I have been very impressed with the confidence of our students and the positive relationships they have with college staff and each other. Please do call me at the college or email me (see details above) if you have any concerns or queries.

## Curriculum and Qualifications



In addition to the ASDAN awards in Personal Progress Award at KS5 and Personal, Social Development at Post-19, our curriculum team are also developing a variety of other qualifications for students to access from September 2023. Students will be able to access BTEC qualification in land-based studies and art and design. Our BTECs will enable students to produce portfolios of work that can be awarded at an appropriate level for each student.

We are also delighted that students are now participating in regular horticulture, ICT and art lessons as part of our core curriculum. We look forward to updating you with our full curriculum offer in the coming months.

## Duke of Edinburgh

Students will also be able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme from September. This award will provide students with opportunities to develop their independence and social skills through a variety of activities and challenges

**Dates & Times:** We have a month of Bank Holidays ahead! Please be aware that college will be closed on 1<sup>st</sup> May and 8<sup>th</sup> May for the King's Coronation. The Spring Bank Holiday half-term commences on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May. Term 6 start for students on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June and ends on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July. Term dates for the next two academic years can be found on our website: [Important Information - Bankside College](#)



## **OFG Autism Strategy**

Bankside Staff have all been trained in OFG Autism Strategy – Ask, Accept, Develop. Please see the attached leaflet about how this strategy impacts upon our practice at Bankside College. Our Clinical team will now be supporting staff with Practice Impact Reviews, while the College works towards Accreditation over the next six months. This will include such aspects as Staff ongoing training, Student Communication Profiles, Use of Visual Supports, Student Sensory profiles and Promoting Independence. Please ask if you would like to know more.

## **New Staff**

As many of you are aware, Eve Gregory will be starting her maternity leave towards the end of Term 6. To ensure that students' learning and experiences remain positive and consistent, we are pleased to welcome Annick McLinden to Bankside College. Annick joined us on 27<sup>th</sup> April and we are delighted to have a teacher of her experience and expertise on the team.

As Bankside continues to grow, we have also appointed Kate Jasper as Assistant Headteacher. Kate will be joining us on 7<sup>th</sup> June and joins our team with a wealth of experience from teaching and leading in specialist settings across the county.

**Timetables:** We have now reviewed all timetables to ensure that all students know the lessons they are accessing on either a daily or weekly basis. Students will be able to see an accessible timetable from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

## **Horticulture Area**

All students are enjoying their Horticulture lessons and are working hard to develop the college's outside spaces. During these lessons, students have worked hard with Steve Ranford (Practical Skills Teacher) and our Learning Support Mentors to build outside storage and have also begun to format the lay-out of vegetable beds. Some students will also start to research, plan and design a sensory garden that the college team will develop with students through the remainder of this academic year. We are looking forward to the fresh produce being used as ingredients for meals in our college café.

## Ask

Student Voice is our top priority. We treat each student as a unique individual with their own likes, dislikes, wants and needs. This is facilitated within a Total Communication Environment, including the use of augmentative and alternative communication. Central to this is our focus on relationship-building, connection and creating an environment of psychological and physical safety. Students are supported to collate their own Profile document to inform us in how we can best support them.

## Accept

Our ethos and approach has a common language, consistency and understanding, based upon neuroscience. We have an empathic understanding based upon relating to the individual perspectives of each student, supported by PACE (Trauma Informed Practice). We respect each student's personal experience to inform what may frighten, preoccupy or distress them. Relationships, connection and belonging are central to our ethos. We create structured and predictable environments, and use communication systems and activities which meet the needs of each student and enable them to thrive and experience positive emotions. Support plans are formulated with the students, their families and our clinical team.

## Develop

We teach our students new skills, abilities and strategies related to the Outcomes within their Education, Health and Care Plans. These are driven to improve their quality of life and well-being through a focus on enablement and empowerment to increase independence and flourish. We do this through positive, evidence-based approaches and positive expectations. We use sensitive but persistent intervention, based upon individual assessment, that uses and supports each student's capacity for emotional regulation and engagement. We accredit achievement using ASDAN qualifications and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. We work in partnership with the student, their family, and all involved professionals.