

Events at Blundell's

PARENTS' GUIDE



Blundell's

FOUNDED 1604

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Introduction

Welcome to our inaugural parent brochure, showcasing the wide array of different events to which parents are invited. This guide provides an initial introduction and then a term-by-term outline of when parents are invited to school for academic, pastoral and extra-curricular events. Alongside this brochure, sports fixtures are as per the calendar and the Blundell's Association runs various social events through the year, from coffee mornings, tennis, campus tours and dog walks. The Blundell's Association events will be published at the start of each term via the Development Office.

Please check the termly school calendar for specific dates on the events in this brochure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'B. Wielenga.' with a period at the end. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bart Wielenga

THE HEAD

Academic Forums

These take place on a Saturday at around 12 noon (apart from School House, whose Forums are on a Wednesday afternoon), and are organised after the fixture schedule is set so that as many of the teams in that year group(s) are playing at home as possible. At Academic Forums you will hear from members of the Academic Leadership Team, the Head of Careers and Higher Education, and the Head of PSHE, if appropriate, on upcoming matters of importance for that Year group. These Forums often focus on exams, and how the school is supporting pupils in preparing for both external and internal exams, and the part we ask parents to play. We will also present on options choices for Year 9, GCSE and A-Level, upcoming academic initiatives, university applications and the UCAS process, as well as careers and other matters. Around 2 weeks before a Forum is to take place, you will receive an email outlining the focus of the Forum and the speakers.

Forums last around 45-60 minutes, and there is a Q & A session at the end. A few days after each Forum, a recording of a voice over PowerPoint is sent out by the presenters of the Forum, as well as a link to the slides shown during their presentation.

PSHE Forums

Each half term we host a PSHE Discussion Evening, under the overall banner of 'You're not in this alone'. Each evening is themed around a particular area of the PSHE curriculum which we feel will be of interest to parents (for example, 'social media and screen time', or 'alcohol & drugs'), and we use the opportunity to discuss key themes and developments in these areas, explore case studies, and share examples of the resources used with pupils in their PSHE lessons. Close collaboration between parents and school is integral to helping children grow into positive, well-rounded and value-driven adults, and nowhere is this more true than in many of the areas covered in the PSHE curriculum; it is very much our intention to work together with parents on these areas, and these evenings are one of the key ways in which we try to achieve this.

The evenings run from 7 – 9pm, with food and refreshments provided, and are led by the Second Master, Mr Radley, and the Head of PSHE, Mrs Jones. The specific dates of each event can be found in the calendar, and details on how to sign up, as well as about the evening's topic, will be emailed in the fortnight before the event itself.

Music and Drama

There are many music and drama events over the course of the year. Some are ticketed, and these are indicated in the school calendar.

GENERAL MUSIC EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

As well as our large-scale, ticketed Spring Concert, Choral Concert and Christmas Concerts, there are many concerts which do not require tickets in advance. **Candlelight Concerts** take place twice a term, where we hold candlelight concerts for our musicians in Big School or Chapel. These are organised by Year group. All musicians learning an instrument are encouraged to perform, either as a soloist or in an ensemble, and the magical atmosphere makes these occasions very special. The Year 10 concert, in the Summer Term, takes place outside in the Blundell's Garden and is equally atmospheric.

We always warmly invite parents and friends to our **Examination Concerts** towards the end of each term. These are to help pupils preparing for ABRSM or Trinity instrumental musical examinations, and they offer a chance for a formal run-through of the music in advance to help prepare for the final performance and combat any lingering nerves. The music is always extremely impressive with a high quality of performance and musicality, whether that be at Grade 1 level or Grade 8 and beyond. There is also the chance to attend the **Year 13 and 11 Recital Concerts** for students taking their A-level and GCSE academic examinations.



Blundell's
ASSOCIATION

Blundell's Association

The Blundell's Association runs various social events through the year, from coffee mornings, tennis, campus tours and dog walks. These will be published at the start of each term via the Development Office.



The School Garden

The Blundell's Garden has been developed by various groups of pupils over the last four years. It can be found behind the Biology Department, in an area of school that was once the Head's vegetable garden from years past.

The vision for the Blundell's Garden is to create a beautiful space for us all to enjoy, to enhance the curriculum and pastoral care and to learn horticultural skills and healthy food production with wildlife, biodiversity, sustainability and environmental care at its heart. It is a place to rest, relax, enjoy each other's company, and focus on life's priorities. We aim to create a strong interconnected community which is physically and mentally healthy for everyone.

