The Belsteads School

Believe & Achieve

Parents Handbook

2026

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The Belsteads School, Back Lane,
Little Waltham, Essex, CM3 3PP

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Welcome from the Headteacher

The information enclosed in this booklet will provide you with key information about the day-to-day life at The Belsteads School.

Our aims and ethos underpin every aspect of school life at The Belsteads School.

We strive to become the '#best school in the universe' and our nurturing family environment makes us exceptional. We believe that children reach their true potential when they feel safe, secure and valued as part of a supportive community.

We offer, for students who require some additional support to flourish, an on-site counsellor who will work with our students for 8-12 weeks to support their social and emotional progress.

We recognise that each child is an individual, with unique strengths and abilities. As part of our nurturing environment, we believe our pupils will flourish.

We recognise that not all students can attend school full-time so we offer an outreach service, where any student on our roll can be supported to access their learning, both academically and socially and emotionally, remotely. This can be in the home, a library or over Zoom.

By living our ethos we hope to foster in each child a passion to learn, motivation to achieve and belief that they will achieve.

Our Ethos

- The Belstead School aims to provide a caring, supportive and nurturing environment, in order to help our pupils achieve and develop fully as individuals.
- To provide an informal, yet structured, happy environment where each member of our community is valued and secure.
- We are committed to encouraging the individual development of our pupils.
  To promote and encourage self-discipline, self-motivation, self-respect and respect for others.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which encourages children to realise their full potential.
- To adopt and foster a lively and varied learning environment.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage regular communication in the best interests of the child.

Erica Barnett
Headteacher

I love being the Headteacher at Belsteads School and I am very proud of the team of staff who support me and work so hard to develop the students. Our Governing body and Proprietor are all actively involved with the school and ensuring the very best opportunities for the students. At the Belsteads School we all work together and there is a great sense of family within the setting. I am looking forward to working together with you and your child as you join us.

#bestschoolintheuniverse

Our Proprietor

My name is Peter and I am the founder and proprietor of the Belsteads School.

In 2017 after a 17 year career in London and realising that helping people is more in line with my passions, I left London to open the Belsteads School. Having passion but no knowledge (of what is required to open a school) meant there would be challenges ahead, but persistence always pays off and after 6 years of being open I am very proud of what we have achieved at The Belsteads School.

The school has moved forward every year and my dream of creating a space where children can be the individuals they were born to be without the rigid structures of mainstream education is now starting to materialise.

We are far from the finished article but we are definitely on the right path and we will continue to improve. We have so many success stories already and I'm looking forward to creating so many more.

In Erica we have an amazing head who is delivering this and the school is very lucky to have such an amazing head. I feel very lucky to be part of this amazing journey and cannot wait for the next steps ahead.

~ Peter Adams

Our Staff

PROPRIETOR	Peter		
HEADTEACHER	Erica		
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER	Richard		
HEAD OF SCHOOL - DESIGNATE	Julien		
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER	Peter		
SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER	Fiona		
BURSAR	Nicole		
LEAD SENCO	Jackie		
TEACHERS	Emma	Hannah	Alison
	Nicole	Melissa	Bradley
	Breda	Millie	Peter
SENCO	Stephanie		
HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant)	Elaine	Charlotte	Becky
	Sue	Joulene	Jo
	Nadine	Claire	Sharon
LSA (Learning Support Assistant)	Joyce	Lisa	Ian
	Bradley	Liz	Carla
	Rory	Natalie	Sally
	Sally	Shannon	Aiofe
	Sasha	Clair	Sasha
OUTREACH WORKER	Laura		
CATERING MANAGER	Samantha		
CATERING ASSISTANT	Lily		
SITE TEAM	John		
	Horace		
SCHOOL DOG	Elmo		

Our Governors

I would like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of The Belsteads' Board of Governors to the community of parents, carers and students.

The Belsteads school is a school for pupils with special needs from 11 – 17 years old and works with many surrounding local authorities, who want to place their students in the best learning environment for each individual.

The whole school community takes pride in warmly welcoming pupils, parents, staff and visitors into our school.

The Board of Governors are an experienced and committed team who are tasked with providing the strategic vision for the improvement and development of the school, very much at the forefront of learning with high aspirations and expectations that every pupil will achieve their best and more in order to become successful citizens.

Governors work collaboratively with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team to ensure our pupils receive the very best education through the monitoring of their progress against the aims and objectives set by the Board of Governors. They are a highly effective support who challenge and know the school well and are truly focussed on its continued development and improvement.

The Board meets 5 times over each academic year and are linked to particular areas of interest and or expertise, e.g. this may be a curriculum subject, or administration or Finance. Every Governors visits the school at least once a term and submits a report on their visit, they also attend many of the regular special activities.

The Governors are accountable to the school community for the performance of the school.

The Board of Governors' names, expertise, committee meetings and school policies are available on the school website or on request from the school office.

~ Dame Anna Hassan

Role	Name	
Chair	Dame A Hassan	
Vice Chair	Miss K Adeniji	
Headteacher	Ms E Barnett	
Staff	Mrs N Clark	
Co-Opted	Mr F Ahmed	Mr B Davis

Mr Clarke also attends all governor meetings as an observer. The clerk is Miss Walker and she can be contacted via **admin@belsteads.essex.sch.uk**

If you would be interested in being a school governor, please contact the clerk Should you wish to get in touch with our Governors please email **admin@belsteads.essex.sch.uk**

Admission Arrangements

The Belsteads School is an independent special school approved by the Secretary of State to admit pupils for whom Statements / Education Health Care Plans are maintained under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996. The current approval for the school is for 55 pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties, ASD and associated behavioural difficulties, aged 10 – 16 years.

