



Birmingham
Independent College



BIRMINGHAM INDEPENDENT COLLEGE (BIC)

Parent & Student Handbook 2024/2025

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1. Welcome

Welcome to Birmingham Independent College (BIC). We are very pleased that you have joined our small and successful college. This document outlines key information at BIC. It includes some key points that will be helpful to you during the academic year.

2. Our Vision

Our vision is to provide high quality academic teaching and learning experiences alongside targeted vocational and employment training. Our individual learning plans are designed to ensure students achieve their maximum potential, towards their chosen career destination whether that be, in a functional, vocational or academic pathway.

3. Our Aim

- a. To nurture and celebrate the unique worth of each student so that all students are empowered to fulfil their potential wherever their given talents may lie.
- b. To prepare students to enjoy life to the full in this wonderful, exciting world by introducing them to as many different, challenging and enjoyable experiences as possible.
- c. To develop our students into functional, articulate, literate and numerate people so that they can access all that life has to offer.
- d. To be fully inclusive and strive for the highest standards in teaching and learning.
- e. To encourage all members of our college community to own the education of our young people as a joint venture among parents, community and college.

4. Term Dates 2024-2025

Autumn Term 2024

Term Starts: Monday 2 September 2024

Half Term: Monday 28 October 2024 to Friday 1 November 2024

Term Ends: Friday 20 December 2024

Spring Term 2025

Term Starts: Monday 6 January 2025

Half Term: Monday 17 February 2025 to Friday 21 February 2025

Term Ends: Friday 11 April 2025

Summer Term 2025

Term Starts: Monday 28 April 2025

Half Term: Monday 26 May 2025 to Friday 30 May 2025

Term Ends: Monday 21 July 2025

5. Important dates for the College Year (these are subject to change)

Important Dates	Dates
Teacher Training Days	2 nd - 5 th September 2024 7 th January 2025 18 th July 2025 One more day to be announced
Functional Skills Exam	On Demand
GCSE/BTEC/A Level Exams	As directed by exam boards – details will be provided
College Visits/Trips	Usually during the final week before the of each term more details to be announced

6. Contacting BIC

The college is open Mondays to Wednesdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm and on Thursdays, from 9.00am to 1.30pm. The office telephone is usually open for calls every day of the holidays as well, unless otherwise stated.

Your first point of contact is:

Ms Vivienne Lambert

Ms Lambert is the Operations Manager and Designated Safeguarding Leader and can be contacted by telephone on **0121 507 0904 or 07486 888054**. You can also leave a message for Ms. Lambert on the telephone or email info@biccollege.org

The college address is:

Birmingham Independent College
Albert Hall
Witton Road
Aston
Birmingham
B6 5NU

The college website is www.biccollege.org

The college email is: info@biccollege.org

If Ms Lambert is not available please contact Ms McIntosh, Head of College.

7. The College Day at BIC

The college day starts in accordance with the students' timetable and transition plan which is given to each student in paper form and electronically on their first day in college (please ensure we have your correct email address) - you may want to take a photo of your timetable just in case it is misplaced. Functional, GCSE and A Level students will also be given a diary where they can also keep their timetable.

For Complex Needs students they will have a daily log detailing their activities for the day which must be returned to college the following day along with any comments from parents/carers.

Each timetable includes a registration time which is usually 15mins before the start of their first lesson of the day.

Students will follow their own individual timetable and transition plan. Below are examples of the content of some of our timetables.

FUNCTIONAL TIMETABLE

- Functional English
- Functional Maths
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Entry Level Science

- Citizenship/British Sign Language/Food Skills/Asdan short courses
- Food Technology
- Food Hygiene/Safety
- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education)
- Life skills
- Careers
- Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE)

GCSE TIMETABLE

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE Maths
- GCSE Combined Science
- BTEC Health and Social Care
- GCSE Sociology
- GCSE Psychology
- Hospitality and Catering
- Food Technology/Hygiene
- Life Skills
- Careers
- Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE)

A LEVELS TIMETABLE

- BTEC Applied Science
- BTEC Psychology
- BTEC Forensic and Criminal Investigations
- Physics
- Maths
- Further Maths

8. College Uniform

All students are required to wear a BIC Hi-Vis vest when outside of college.