The Garden Cabin was built last year and is the base for the Community Partnerships programme at school and a permanent venue for the garden café.

Throughout the year there are several garden-based events open to the Blundell's and local community. These are ticketed and will be promoted nearer the time.

Chapel Services

Parents are always welcome to attend Sunday services in chapel, some of which are highlighted in the General Music section and elsewhere including **Choral Evensong** and the biennial **Carol Service** in Exeter Cathedral. **Confirmation** also happens, usually at the beginning of the Summer Term. Please contact the Chaplain for further details. There are also a number of pupil led joint House services held during the course of the year. Details of all school services are to be found in the school calendar.



Autumn term



Academic Forums

YEAR 13

In the first Forum of the year, the focus is on the UCAS process and university or apprenticeship applications, the resources and support available from the Careers and Sixth Form Team, as well as the academic plan for the year and an outline of the enrichment lined up for the year. We explain how we support pupils through what is probably the most consequential year of their education to date; how we help them manage their well-being as well as the social events for the pupils over the year.

YEAR 12

The first Year 12 forum welcomes many parents new to Blundell's. At this Forum, we give an overview of the academic plan for the year, and the focus is on the transition from GCSEs to A levels; how to make the most of the new freedoms counterbalanced with the new responsibilities that pupils will have. There is an introduction to the 'Futures' Sixth Form careers programme, including a demonstration of how we use Unifrog to support students at this stage. We also introduce EPQs as well as an overview of the enrichment plan for the year and the social events calendar for the year.

YEAR 11

The focus of the first Year 11 Forum of the year is around preparing for GCSEs. We explain the academic overview of the year, where the pressure points will come, and how we, working with parents, support the pupils as they work their way through this year. We also start the thinking process around A level choices and wider post-16 options, linked to the advice pupils are receiving around careers, enabling informed decisions. We introduce our work experience programme and the benefits this brings for the students.

YEAR 10

The Year 10 Forum focuses on the transition from Year 9 to Year 10; now the pupils have chosen their GCSEs how they can make the most of the opportunities in front of them. We discuss how we help pupils learn to manage and plan for the extra demands of coursework. We hear from our Head of PSHE around how the PSHE curriculum and teaching manages the particular challenges of this age group, to support the more detailed PSHE evenings run by the Second Master.



YEAR 9

The Year 9 Forum introduces many of the themes that run through Blundell's education given that we have a significant number of pupils who join us in this Year group. We explain how things change for the pupils as they move into the Senior Houses. We talk about GCSEs, both around the fact that some subjects start teaching GCSE content in Year 9, and that pupils will need to make some choices around the GCSEs they want to pursue in Year 10 quite early on in the spring term. We also hear from our Head of PSHE around how the PSHE curriculum and teaching manages the particular challenges of this age group, to support the more detailed PSHE evenings run by the Second Master.

YEAR 7/8 (SH)

Our Year 7/8 (School House) Forums are generally run on a Wednesday afternoon rather than Saturday since our youngest pupils don't have Saturday school. The first Forum of the year coincides with the Steve Mault project presentation; this is the project the Year 7s have carried out over the summer holidays. Our, now Year 8, pupils show their projects in Big School and all School House parents are warmly encouraged to come in and view the presentations. The Year 7 Forum is very much an introduction to Blundell's Senior School; the key people to know. and how we support pupils gain their more independence as they move into a much more complicated, bigger school. We discuss the similarities and differences between the two Year groups. At this Forum we also hear from the Head of PSHE about how PSHE works at Blundell's.

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

The Sixth Form open evening is the first step in pupil's journey to choosing A-Level subjects. It begins with a talk from the Head, the Head of Sixth Form and current Year 13 pupils on life in the Sixth Form and on what to consider when making A-Level subject choices. Each Head of Department is present and there is an opportunity to ask questions about each course, as well as about 6th Form Scholarships and University pathways. A tour of Westlake, our Year 13 House, is also offered. Following the Sixth Form evening, more specific help and advice in choosing Sixth Form subjects follows in the Spring term, with a further opportunity to talk to Heads of Department, along with the Year 11 Parents Meeting to gather feedback from class teachers.