In considering admissions, The Belsteads School complies with the Independent School Standards (DfE, 2019), having regard for the revised Regulations contained within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, (DfE, 2014). The Belsteads School currently receives referrals from Local Authorities, although it will consider requests from other agencies. Pupils are primarily referred because the severity and diversity of their needs is such that they cannot be met effectively in mainstream schools or have not been met in similar establishments. In aspiring to meet such needs, we believe that it is essential that a systematic approach to admission be adopted, planning therefore commences at the time of referral.

All pupils admitted have Education Health Care plans. The school offers small groupings with supportive and committed staff, experienced in providing a clearly structured and personalised education. Our curriculum strives to be responsive to each learner, and build on individual strengths and interests. A rolling plan is in place, which supports a balance of stimulating contexts for learning through different learning experiences, themes and subjects.

The Belsteads School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Admissions Policy is non- discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010) and takes account of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2019. We welcome pupils irrespective of their gender, race, religion, ethnic or national origins, disability or special educational needs, provided that there are good prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and the welfare of other pupils. We recognise that factors governing pupil admissions are complex and vary from case to case. These factors might include:

- Nature of the pupil's needs and previous educational experiences
- Recommendations / expectations of the referring body
- Wishes of the parent / carer and pupil

We ensure that the school admits those pupils whose needs, as identified in their EHC plan, can be met effectively and in doing so maximises the potential to make progress in all aspects of their development.

Profile Of A Pupil Likely To Be Suitably Placed

Those pupils likely to be suitably placed will have a diagnosis of SEMH / ASD / MLD, which may be compounded by medical conditions including ADHD, Dyslexia / Dysgraphia, ODD and OCD. These can manifest themselves in a combination of difficulties including:

Severe/Moderate/generalised learning difficulties, significantly delayed speech language and communication skills, social communication difficulties, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, significant difficulties in attention and impulsivity. limited independence.

Pupils are likely to experience a combination of low self-esteem, together with a significant degree of emotional vulnerability. As a result, they may exhibit:

- Unpredictable and intense patterns of behaviours which significantly disrupt the learning of themselves and their peers.
- Distractibility that inhibits their progress even with significant adult support and increasingly individualised personalised learning programme.
- Behaviour which is bizarre and/or self-injurious and/or endangers others.
- Significant anxiety / unhappiness, stress and/or disaffection over a sustained period often accompanied by prolonged periods of absence, leading to a negative attitude towards education.

Admission Criteria

Referrals for admission to The Belsteads School will arise from a pupil's EHCP or Annual Review recommendations agreed by the LA. All admissions take account of the need to provide education appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and additional educational needs (AEN). Pupils can be admitted at any time of year.

Where a request for admission is received, and there is a place available within the school, the following criteria will be applied in order of priority in deciding whether a place is able to be offered:

The pupil falls within the terms of the current approval for the school and presents with the aforementioned profile.

The pupil has an EHCP which specifies that the pupil has SEMH/ ASD / MLD.
There is room within the appropriate year group.

Adding another pupil to the group will not adversely affect the provision of efficient education for the pupils with whom he / she would be educated or the efficient use of resources.

Offering the pupil, a place will maintain a positive balance between the types of AEN within the group and school.

There is evidence from professionals that the pupil will benefit from access to a highly personalised programme within a special school.

Pupil, parent / carer and, where appropriate, social worker express commitment to the placement.

Refusal of Admission

The Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to refuse admission in the following cases: the school is fully subscribed where the admission of a pupil would compromise the Health and Safety of pupils and/or staff within the school where admission would not be compatible with the efficient and effective education of others.

Legislation

In formulating our Admissions Policy, we have taken into account the following legislation: The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2019 Equality Act (2010) Education Act 2011.

Access To Admission Information

A copy of the admission policy is located in the main office and is published on the school website. Additional information can be obtained through direct contact with Erica Barnett (Headteacher) or Peter Adams (Proprietor).

Admission Process

Admission to The Belsteads School is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team who will look objectively at every referral received. In considering the appropriateness of a placement they will consider the dynamics of the existing pupil group, potential identified risks and the school's ability to safely manage these. Once a referral has been received the following steps will be taken:

Stage 1 **Initial enquiry**

Verbal or written enquiries should be made to the Headteacher. Detailed information concerning the pupil should accompany any referral. Referral information received Consideration of documentation by Senior Leadership Team In determining the suitability of the referral, consideration will be given to the educational, health and social history and whether the profile of the pupil is in keeping with the provision we are able to provide. If applicable, an observation visit will take place at the pupil's current educational provision.

Stage 2 Visit

The introductory visit will include: A tour of the school Introduction to key staff discussion with a member of the SL T concerning such issues as curriculum, school expectations in respect of learning and behaviour, key policies including positive handling If, following the introductory visit, all concerned agree that the pupil's needs can potentially be met, a mutually convenient date will be arranged for the pupil to spend a session in the school. If appropriate, parents will be asked to remain on site during this session.