Sports Uniform

All students will do sports as part of their PSHE lessons. For sports, all students should wear comfortable/loose clothes with trainers. Long hair should be tied up. More advice will be given on the first day of college.

- a. BIC Hi-Vis vest
- b. Loose Fitting t-shirt/top
- c. Jog bottoms
- d. Trainers

9. Equipment List (Functional, GCSE and Functional Student)

Students must bring the following equipment to college every day:

- Writing pens (black, blue and red)
- Writing books/paper
- Pencils
- Rubber/Eraser
- Ruler
- An English dictionary
- Lever arch folder(s)
- A calculator
- A large bag for college work

Students are not allowed to leave the building under any circumstance between the hours of 8.45am and 4.00pm, unless authorised to do so.

During class times students should only leave their lesson when authorized by a member of the college team.

10. Attendance

Parents/carers must make sure their children receive a full-time education that meets their needs.

Where children are not receiving a full-time education, and there isn't a good reason why

not, parents may have to pay a fine. Parents may also have to attend court where they could receive both a fine and a criminal record.

In order to do well in school, children must:

- Attend regularly, and
- Be punctual

Did you know?

- 5 minutes late every day means around 3 ½ days of education are missed
- A score of 90% in a test would be a good result but 90% attendance means that a child will have missed around 100 lessons over a school year.

Sanctions for lateness

Arrival after 8.45am could lead to students receiving sanctions. For every 5 minutes that a student arrives after 8.45am they will receive a 20 minutes detention on the day of lateness. If a student arrives later than 9.15am parents/carers will be contacted and asked for a written statement as to why their child is late. Unless a valid reason is given students arriving after 9.15am will be given 60mins detention on the date of lateness.

For persistent lateness, more than 2 times in a month, which incurred a detention, parents will be contacted to attend a meeting to discuss ways of improving their child's attendance.

11. BIC Code of Conduct

At BIC we foster strong and positive relationships with every student by promoting attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect and confidence. We expect students to try their best and commit themselves to the highest standards of behaviour.

We expect our students to:

- Learn without disruption
- Respect themselves, other's points of view, irrespective of their race, gender, religion or background
- Do their best
- Be polite and courteous to teachers and other students
- Act with honesty and responsibility
- Be punctual
- Have a positive approach to all aspects of college life

We will not tolerate:

- Using telephones during the college day – phones must be handed to the admin staff at the beginning of the day and will be handed back at the end of that day
- Using gadgets (MP3, Tablets etc) during the college day
- Dressing inappropriately and immodestly
- Wearing jewellery (only small stud earrings or a small watch)
- Social networks/accessing chat rooms
- Bright coloured lipstick (natural coloured lip gloss)
- Using a computer or network for a purpose not permitted by the college
- Physical contact
- Bullying of any kind
- Any type of violence
- Vandalism, graffiti, or littering
- Cruel or insensitive behaviour
- Possession of or dealing in drugs or alcohol
- Smoking cigarettes/Vaping
- Any signs of disrespect to any member of the community
- Arriving late to college or to lessons
- Leaving the college without permission or missing lessons

In the unlikely event that students engage in behaviour that is contrary to our expectations, sanctions will be applied. Please refer to the BIC Behaviour Policy for more details.

CHEWING GUM IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING!

FOOD IS NOT ALLOWED IN CLASSROOMS!

12. Personal Hygiene

We are all aware that health and hygiene is paramount to maintaining good physical and mental health, and particularly for those who need support with personal care. We know that some students may want to shy away from some of these activities, but it is our duty

to ensure their health and wellbeing and that it is of the highest standard to keep everyone safeguarded.

BIC has taken the stance that all students must comply with the 5 points below and if these points are not applied as a minimum, we may ask that students are collected from college and not returned until the 5 points have been implemented.

Therefore, with effect from Monday 22nd January 2024, we are urging parents/carers to comply with the following 5 health and hygiene points ensuring that their child arrives at college:

1. **In clean and fresh clothing**
2. **With their faces washed**
3. **With their teeth brushed**
4. **With their hair washed and combed**
5. **Deodorant/anti-perspirant applied**

We know there are parents who meet all the 5 points above, so please use this as a reminder and confirmation of the support you are providing to our young people.