Music events

CAROL SERVICE IN EXETER CATHEDRAL

A biennial event, the next outing being this year, 2023, the Exeter Cathedral Carol Service is a features a varied choral repertoire as well as instrumental music-making. This event is attended by the whole school. Information is released towards the end of the autumn term on how to acquire tickets for this event, which always sells out.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Held on the last Friday of term, the Christmas concert is a wonderful way to bring in the feeling of festivities with both secular and sacred music traditional to the Christmas period. Previous concerts have included Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* played by our Orchestra, alongside other Christmas favourites from the Big Band, Chamber Choir and soloists. This concert takes place in a church somewhere in the local area, and in 2023 will be held in Dulverton Church.

CHORAL EVENSONG

In the Autumn Term our Chapel Choir perform alongside the University of Exeter Chapel Choir in a service of choral evensong to which parents and guardians are warmly invited. The partnership we have built with the University Chapel Choir enables pupils to see an example of where they can take their learning and choral singing post-Blundell's, building aspirations and academic and musical links with students currently engaging in Higher Education.

SCHOLARS' CONCERTS

Our Music Scholars are extremely impressive musicians and each year we hold two concerts for them, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Spring Term. These take place at external venues and in November 2023 we will be visiting Sampford Peverell church with our Year 9, 12 and 13 Scholars, with another in January for the other year groups. This is a rare chance to hear exceptional solos from award-winning young musicians.

HOUSE MUSIC COMPETITION

Entirely devised and run by the student body with every member of the school from Year 9-13 in attendance, House Music is a fiercely fought and extremely entertaining occasion on the last Tuesday evening before the October half-term. As well as the House instrumental and vocal items, there is the legendary House Song (more often than not more of a shout!) chosen, rehearsed and arranged by the pupils. The evening is always full of fun and smiles and a real tonic to end the half term as the nights begin to draw in. The evening also features the "Blundell's Performer of the Year" final, which enables the student body to hear the very best of our solo instrumentalists and singers. This is a ticketed event and will be a sell-out.



Drama events

SENIOR SCHOOL PLAY

The Drama Department's flagship production featuring students from Years 11-13. They perform a well-known piece of theatre. Recent productions have included *A Chorus Line*, *Our Town*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Twelfth Night* and *Into The Woods*. This is a ticketed event and is always a sell-out.

Garden events

In the Autumn term, garden events are focussed around the Garden Open Day when the school garden is open to visit at various times. The 'Community Garden events' run throughout the Autumn term and include plot to plate, autumn harvest, a propagation workshop, planning and designing a garden, a wildlife gardening workshop and the Christmas Charity Fair. Father Christmas will also be making an appearance!

Chapel Services

We warmly invite new parents to join new Blundellians for the *Salvete Scholastici*. This welcome service gives everyone the opportunity to recognise God's guidance and support. It is a time for Blundellians to reflect on the hopes and aspirations of the journey on which they are about to embark.

CHORAL EVENSONG

Choral Evensong takes place this term: a beautiful and timeless Anglican service which includes Mary's words (*The Magnificat*) set to music as she prayed to God with thanks for the birth of her son Jesus. It includes readings and prayers and is a lovely way to draw the day's hustle and bustle to a close.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

A service of Remembrance is held on Sunday 12th November.

CAROL SERVICE

The Carol Service takes us right to the heart of the Christmas story. It includes the traditional Bible readings, congregational carols and music – a fitting end to the longest term of the academic year. All this against the back-drop of the sublime beauty of Exeter Cathedral.





Spring term



Academic Forums

YEAR 13

The Year 13 Forum in the Spring term is the last one for this year group, and the focus is on preparing for the mock exams after half term. We cover how much revision is expected, how we support pupils with revision, as well as what happens when the summer external exams start with information around study leave. The Head of Careers explains the process from this point on with UCAS applications, the benefits of offer-holder open days, and information is shared about the resources and support available to students making apprenticeship applications, planning gap years and learning about student finance and budgeting. Further information is provided around what happens when results come out in August and the support available from the Careers Department for Old Blundellians.

YEAR 11

The focus in this Forum is on preparing for the mock exams after half term. We cover how much revision is expected, how we support pupils with revision, what we ask of parents to help us, as well as what happens when the summer external exams start with information around study leave. We recap the A level options process, and we hear from the Head of Careers around the importance of making good choices with A-levels, how we support pupils with these choices and how the choices are made via the online option system. We also revisit the expectations for work experience at the end of the summer and the benefits of taking part. At this Forum parents are offered the chance for a tour of Westlake; the Year 13 House.

YEAR 10

The Head of Careers shares information about forthcoming events in the careers programme - the Employability Elective, Employability Day and the Morrisby Assessment, demonstrating how this works and how the personalised results support informed decision making and exploration of options post 16.