Stage 3 Offer

Following attendance at the school, and dialogue with the pupil and parents / carers, representatives from other agencies e.g. social care, a final decision by senior leadership will be made, and the referring agency informed accordingly. Confirmation of funding including any additional resources and transport will be sought from the LA. Once the offer of a place has been accepted by the referring agency, The Belsteads School will arrange a pre-placement planning meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to finalise admission arrangements, clarify roles and responsibilities and to complete the admission pack. All new pupils will start on a transitional timetable to be agreed at the pre-planning meeting. No pupil will start immediately, on a full-time timetable, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Stage 4 Admission

The pupil's name will be entered into the Admissions Register on the agreed admission date.

Where a place is not offered because it is determined that The Belsteads School cannot meet the pupil's needs, a letter will be sent to the referring agency confirming the decision and outlining the reasons.

Behaviour Policy

Introduction

At The Belsteads School, we have a relationship policy (rather than a behaviour policy) that is based on mutual respect of all members of the school community. We believe that by nurturing the values of **RESPECT**, our students will develop the self-regulation skills they need to flourish as responsible citizens of the 21st century. By forming 'connections, not corrections' our young people will develop resilience, self- esteem and confidence and become the best possible versions of themselves they can be.

Aims

- Students will be enabled to develop self regulation behaviours for learning in recognition of its importance as a lifelong skill.
- To provide a safe, happy and friendly environment, which encourages each individual to achieve his or her own potential through a desire for excellence, using challenging, active and creative personalised learning.
- To enable staff to support children with their regulation through providing students with strategies based on **RESPECT** to manage their own learning.
- To endeavour to create a conducive and purposeful working atmosphere.
- To ensure that all children and adults have a sense of belonging, feeling safe, secure and valued.
- To provide a clear, fair and consistent approach to behaviour when students are unable to regulate.
- To foster, nurture and value strong and healthy relationships.
- To ensure that our children are intrinsically motivated to gain the skills to be able to regulate themselves for optimal learning opportunities and to become successful independent citizens.

At The Belsteads School, we recognise that our children can struggle to self-regulate their emotions. We want to encourage these children to manage to regulate themselves or with the help of our staff, work together to identify their needs to aid regulation.

At The Belsteads School, we have the following underpinning principles:

- Nurturing relationships based on **RESPECT** are imperative to our practice between all members of our school community.
- Children and adults have a sense of belonging, feeling safe, secure and valued.
- People learn to regulate all aspects of their lives with support from the whole school community.
- The importance of fostering social relationships in a school community of mutual engagement.
- Responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others.
- Respect for other people, their views, feelings and circumstances. Empathy with the feelings of others affected by one's own actions within their own capacity.
- Fairness.
- Commitment to an equitable process.
- Active involvement of everyone in school with decisions about their own lives.
- A willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff.

We have in place a variety of praise systems (including self-praise) to promote an environment where everyone can fully achieve:

- Clear and concise expectations of behaviour will be described, modelled and encouraged through class assemblies and in class, to ensure that all children understand what is appropriate.
- Unconditional positive regard reinforced with all pupils and stakeholders at all times
- Verbal and written praise from the class teacher or other adults in school for good learning, effort or behaviour. Specific links should be made in line with growth mindset principles.
- Children who have completed successful learning will be asked to share their learning with other teachers, classes and at our rewards assembly.
- Teachers will share information about a child's success – by either phone, face-to-face, email or using postcards to parents.
- Every Friday, a Celebration Assembly will be held. Each class will have a representative who will share their classes learning from the week. Whenever possible, this will be linked to our **RESPECT** values.

However, we understand that occasionally children will communicate their lack of regulation for multiple reasons. When children are dysregulated, there are several layers of support in place to help them to manage their regulation.

As a practitioner, you should always be thinking 'all behaviour is communication' and what is the child trying to communicate? We realise that sometimes this can be different for every child who has their own needs so may look different in each individual case.

Children can be identified by any member of the school community as needing extra emotional support and a cause for concern form will be completed for that child. This may result in children receiving extra support from: play sessions, play therapy, Lego therapy, art therapy, counselling and sensory playtime.

- Children who need extra support will have strategy plans. These plans will be written and reviewed by the child's class teacher. They will be reviewed at the end of each term but can be adapted any time.

- Staff to log incidents online using CPOMS. The SLT will hold meetings to decide the best course of action based on the patterns they (or others) have noticed for individual children.

- The context of the situation is always to be taken into account.

- A child is not to be defined as 'bad'. It should be explained to the child that they have made a wrong choice. You should link your rationalisation about the situation to the behaviour actions and not the child e.g., I wonder how the choices you just made make you feel?

- Children should be supported through a difficult period by the adults in school and the situation should be viewed as a teachable moment. Children should know that they are not defined by an event. They are allowed to make mistakes and can learn from them. Once a situation is dealt with, it is finished and this needs to be clear to the child.

- Support through our psychotherapist is available for all members of our school community, in order to provide support for their wellbeing.

Restorative Approach

Our **RESPECT** policy is not primarily concerned with rule enforcement. It is a tool used to promote relationships so that people can work together with the common purpose of helping everyone learn.

Restorative approaches are based on four key features:

RESPECT – for everyone by listening to other opinions and learning to value them and respect for self

RESPONSIBILTY - taking responsibility for your own actions

REFLECT - taking the time to think about what happens when they are disregulated

REPAIR – developing the skills within our school community so that its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm

This school uses restorative approaches to encourage everyone to be responsible for their actions. Key staff have been trained in restorative approaches and will apply them to resolving situations in the school.

