

22nd May 2026

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure to write to you with my end-of-term update for Term 5, in the warm late May sunshine!

## The Class of 2026

Today, we say “farewell” to our Year 11 Class of 2026, as they begin their study leave. They are a really wonderful group, and today has been full of laughter, joy and some tears as we have celebrated together. We look forward to what they will go on to achieve, not only in their exams, but in the rest of their future lives.

The same is true for the Year 13 Class of 2026, who began their study leave the week before last. They are now in the thick of their exams and are tackling the challenge with great determination and resilience. We wish them all well as they continue to revise and prepare over half term, and for every success in their lives beyond Churchill.

## Looking ahead to Term 6

Term 6 is packed with exciting whole-school events, beginning with our Sponsored Walk and Senior Trek on Friday 12th June. This is a great opportunity to make the most of our fantastic rural location, getting all of our students out into the countryside to enjoy the fresh air and the wonderful scenery of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We’re really looking forward to the day, with thanks to all the staff, sixth formers and additional volunteers who work so hard to make it possible.

Following on from that, we also have the excitement of Sports Day, Activities Week, work experience for Years 10 and 12, Celebration of Success evenings, and the award of the Academics Cup, the Head of House Challenge Cup, and the House Cup at the end of the year. There’s still all to play for!

## School reforms

The *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act*, passed by the government on 8th May, has significant implications for the education system. There are changes to the curriculum, reforms to the systems for supporting children with special education needs, and changes to school food standards, amongst other things. Please be assured that we are working hard to ensure that we are ready for all of these reforms, which we believe will be positive for children, families and the education system as a whole.

One of the most significant changes for schools, which will likely come into force in the next academic year, is the banning of mobile phones during the school day. Under the new law, it will no longer be sufficient for schools to say that they expect children to have their phones simply switched off and in their bags. Again, we agree with this direction: smartphones are designed to be attention-seeking and attention-grabbing, and even the most diligent and dedicated student will be tempted to check their phone during the school day. They are distraction machines! There is also a building body of evidence that smartphones cause a range of harms to children and young people.

We are therefore actively exploring the introduction of lockable mobile phone pouches for students in Years 7-11. In this system, each student would be issued a lockable pouch, which would enable them to keep their phone with them during the school day, but locked away so that it cannot be used. Pouches are already in use at Backwell School and Gordano School within the Lighthouse Schools Partnership, and both schools have reported really positive impacts on learning and behaviour as a result. We will keep you posted as our planning for this develops, but we wanted to give families a "heads up" that we plan to introduce this system in due course.

## Head of Sixth Form

We say goodbye today to Mr Heysham, who has been acting Head of Sixth Form since September, on secondment from Gordano School. One of the many advantages of working in a strong multi-academy trust is the ability to "borrow" excellent staff like Mr Heysham, who has made a great contribution to the Sixth Form and the wider Academy through his leadership and dedication. We wish him well as he returns to his substantive role at Gordano, and we look forward to welcoming back our Head of Sixth Form, Miss Sheppard, who returns from maternity leave in term 6.

## Thank you

As ever, we are so grateful for all the support you continue to provide to the Academy, and for entrusting us with your children's education and development. Working at Churchill is a pleasure and a privilege, and we don't take it for granted!

I wish you all a restful and relaxing half term break. We look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 1st June, for a timetable week 1.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Hildrew', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Hildrew  
Headteacher