YEAR 9

The focus of the Year 9 Forum in the Spring term is around GCSE choices as pupils are asked to make subject choices at the end of the spring term, as we start timetabling over the Easter holidays. This forum explained the rationale of the number of GCSEs we ask pupils to choose, why the compulsory GCSEs are compulsory, and the choices pupils are encouraged to make. We talk parents through the way the online option system works. At this Forum we also hear from Learning Support about how this department works in Year 10, and how having Learning Support might change the number of GCSE choices pupils make. We hear from the Head of Careers about the importance of getting GCSE choices right in the context of post 16 and post 18 education.

YEAR 7/8

The Year 7-8 Academic Forum in the Spring term also takes place on a Wednesday afternoon. The focus is on Year 8 into 9 options choices; how the option process works, what we do to support pupils to make good choices, and what we ask of parents to help make good choices. We also discuss the School House exams, which take place in a few weeks into the Summer term. We talk about the point of the exams from the school's point of view, as well as how we support pupils in learning good habits around the process of revision and what we ask of parents to help us with this.



Music events

SPRING CONCERT

On the last Wednesday before the Spring half term break, over 200 of the school's musicians come together to perform a spectacular production of musical exploration in Big School, complete with live artists, stunning projections and guest speakers. This is one of the highlights of the school year for pupils and parents and features our impressive full Orchestra, Choirs, Chamber Groups, Jazz bands and pop musicians. The concert is always a sell-out and early booking is advised. Previous concerts have included the amazingly ambitious *Blundell's in Space*, the joyous *Blundell's on the Sea* and the much-loved *Blundell's at the Games*. This year we look forward to the excitement of *Around the World in 80 Minutes*.

CHORAL CONCERT

In the penultimate week of the Spring term our seven school choirs come together in the Chapel to perform a major choral work, often interspersed with other choral items. The setting is always serene and the music-making of an exceptionally high standard. Recent concerts have featured Mozart's *Requiem*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Roth's *A Time To Dance* cantata and Duruflé's *Requiem*. This year we will be performing Tippet's inspirational *Five Spirituals* from *A Child of Our Time*. The quality of the singing at Blundell's is nationally recognised and this is an annual treat for music lovers.

CHORAL EVENSONG

In the Spring Term our Chamber Choir and Chapel Choir take part in an external choral evensong to which parents and friends are always warmly invited. Previous visits have included Exeter, Wells, Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals, and in January this year we will be singing in Bath Abbey.

SCHOOL HOUSE MUSICAL

Musicals are always hugely popular among the student body and audience alike, and working alongside the Drama Department there is always at least one a year. In 2024 it will be the turn of School House, who will perform *We Will Rock You* in Ondaatje Theatre. This event is ticketed and will be sold out.



Drama events

SCHOOL HOUSE PLAY

Students from Years 7 and 8 perform their annual production. This ticketed event features the talent of a large cast and runs over at least two nights. Previous productions have included *School of Rock*, *James & The Giant Peach*, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* and *Charlie & The Chocolate Factory*.

GCSE DRAMA SCRIPTED EXAM SHOWCASE

The Year 11 GCSE Drama students perform extracts from their GCSE playtexts to a visiting examiner. These examined performances account for 20% of their GCSE course. An audience of friends and family of GCSE Drama students is invited to attend.

A LEVEL DRAMA SCRIPTED EXAM

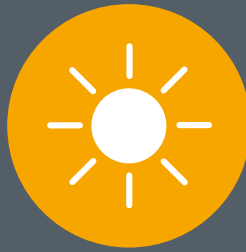
The Year 13 A Level Drama students perform an extract from their chosen A Level playtext to a visiting examiner. This examined performance accounts for 20% of their A Level course. Everyone is welcome to attend this opportunity to watch the work of some of our most talented Drama students.

Garden events

In the Spring term, we have another Garden Open Day when the school garden will host various events throughout the day. Spring Community Garden Events include Plot to plate; winter warmers, another Wildlife Gardening workshop and a Seeds and sowing workshop.

Chapel Services

As we come closer to Easter Jesus' Passion is remembered in the dramatic and moving service of *Tenebrae* in which we are taken literally from light to darkness.



Summer term



Academic Forums

YEAR 12

The last Academic Forum of the year is the Year 12 Forum which takes place towards the end of the summer term. At this forum we talk about the UCAS process, key dates and deadlines, how UCAS grades are used by Universities and the terminology the school will use around UCAS grades. The Head of Careers explains about UCAS week, (a programme of talks from universities, employers and OB's), and the wealth of super-curricular resources to support pupils in making good applications and post-18 choices.