Suspensions

At The Belsteads School, we recognise the damaging effects of excluding children as it leaves them open to further social suspension which increases the chance of future harm. As a result, we have a zero suspension policy unless a pupil has physically harmed a member of our school community and we feel it is unsafe for the pupil to return to school for themselves or others.

Respect

Relationships	"Help me feel safe; trust me; don't judge me and get to
Empathy	"We all listen to each other, try to understand how others are feeling and be kind to each other."
Safety	"We all keep changes to a minimum, we'll respect each other's space, and try to have a calm environment that
Pride	"We all take pride in our school. We feel proud of who we are and who our friends are; we know it's okay to feel good about ourselves and to be resilient."
Equality	"Treat me fairly, let me speak freely but appropriately and let's embrace our differences."
Creativity	"We will manage ourselves and help each other in original and innovative ways."
Transformation	"We will develop and grow together during our time at The Belsteads School."

School Day

08:50 AM Students arrives

Breakfast Club

09:05 AM Regulation Time Prior to Learning

09:30 AM Lessons starts

10:30 AM Breaktime

12:30 PM Lunch Time Starts

01:30 PM Lunch Time Over

03:00 PM School Ends

Wednesday

12:00 PM Lunch Time Starts

01:00 PM School Ends

Breakfast, Snacks and lunches

When students arrive, they can have breakfast at school. Choices on offer include: toast, cereal, smoothies, yoghurt and fruit. There are also sometimes bacon or sausage sandwiches available.

Fruit is available at break times. There is no need to send snacks with students but students are encouraged to bring a water bottle with them which can be refilled throughout the day.

Every student is given a free school lunch. There is a three week rotating menu which can be found on the school website. Each day there is a hot option (vegetarian option available) as well as a choice of sandwiches.

School Uniform & Appearance

We believe in fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages students to express their individuality. As such, we do not require students to wear a uniform. We want our students to feel comfortable and confident in their clothing choices while respecting the guidelines outlined below:

1. Dress Code: While there is no strict uniform policy, we do have a dress code to ensure that all students maintain a safe and appropriate learning environment. Students are expected to dress modestly and avoid clothing that may be considered distracting, offensive, or unsafe. Any attire that promotes violence, discrimination, or inappropriate language is strictly prohibited.

2. Comfort and Practicality: Students are encouraged to wear clothing that allows them to move freely and comfortably throughout the day. Since learning often involves various activities, we advise choosing attire suitable for both indoor and outdoor settings.

3. Expression of Identity: At The Belsteads School, we celebrate individuality and diversity. Students are free to express their personal style, cultural identity, and preferences through their clothing choices, as long as it adheres to our dress code.

4. Weather-Appropriate Clothing: We encourage students to dress appropriately for the weather conditions to ensure their well-being and comfort during outdoor activities.
5. Safety Considerations: For safety reasons, certain items, such as clothing with drawstrings or loose accessories, may be discouraged during physical education classes or specific activities.

6. Respect for Others: While expressing oneself is essential, we also stress the importance of respecting others' feelings and sensibilities. Any clothing that may be deemed offensive or disrespectful to fellow students, staff members, or the school community is not permitted.

Parents and carers are kindly requested to review and support their child's understanding of our dress code. We believe that by allowing students to make appropriate clothing choices, we encourage self-confidence, creativity, and individual expression while fostering a respectful and inclusive school culture.

Class Organisation

We believe in creating a learning environment that caters to the diverse needs and abilities of our students. Our class organisation is designed to support optimal learning experiences and foster a sense of belonging for all students. Instead of organising classes solely based on age, we implement a flexible and dynamic approach that considers various factors to ensure each student's educational journey is enriched.

Key Principles of Class Organisation:

1. Learning Readiness: We recognize that each student's readiness to learn varies, and factors such as cognitive development, emotional maturity, and prior educational experiences play a vital role in their learning progress. Our class organisation takes into account these individual differences to create well-balanced and supportive learning groups.

2. Academic Ability: Students are grouped in a way that promotes a balanced mix of academic abilities within each class. This approach allows for differentiated instruction, enabling teachers to address varying learning needs effectively.

3. Social and Emotional Development: We consider the social and emotional development of students when organising classes. Our aim is to create a positive and nurturing classroom environment where students feel comfortable and valued.

4. Interests and Learning Styles: Students' interests and learning styles are taken into account to create engaging and motivating learning experiences. Our curriculum incorporates a variety of teaching methods to cater to different learning preferences.

5. Flexibility: Class organisation is not rigid and may be subject to change based on ongoing assessments, individual progress, and student needs. This flexibility ensures that students are continually placed in the most suitable learning environment.

6. Teacher Collaboration: Our teachers work collaboratively to discuss student progress and needs. This collaborative approach helps to ensure that each student receives the best possible support and instruction.

Parental Involvement:

We value the insights and perspectives of parents in our class organisation process. While we place considerable effort into creating well-balanced classes, we also welcome parent input and encourage open communication. Parents are encouraged to share any pertinent information

about their child's learning style, interests, and social-emotional development, which may further inform the class organisation.

Our approach to class organisation revolves around meeting the unique needs of every student, promoting a positive learning experience, and building a supportive and inclusive school community. We believe that this flexible approach allows us to best serve the diverse needs of our students while fostering an environment where each individual can thrive academically and socially.

