

Update from the Head

Friday 26th September

Dear Parents,

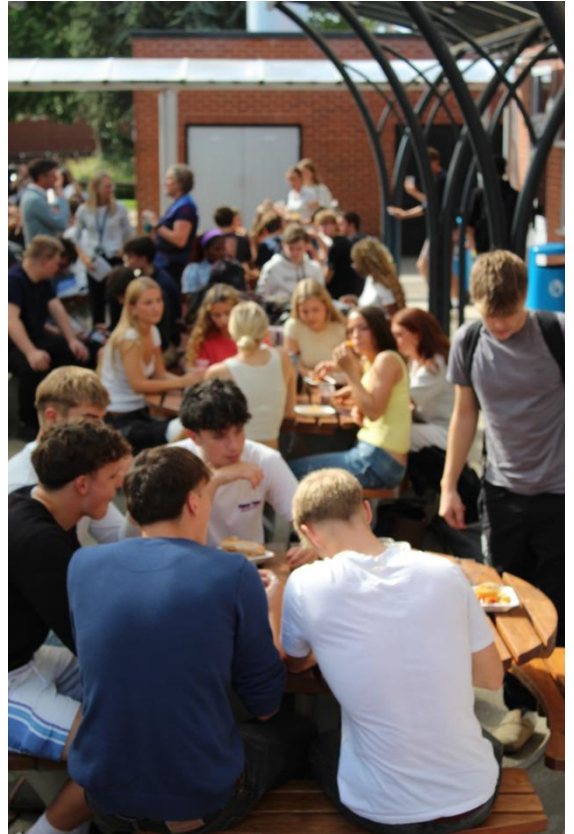
The weeks are flying by. I can't believe we are already almost through the first month! That's over 10% of the school year completed already!

Sponsored Walk

We enjoyed a great walk into the Cotswold hills last Friday. The entire lower school tackled the Annual Sponsored Walk and they were joined by several staff members. As I always I was the back marker and I really enjoyed a nice walk in the autumn sunshine. My thanks to Mr Goddard and Mr Lane for organising it. We don't yet know how much we raised but when we do I'll let you know.

Bonding BBQ

Whilst the lower school were enjoying a nice country walk, the sixth formers were engaged in the Bonding BBQ. Mr Constance and his team catered for over 400 whilst pupils from the music department played some brass music as a backdrop.



Cheltenham Half Marathon

On Sunday over 30 Balcarras staff ran the half marathon in honour of our friend and former colleague Kevin Clancy and to raise money for Sue Ryder. So far they have raised over £7,000.



Chelsea's Story

On Thursday Year 8 gathered in the hall to watch 'Chelsea's Story' which is an educational play about Child Sexual Exploitation. It is used widely in schools across the UK and has proven highly successful in raising awareness around the issues surrounding Child Sexual Exploitation. It forms part of our personal development curriculum in Year 8.

PTFA AGM

On Wednesday the Balcarras PTFA had their AGM. Mr Constance went along to represent the school's senior management team. I understand from him that it was a very successful meeting. The PTFA raised well over £10,000 last year and, more important than that, they hosted a number of great community events. We are very grateful to them.

House Cross Country

On Wednesday we had the first big House competition of the year. Hundreds of pupils tackled the House Cross Country Course. Selvey continued their winning streak in house events by claiming the first trophy of the year. To see an article click here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1300>



The Balcarras Bacculaureate Graduation Ceremony

On Wednesday Mr Towers and I met with the Year 12 pupils who achieved the Balcarras Bacculaureate at GCSE last year. It is quite a challenge and it was great that 8 of them managed to achieve it. See news article here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1298>



GITEP Board Meeting at Balcarras

On Thursday I chaired the first meeting this year of the Gloucestershire Initial Education Partnership (GITEP). I am starting my third year as the Chair of GITEP which is a teacher training provider based in Gloucestershire. Balcarras is the lead school of GITEP but the partnership includes well over 30 secondary schools and 10 primary schools across the county. This year GITEP is training 74 secondary teachers and 13 primary teachers. GITEP exists to ensure that we have a ready supply of excellent new teachers coming into the county. I thoroughly enjoy my role working with other headteachers, the staff of GITEP and colleagues across the county, to ensure that our offer for teacher training continues to be outstanding. If you are interested in the work of GITEP or you are interested in a career in teaching have a look at GITEP's website here:

<https://gitep.org.uk/>

Work Experience Launch to Year 10

On Thursday evening I attended the Work Experience Launch for Year 10. I think work experience is a great thing and I look forward to hearing what our pupils get up to later in the year. Thanks to Mrs Lewis and Mrs Towers for all of their hard work on careers.