YEAR 10

The focus of our summer term Year 10 Forum is around the end of year exams; these are after half term in the summer term. We talk about the purpose of the exams from the school's point of view, as well as how we support pupils in learning good habits around the process of revision and what we ask of parents to help us with this. We cover what parents can expect in the transition from Year 10 into Year 11 and the academic plan for Year 11.

YEAR 9

The focus of our summer term Year 9 Forum is around the end of year exams; these are after half term in the summer term. We talk about the purpose of the exams from the school's point of view, as well as how we support pupils in learning good habits around the process of revision and what we ask of parents to help us with this. We also cover what parents can expect in the transition from Year 9 into Year 10 and the academic plan for Year 10.



Music events

SUMMER JAZZ AND MUSICAL THEATRE CHARITY CONCERT

Towards the end of term we enjoy the better weather to hold a picnic concert outside in the Music Quad. The focus is on lighter, more popular genres, including musical theatre and jazz items performed by the Big Band, Chamber Choir, Close Harmony groups and chamber musicians and soloists. The concert is always a lovely atmosphere, especially for our leavers, for whom this will be their final concert. We use the occasion to raise a collection to support local charities. Picnics are strongly encouraged!

SCHOOL HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Year 7 and 8 have their own House Music competition as part of the SH House Music Festival that takes place on the last Friday afternoon before the May half term break. This includes the hotly contested SH Performer of the Year competition, and parents are invited to the final of this, which is heard in Ondaatje alongside the House competition.

LEAVERS' CONCERT

In early May we hold a concert that features our Year 13 leavers in an external venue. The quality of the music-making is exceptional as these musicians have reached the pinnacle of their school musical journey and each year the concert is tailored to best suit the pupils. Traditionally a classical concert, such as the Bickleigh Castle concert of 2022, last year this was a pop and rock gig in the Exeter Phoenix as this better suited that cohort. In 2024 we have an exceptional crop of musicians in Year 13 and so this concert comes highly recommended.

YEAR 10 GARDEN CONCERT

The concert in the Blundell's Garden, complete with pre-concert barbeque, has become a summer term highlight. The Year 10s always provide stunning musical accompaniment and it is always a magical and hugely enjoyable al fresco concert experience. All welcome, non-ticketed but pre-concert food requires booking. Choir Tour: We hold an annual Choir Tour and in 2024 will be singing in St. Mark's, Venice, as well as concerts in Treviso and Vicenza, as well as visiting iconic locations across Venice and Lake Garda. Although it is clearly a far greater distance to travel, parents and friends are always welcome at our international concerts.

CHORAL EVENSONG IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

We would like to invite the entire Blundell's community to hear the Choir sing evensong in Westminster Abbey on Monday July 15th 2024, as the culmination to our Choir Tour to Venice and Lake Garda.



Drama events

YEAR 9 & 10 PLAY

This annual production is a ticketed event which showcases the talents of our best performers in Years 9 & 10. This production is an opportunity for students to introduce audiences to lesser-known plays or musicals or put on out of the ordinary theatrical experiences. In recent years, this has included the musical *Bodywork*, a promenade production of *The Admirable Crichton* and an outdoor production of *As You Like It*.

A LEVEL DRAMA DEVISED PERFORMANCES

The Year 12 A Level Drama students perform short pieces of theatre that they have created themselves as part of their A Level course. This is an assessed performance which makes up 15% of their A Level grade. An audience of friends and family of A Level Drama students is invited to attend.

SPEECH & DRAMA SHOWCASE

Over 100 students take extra-curricular Speech & Drama lessons covering all grades up to and including Diploma level. This showcase is an opportunity for the students to perform their work to friends and family. A wide variety of work is featured from Public Speaking to Devised Drama and from Acting to Speaking of Verse & Prose.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE GARDEN

Year 8 students perform their own abridged version of a well-known Shakespeare comedy in the garden of Blundell House. All Year 8 parents are invited to enjoy refreshments and entertainment, come rain or shine!



Garden events

The Summer term sees the Garden Open Day hosting activities throughout the day including visits to our beehives. The Summer term Community Garden Events programme covers a Plot to plate; spring harvest with simple salads, summer Wildlife gardening, Dinner in the Garden and the Year 10 Music Concert.

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