We have 8 classes at the Belsteads School

Endeavour	Hannah
Prosper	Nicole
Nurture	Melissa
Thrive	Breda
Inspire	Emma
Empower	Peter
Ignite	Alison
Flourish	Millie & Bradley

Each class, alongside the teacher, has a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (H.L.T.A.) and two teaching assistants to support the students.

Curriculum

The curriculum at The Belstead's School aims to fulfil the school's objectives of providing a "broad, balanced and forward thinking curriculum" relevant to the aspirations of the pupils and their parents.

The curriculum focuses on developing the key skills of communication, cognition, independence, physical development and self-care, that equip children and young people for life beyond the school. It will give all pupils "experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education" as required by The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003.

In particular, the curriculum aims to ensure that:

- Subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils
- Pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- The personal, social and health education reflects the school's aims and ethos
- Appropriate career guidance is given
- For all pupil's, the programme of activities is appropriate to their needs and wherever possible individualised
- All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress through a broad and balanced curriculum
- We seek to ensure all pupils are adequately prepared for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life
- We work in conjunction with pupils E.C.H.P's focusing on personalised learning through collaboration and team working to enhance confidence, motivation and pupils' self-esteem

Our curriculum strives to be responsive to each learner and build on individual strengths and interests. A rolling two year plan is in place, which supports a balance of stimulating contexts for learning through different learning experiences, themes and subjects.

All classes complete Maths and English every morning. Afternoons are spent covering the wider curriculum of Health and Wellbeing which includes P.E. PSHE and Personal Development. Science, Expressive Arts which covers Art, Drama and Music. Also, Humanities which covers R.E, History and Geography.

Every Monday each class has a session with our qualified, outdoor learning expert. Every class also has community visits timetabled to enjoy and practise the key skills needed for adulthood. Our trips aim to fulfil the criteria for the Preparation for Adulthood pathway

Time is built into the timetable to allow the students to practise and develop their social skills through games with their peers and staff as well as recreational time just for fun in our spacious surroundings. They engage in lessons designed to help them understand their mental health and wellbeing as well as practical life skills such as cooking-all fulfilling the preparation for adulthood pathway.

School Trips

We believe that experiential learning through class trips offers invaluable educational opportunities for our students. Whether exploring local sites or venturing further afield, these trips provide students with real-world experiences that enhance their academic, personal, and social development.

Local Class Trips:

Local class trips refer to educational excursions within the immediate vicinity of the school. These trips are typically day outings and are intended to complement the curriculum, allowing students to connect their learning to the world around them. Examples of local class trips may include visits to museums, historical landmarks, nature reserves, community service projects, or local businesses, visiting the nature reserve.

Safety Precautions:

1. Students must wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the activities planned.
2. All participants must follow instructions provided by adults.
3. Staff will carry first aid kits and emergency contact information.
4. Allergies and medical conditions will be communicated to relevant staff to ensure proper care.

Further Afield Class Trips:

Further afield class trips involve travel beyond the local area. These trips offer students the chance to explore new cultures, environments, and experiences. Examples of further afield class trips may include Duke of Edinburgh expedition or residential trip.

Safety Precautions:

1. Detailed itineraries will be provided to parents/carers, including trip dates, destinations, and emergency contact information.
2. Adequate supervision will be maintained throughout the trip, with a reasonable student-to-teacher ratio.
3. All accommodations and transportation arrangements will prioritise safety and security.
4. A designated emergency response plan will be in place, and participants will be briefed on emergency procedures.

Code of Conduct:

Regardless of the trip's location, students are expected to adhere to the school's code of conduct. This includes respectful behaviour towards peers, teachers, and others they encounter during the trip. Students are representatives of the school community and are expected to maintain a positive and responsible attitude at all times.

Parental Consent:

When your child is admitted to the school you will be given a consent form to cover all trips. However, information about any trip, its purpose, location, and itinerary will be communicated to parents. Parents will also have the opportunity to provide any relevant medical or dietary information that may be required during the trip.

Class trips are an integral part of the holistic education we offer at The Belsteads School. By engaging in these experiences, our students gain a broader perspective of the world and develop essential life skills. We are committed to ensuring that each class trip is safe, well-organised, and aligned with our educational goals.

Holiday Club

We run a holiday club that is open to all students and their siblings. It is free of charge and runs for limited times during all school holidays except the Christmas holidays.

Activities on offer including:

Cooking **Arts & Crafts** **Sports** **Gaming**

Children need to bring a packed lunch as well as snacks and a drink.

If your child is normally brought to school in a taxi, please contact the school office to see how we may be able to assist with them attending holiday club.

Home / School Communication

We recognize the importance of effective communication between home and school. We value the partnership between parents/carers and our staff in supporting the education and well-being of our students. While we understand that some parents/carers may not be able to physically come to the school regularly, we have established various channels of communication to keep you informed and involved in your child's educational journey.

1. Parent/Carer Communication: Our teachers and staff are available for phone calls and emails to address any concerns, questions, or feedback. You can call the school office to leave a message or email **admin@belsteads.essex.sch.uk** and the relevant member of staff will get back to you at the earliest opportunity.

2. School Newsletters: We regularly publish school newsletters to keep parents/carers informed about upcoming events, curriculum updates, and other relevant information. These newsletters will be shared through email or available for download on our website.

3. Parents Evening: We conduct parent-teacher conferences regularly, providing an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss their child's progress and address any concerns. We do these via zoom/Teams as we understand that some parents/carers may not be able to attend in person.