ASCL Survey on School Funding

I am a member of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL). Recently they conducted a survey of school leaders on school funding and I responded on behalf of Balcarras. On Tuesday they released the results. ASCL are submitting the survey as part of their evidence to the treasury ahead of the autumn budget.

The results of the survey make for grim reading. Schools up and down the country are having to cut services, increase class sizes, and reduce staffing. If you are interested you can view the results of the survey here:

https://www.ascl.org.uk/Our-view/Campaigns/ASCL-Funding-campaign/Funding-survey-results-2025?utm_source=ASCL+Briefing%3A+23+September+2025&utm_campaign=2506291047-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_09_23_09_39&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-2506291047-575883901

Gloucestershire's New Teachers Gather at Balcarras

This week we hosted over 150 Early Career Teachers (ECTs) at Balcarras for their welcome conference to the ECTP (Early Career Training Programme). As new teachers to the profession the DfE funds all schools to support their professional development in the first two years of their careers. Balcarras and Odyssey Teaching School Hubs co-deliver this training with the support of University College London. It was fabulous to see both Primary and Secondary teachers from across the county gathering together and as a school we do a great job in hosting the event. The catering team got a lot of praise for the lovely lunch and it is fantastic that we don't have to out-source such events to hotels and conference venues. In the coming weeks we will also be welcoming ECTs and their mentors starting the second year of their programme.



Safeguarding Information

A reminder to you that the school has a dedicated safeguarding team led by Liza McCarthy who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. All of the details are on our website here:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/page/?title=Safeguarding+and+Wellbeing&pid=139>

Here is the safeguarding team for 2025-26:

Need someone to talk to? Need support? Feeling anxious?

You can talk to the Balcarras SAFEGUARDING team...

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<p>If you are in a friendship that is upsetting you or encouraging you to do the wrong thing.</p>	 <p>Miss McCarthy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</p>	 <p>Miss Niblett Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)</p>	 <p>Mrs Winterbottom Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)</p>	 <p>Mr Rothwell Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)</p>	 <p>Ms Bourne Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)</p>
<p>If you feel unsafe at school, at home or online.</p>	<p>If you are worried or feel you need some support.</p>	<p>If you are concerned about a friend or someone in your family.</p>			
<p>CONTACT US: safeguarding@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk or visit us in our offices along the main corridor or in the sixth form area.</p>					

Please trust that we will deal with your concerns discreetly.

* Mrs Winterbottom is on maternity leave until December

Upcoming Events

Annual Careers Fayre Thursday 2nd October from 5pm in the main hall

House Music Highlights Concert Wednesday 8th October 7pm in the Main Hall

The Balcarras Trust

SELF MOTIVATION
TEAM WORKING
PROBLEM SOLVING
LITERACY
COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION
NUMERACY
CREATIVITY
RELIABILITY & SELF DISCIPLINE
RESILIENCE
HONESTY & INTEGRITY

CAREERS FAIR 2025

 **Thursday**
2 October, 2025

 **When:**
5:00pm to 7:00pm

Speak to experts from 40+ universities, colleges and apprenticeship providers.

Connect with top employers, discover your career possibilities.

Please note:

Quiet time from 4:45pm until 5:00pm

Years 11, 12 & 13 are invited from 5:00pm until 6:00pm

Years 9 & 10 are invited from 6:00pm until 7:00pm



Balcarras School, East End Road, Charlton Kings GL53 8QF

Right that's it from me. Time for the weekend. Leeds face Bournemouth at Elland Road. Come on Leeds!

Dominic Burke