

HEAD TEACHER'S EDUCATION BULLETIN

December - 2025



MOBILE PHONE USE IN SCHOOL

Following extensive consultation with staff and feedback through a parents questionnaire, the school has made the decision to introduce Yondr mobile phone pouches on 1st June 2026. This will affect years 7 to 10, but not the current Year 11. It will also not affect our Sixth Form students who are not included in the Yondr programme.

The Yondr team provide an extensive support package and you will hear a lot from school in the spring, about how this will work in practice. We have our launch meeting with Yondr on 20th January and you can expect to hear more news after that. If you missed our phone free school survey, the introductory information explaining our reasons for exploring this idea are here:

- **Smartphones in Schools 'Will Lower Your Child's IQ'**
- **Screen Time Up 20% Post Pandemic**
- **Reducing Screen Time Reduces Anxiety Levels**
- **The Case for Phone-Free Schools, Jon Haidt**



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CHANGES TO SCHOOL UNIFORM

From September 2026, **statutory government guidance** on school uniforms is changing. Schools will only be allowed 3 branded items including PE kit (4 if a tie is included). As we have both a summer and winter uniform we have arrived at a compromise for parents to minimise costs, and this has been done relatively quickly to meet with uniform supply chain ordering times.

Our uniform for next September will contain 3 compulsory items:

- A school sweatshirt with the Bewdley logo
- A school polo shirt with the Bewdley logo – lighter for lower school (Y7/8); darker for upper school (Y9/10/11)
- Our current PE sports top

We will be phasing the new uniform in so that any existing uniform can still be worn until it has worn out, or grown out of and needs replacing. Our suppliers still have stock of the current uniform, and this can be purchased during the year as needed. The main change is the replacement of a jumper with a considerably more affordable sweatshirt, and the removal of the school tie as a requirement. Photographs and costs of the new uniform can be seen at the end of this bulletin. In terms of the impact of this, you can see that costs for parents will be significantly reduced:

- Current jumper - £24.99 to £29.99 versus New Sweatshirt - £15.99 to £19.99
- Polos remain the same - £11.49 (Age 9 to age 13) to £13.49 (Adult Small to XL)
- Comparing total costs (1 of each compulsory item):
 - Core Uniform Currently: £32.48 to £37.48
 - Core Uniform + Summer: £43.97 to £50.97
 - New Core Uniform: £27.48 to £33.48

You will have noticed that in past years we have had 'non-uniform' or 'Christmas jumper' days at the end of the autumn term. On reviewing attendance data, we see a large drop in attendance of our most vulnerable students during these days, and have therefore decided that the educational costs for these students unfortunately outweigh the cultural benefits of these 'special days'. Our priority is therefore for a simple, comfortable and smart uniform, that is affordable and easy to wear.



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THE NEW CURRICULUM FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Parents may have heard of the ongoing curriculum consultation, with much publicity about reading tests to be introduced in Year 8 in 2028-29. There is also a consultation taking place about the progress 8 measure at GCSE, which is used by the government to shape student subject choices.

At present the progress 8 consists of English, maths, 3 Ebacc subjects (humanity, language or science) and 3 'open' subjects. In practice for us as double science is compulsory, we ask students to select at least 1 humanity or 1 language, with the other 3 choices being free options within the restrictions of timetabling.

The new proposed progress 8 measure consists of English, maths, 2 sciences, 2 selected from these 3 groups:

- Category A – Humanities – geography, history, religious studies
- Category B – Creative – art and design, music, drama, dance, design and technology
- Category C – Languages – modern foreign languages and ancient languages

and any 2 others. The principle change here is that the Ebacc would be removed and there is much more encouragement to study creative subjects. Another subtle change is that in the current system religious studies does not classify as a 'humanity', whereas under the new proposals it would.

These changes are still part of a consultation exercise, together with the proposed introduction of V (vocational) levels for 16-19 year olds. We will keep you updated with changes as they become fixed as statutory guidance.

It is disappointing that successive governments believe that shifting the curriculum around will improve student experience in schools. Countries that have made widespread systemic improvements in their education systems, have started with the premise that teachers need to be treated as skilled professionals.

'Changes to the curriculum'

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CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Department for Education requires all schools to have a Climate Action Plan in place by the end of 2025. After extensive consultation and development throughout recent years our plan was approved by governors at their last meeting, and consists of 5 key areas:

1. Decarbonisation
2. Adaptation and resilience
3. Biodiversity
4. Resource Use
5. Climate education and green careers

Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 of our plan are mandatory elements and section 4 is added to pull the various parts of the plan together. We are working with a number of partner organisations in the Bewdley community and further afield, and our plan can be found **here**. We will update you on elements of this plan as they develop.



'Climate Action Plan

in place by the end of 2025'

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THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

As a brief update to our whole school reading project, supported by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), these are the 3 key elements of reading we will be working on:

1. Whole school reading strategy

We will be reintroducing Accelerated Reader for years 7 and 8 in the coming months, and reviewing and improving our library provision.

2. Scaffolding curriculum access

We will review our Red Box Reading and phonics work with our weakest readers, and use EEF research to help us find the best strategies to help build confidence in reading.

3. Reading across the curriculum

We will work on strategies to encourage students to read in class in 'low stakes' or non-threatening ways. We will also develop etymology skills to help our students understand specialist vocabulary

Being a proficient reader is key to being able to access fully the breadth, depth and richness of our curriculum, which is what makes these developments so very important.

FATHERS AND SONS

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a lovely project, in which fathers are encouraged to write 'Letters to our sons'. The introductory video is **here**, and any father who would like to contribute a letter to the project, can do so **here**, up to 12th January 2026.



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