4. School Website and Social Media: Our school website and social media channels will provide a central hub for information about school activities, policies and announcements. Parents/carers can access the latest updates and stay connected with the school community.

5. Parent/Carer Involvement: We encourage parents/carers to actively participate in their child's education, even if they cannot physically visit the school. We hold many events that we welcome parents/carers to throughout the academic year.

We believe that strong home-school communication is vital in ensuring the success and happiness of our students. By utilising various communication channels, we aim to create an inclusive and supportive environment where parents/carers feel connected to the school community and are actively engaged in their child's education.

Complaints & Compliments: Your Voice Matters

We value open communication and believe that feedback from our school community plays a crucial role in our continuous improvement. We encourage parents, students, and staff to share their compliments, concerns, and complaints, as your voice matters to us. Your feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and where we can make improvements to ensure a positive learning environment for everyone.

Compliments:

We believe in celebrating the accomplishments and positive contributions of our students, staff, and community members. If you have had a positive experience or wish to recognise the efforts of our dedicated team, we encourage you to share your compliments with us. Compliments can be conveyed through:

1. Emails or Letters: Send an email or letter expressing your compliments to the Headteacher or administrative staff.

2. Testimonials: We appreciate when parents, students, or staff members provide testimonials about their positive experiences at our school. These testimonials may be featured on our school website or other school materials with your consent.

Complaints and Concerns:

We understand that concerns may arise from time to time, and we are committed to addressing them promptly and professionally.

Definition of complaints and concerns

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.*

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The following are the key stages of our complaint's procedure

Stage 1 – an informal discussion
Stage 2 – referral to the Head teacher
Stage 3 – independent review
Stage 4 – referral to the Secretary of State for Education

Stage 1 **informal Resolution**

The Belsteads School take all informal concerns seriously and endeavour to resolve these at the earliest stage

Stage 2 **Head Teacher (Informal Resolution)**

If a complainant feels that a concern has not been solved through discussion with the class teacher, or that it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then an appointment to discuss it with the Head teacher should be made, indicating that the appointment is regarding a complaint.

Stage 3 **Panel Hearing (Formal)**

If parents seek to invoke this stage, they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who will convene a complaints panel within 7 working days. They will seek to hold a hearing within 15 working days following receipt of the request.

Stage 4 **Referral to the Secretary of State for Education**

Complaints about The Belsteads School are almost always settled within the school, but in exceptional cases it may be necessary to refer the problem to an outside body independent of the school.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response by the Complaints Panel, they have the right to refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Details as follows: Secretary of State for Education

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THE COMPLAINTS POLICY

- Complaints about the national curriculum entitlement and collective worship
- Student admissions
- Exclusions
- Issues relating to child protection
- Employee grievances/disciplinary/dismissal
- Criminal investigations
- Grievance procedure
- Complaints of financial improprieties or other criminal activities will be dealt with through our Whistleblowing Policy, if raised by staff

Full details of our complaints policy can be found on the school website or a copy can be obtained from the school office.

Anonymous Complaints:

While we encourage open communication, we understand that some individuals may wish to remain anonymous when making a complaint. Although we prefer to address complaints with open communication, anonymous complaints will be taken into consideration. However, please note that anonymous complaints may limit our ability to fully investigate and address the issue.

Whistleblower Protection:

We take the protection of those who raise concerns or report misconduct seriously. If you fear retaliation or are uncertain about reporting a concern, our school follows a whistleblower protection policy to safeguard your rights and confidentiality.

We appreciate your involvement in the school community. Your compliments and complaints contribute to our growth and commitment to delivering an outstanding educational experience for all.

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our administrative staff.

School Administration

The school office is a vital hub of activity, serving as the central point for communication, administrative support, and student-related services. We are committed to providing a welcoming and efficient environment that supports the needs of our students, parents, staff, and visitors. This section of the school handbook outlines the functions and services offered by the school office.

Office Hours:

Our office is open from 7am to 3.30pm during term time. Please note that office hours may vary during school holidays or breaks.

Communication:

The school office is responsible for facilitating effective communication between parents, teachers, staff, and students. Whether it's through phone calls, emails, or in-person visits, we are here to address your questions, concerns, and inquiries promptly and professionally.

Student Enrollments and Records:

For new students, the school office manages the enrolment process, ensuring that all necessary documents and information are collected and processed efficiently.

Attendance and Absences:

Keeping track of student attendance is crucial for maintaining a safe and accountable learning environment. Parents are required to notify the school office regarding student absences. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring regular attendance and punctuality.

Visitor Management:

The safety of our school community is a top priority. The school office manages visitor registration and issues visitor passes to ensure that everyone on campus is accounted for and authorised. When you visit school, you must always report to the office in the first instance.

Health and Medical Records:

In collaboration with the school nursing team and other health professionals, the office maintains health and medical records for students as well as organising vaccinations. It is essential for parents to provide accurate health information and notify the school office of any changes in their child's health status.

General Administrative Support:

Apart from the functions mentioned above, the school office provides general administrative support to the school staff and administration. This includes managing school supplies, scheduling appointments, and coordinating various administrative tasks.

We encourage parents, students, and staff to reach out to the school office whenever you need assistance or have questions. We are here to help and ensure that your experience at The Belsteads School is positive and productive.