We hope that you will appreciate that BIC wants all our students to be respected citizens and that in part means their personal hygiene and presentation is taken seriously.

We would encourage all parents to speak to us if you have any concerns with implementing the 5 points above

13. Leave of absence/holidays/illness

If you are unable to attend college during term-time (e.g a medical appointment, family emergency) please contact the college **before the day of request**. It is very important that you attend college every day so **please avoid taking family holidays in term-time**. Medical appointments, where possible, should be made after college has finished.

If you miss college, you must make time to catch up on any missed work and be available for extra lessons if necessary.

14. Free School Meals

College lunches will be charged at £4.50 each per day. A BIC lunch includes a balanced meal, fruit/dessert and drink. We serve a wide variety of vegetarian lunches both hot and cold including: Cold - sandwiches, wraps, rolls; Hot dishes - Shepherds Pie, Sweet & Sour Quorn Chicken and Rice, Lasagne, Macaroni Cheese, Pizza, Chips, etc...

Please also let us know of any dietary requirements and/or allergies that your child may have.

If you wish your child(ren) to have a BIC lunch we would need payment by cheque or cash a term in advance.

If you believe your child is eligible for free school meals, please provide evidence using the directive from Birmingham City Council below:

*You may be eligible to claim free school meals for your child, up to the age of **19 years**, if you (or your child) get one of the following:*

- *Income support*
- *Income-based Jobseeker Allowance*
- *Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*
- *Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)*
- *Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)*
- *The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit*
- *Universal Credit*

Once we receive confirmation of your child being eligible we will provide a free lunch service to them.

Alternatively, you must send in a balanced packed lunch with your child each day.

15. Free Bus Travel

Students who are referred to BIC from Birmingham's Pupil Placement, only, may be entitled to free bus travel. If your registered address is more than 3 miles away from the college's address (B6 5NU) you may be entitled to apply for a free bus pass. The pass will be available to use during term time.

If you are entitled and are aged 15 years old or under, you will be asked to purchase a child monthly bus pass and then bring it into college so it can be reimbursed to your parent/guardian. If you think you are entitled to apply for a bus pass please speak to Ms. Lambert.

If you are entitled and are aged 16 years old, you will need to apply for a student travel card from Travel West Midlands. If you are 16 years old you are classed as an adult and will have to pay adult prices to travel on public transport. However, a travel card will entitle you to travel at child prices.

If you want to apply for a travel card you will be given a unique verification number, which you will need to apply for the travel card on-line, you will have to pay a fee of £10 for the card. This card can be used until you are 18 years old, if you are still in education, for travel during term time. When you have received your card you must purchase a child monthly bus pass and then bring it into college so it can be reimbursed to your

parent/guardian. If you think you are entitled to apply for a bus pass please let Ms Lambert know.

16. Growth Mindset

In February 2016 BIC launched its Growth Mindset programme. This programme aims to establish a 'growth mindset' in all of our students. In contrast to a 'fixed mindset', a 'growth mindset' recognises that nobody's intelligence is fixed. It embraces the potential that talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. At BIC, failure is viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve abilities; and of utmost importance is resilience and determination to keep going in the face of a challenge.

We work to develop a growth mindset in our students in order to avoid the fixed mindset that often limits their learning potential. We want our students to achieve their full potential, **to be the best that they can**, and our Growth Mindset programme helps turn a 'can't do' attitude into a 'can do' attitude. We expect our students' families to support this mindset and we will send out further guidance to help you do this.

17. BIC Mobile Phone/Devices Policy

Students are not allowed to have mobile phones/or devices whilst in school.

All students **MUST** put their mobile phones and/or devices into their named mobile phone container as soon as they arrive at college.

Student mobile phone containers are held at reception and will be locked away until the end of the college day.

Students who do not hand in their mobile phone and/or devices will have it/them taken away from them and have it returned at the end of the next college day (parents will be informed) - plus 1 hour detention as a sanction.

If a student does not hand in their mobile phone and/or devices for a second time their phone will be taken away from them and return when their parent/carer comes into college and collects it – plus 1 hour detention for 3 days.

If a student does not hand in their mobile phone and/or devices for a third time their phone will be taken away from them and return when their parent/carer comes into college and collects it, at which point the student's sanctions will be formerly reviewed.