Attendance & Absence

We understand the significance of attendance and its impact on the educational progress and emotional well-being of our students. Our school is dedicated to supporting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of every individual. Regular attendance is crucial to achieving these objectives and providing a nurturing learning environment for all.

1. Importance of Attendance:

A. Academic Success: Regular attendance plays a vital role in academic achievement. Students who attend school consistently have the opportunity to fully engage with the curriculum, participate in class activities, and build a strong foundation for future learning.

B. Social and Emotional Growth: Attending school regularly provides students with the chance to develop essential social skills, make friends, and build meaningful relationships with peers and staff. Our supportive school community encourages the emotional growth of every student.

C. Establishing Routines: Consistent attendance helps students establish positive daily routines, contributing to their overall well-being and ability to manage their emotions and behaviour effectively.

2. SEMH-Specific Attendance Support:

A. Individualised Approach: We recognise that students attending The Belsteads School may face unique challenges that impact their attendance. Our school staff work closely with students and their families to provide personalised support to address any barriers to attendance.

B. Emotional Well-being: Our SEMH-trained staff are dedicated to fostering a safe and nurturing environment where students feel emotionally supported and encouraged to attend school regularly.

C. Communication and Collaboration: Open communication between parents/carers and school staff is essential in ensuring we can address attendance concerns promptly. If there are any difficulties in attending school, please inform us as soon as possible, so we can work together to find solutions.

3. Reporting Absences:

A. Absence Notification: If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or any other reason, please notify the school office on 01245 201652 before the start of the school day. You can do this by phone or using the designated absence reporting method provided by the school.

B. Reason for Absence: When reporting an absence, kindly provide a reason for the absence to help us better understand and address any recurring issues.

4. Monitoring and Support:

A. Attendance Monitoring: Our school closely monitors attendance to identify any patterns or concerns. We aim to be proactive in addressing potential attendance issues and providing timely support.

B. Intervention Strategies: In cases where attendance becomes a concern, our SEMH team, together with parents/carers, will develop intervention strategies to support the student in attending school regularly.

5. Leave of Absence:

A. Leave Requests: If your child needs to take a leave of absence for any reason other than illness, please discuss the request with the school office well in advance. The school will consider individual circumstances and work collaboratively to find the best solution.

B. Extended Leave: In the case of extended leave, we may provide work and learning materials to help your child stay connected to their education during the absence. We believe that a strong partnership between parents/carers, students, and school staff is essential in ensuring that attendance remains a priority. We are committed to working together to provide the best possible support for our students' social, emotional, and educational development.

Medical Information

The safety and well-being of our students is the priority for us at the Belsteads School. As an SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) school, we understand the importance of providing a supportive and nurturing environment for all students. To ensure that we can provide appropriate care and support, we require accurate and up-to-date medical information for each student.

Medical Information Collection:

1. Annual Update form: At the beginning of each academic year or upon enrolment, parents/carers are required to complete a comprehensive Student Information Form. This form gathers essential medical information, including allergies, existing medical conditions, medications, emergency contact details, and any specific medical considerations or requirements.

2. Update of Medical Information: Parents/carers are responsible for promptly notifying the school of any changes in their child's medical information throughout the school year. This includes updates on medications, new medical diagnoses, changes in contact details, or any other pertinent medical information.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:

1. Privacy and Confidentiality: We treat all medical information with the utmost confidentiality and respect. Access to this information is strictly limited to authorised school staff directly involved in the care and well-being of the student.

2. Data Protection: We adhere to all relevant data protection laws and regulations when collecting, storing, and processing medical information. Information is securely stored in accordance with our school's data protection policy.

Emergency Procedures:

1. Emergency Contact Information: The emergency contact information provided in the Student Information Form will be used in case of a medical emergency or other urgent situations. It is crucial that parents/carers ensure this information is accurate and current.

2. Medical Care Authorisation: By providing medical information, parents/carers also authorise the school to seek appropriate medical care for their child in case of an emergency where parental contact is not immediately possible.

Communication with Healthcare Providers:

1. Consent for Communication: Parents/carers are required to provide consent for the school to communicate with relevant healthcare providers, such as doctors or specialists, if necessary. This communication will be limited to matters directly related to the student's well-being and educational needs.

2. Supporting Student Needs: Sharing medical information with relevant school staff ensures that appropriate support and accommodations are provided to meet the student's unique needs.

It is of utmost importance that parents/carers proactively cooperate with the school in providing accurate and up-to-date medical information. This enables us to create a safe and supportive learning environment that addresses the unique requirements of our students.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. If you have any questions or require assistance regarding medical information or related matters, please do not hesitate to contact our school's administrative staff.

Emergency School Closure

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are of paramount importance. In the event of an emergency school closure, we have established clear communication procedures to ensure that parents, carers, and the school community are promptly informed.

1. Notification Channels:

A. Parent/Carer Communication: Our primary method of communication during emergency school closures is through phone calls, emails, or text messages to the primary contact information provided by parents/carers. It is essential to keep your contact details up-to-date with the school office to receive timely notifications.

B. School Website: Information regarding emergency school closures will be prominently displayed on our school website's homepage. We recommend checking the website regularly for updates.

C. Social Media: We will also post announcements about emergency closures on our official social media channels. Please follow our accounts to stay informed.

d. Local Radio - It will be announced on local radio if the school is closed as well as on the Essex County Council website.

2. Timely Communication:

A. Early Notification: In the event of an anticipated emergency school closure, we will make every effort to notify parents/carers as early as possible to allow for appropriate arrangements to be made.

B. Continuous Updates: During prolonged closures or if the situation changes, we will provide regular updates to keep parents/carers informed about the expected duration of the closure and any additional measures being taken.

3. Emergency Closure Reasons:

A. Inclement Weather
B. Natural Disasters
C. Infrastructure Issues

4. Reopening Information:

A. Reopening Date: We will inform parents/carers of the expected reopening date as soon as it is confirmed.

B. Verification: Before reopening, we will verify the safety and readiness of the school premises to ensure a secure environment for our students and staff.

5. Learning Continuity:

Remote Learning: If feasible and necessary, arrangements for remote learning will be communicated to parents/carers during extended closures to minimise disruptions to education.

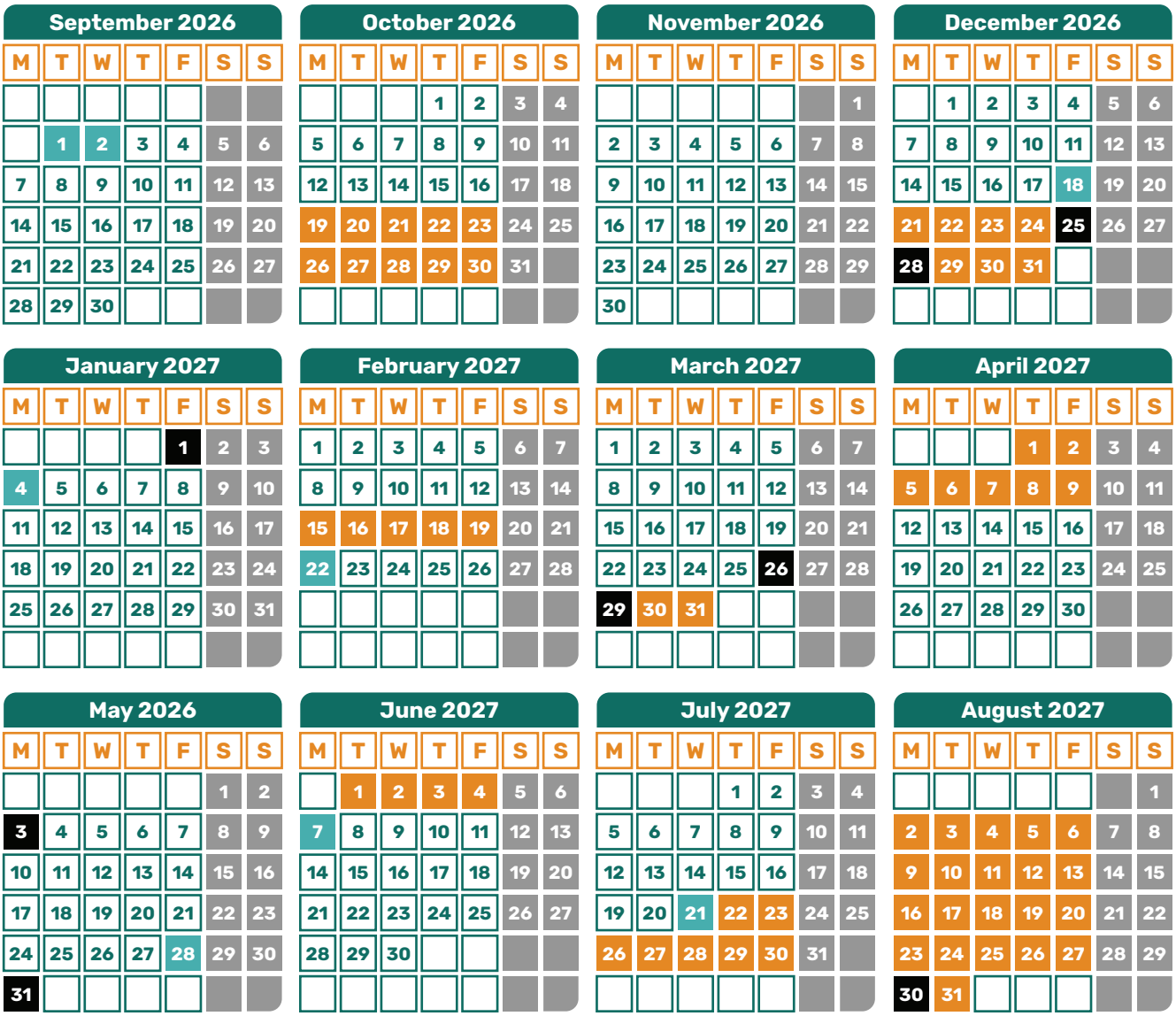
6. Stay Informed:

Stay Connected: We encourage parents/carers to stay connected through the communication channels provided by the school to receive timely updates during any emergency situation.

Please note that the decision to close the school during an emergency is taken with utmost consideration for the safety and well-being of all. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in such situations.

Term Dates

School Days | School Holidays | Bank Holidays | Weekends | Inset Days



Autumn Term: Tuesday 1 September 2026 – Friday 18 December 2026 **74 Days**
Half Term 26 October – 30 October

Spring Term: Monday 4 January 2027 – Thursday 25 March 2027 **54 Days**
Half Term 15 February - 19 February

Summer Term: Monday 12 April 2027 – Wednesday 21 July 2027 **67 Days**
Half Term 31 May – 4 June, and May Bank Holiday - 3 May

Total: 195 Days