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Aston
ACADEMY

Striving for **Excellence**
Empowering Achievement
Shaping **Learning**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Another Friday has arrived, and our students should be very proud of the progress we have made together this week and throughout the first half term. A reminder that the academy will close for the October half-term break next week at the end of the school day on Thursday 22nd October. We look forward to welcoming students back to the academy from 8.10am on Monday 2nd November.

I have sent a Friday Principal's Letter every week since I became Principal and have always wanted it to be a link between home and school; an update that celebrates success, shines a spotlight on certain areas of school life and, hopefully, provides an insight into all things Aston Academy. We speak a lot about our children feeling a sense of belonging when they enter school, but it is equally important that our families feel that same sense of belonging. I am always keen for these Friday letters to be informative and useful for our families. If there are aspects of academy life or school provision that you would like me to focus on in future editions, please do let me know.

If you do not already follow our Facebook page, please do. We are really trying to post a range of content that gives you a good insight into what happens daily at our school. The link is below:

https://www.facebook.com/astonacademy.ACET/

With one week to go until half term, I know our parents and carers (and myself) will be checking their children's school bags and restocking or replacing items ready for the new term.

To support families, and as part of our daily routine, students are asked to show that they have the equipment required for their lessons. If something is missing, our stationery shop is open each morning from 8.10am to 8.30am, selling black pens, pencils, rulers and whiteboard pens for just 10p per item.

Students who arrive without essential equipment will visit the stationery shop before the start of the school day and purchase the items they need. The cost will be charged to their ParentPay account and can be topped up through the 'General Stationery' payment option online. In reality, a balance of around £2 would be sufficient to cover an entire academic year of occasional lost or forgotten equipment, equivalent to 20 items. This simple system helps ensure that every student arrives in lessons fully prepared to learn.

I have consistently said that we want Aston Academy to be the very best school in Rotherham for your children and to ensure that our students can compete academically with their peers anywhere in the country. One of the ways we achieve this ambition is by ensuring that our staff continually refine their practice and seek out the most effective approaches to teaching and learning. Our recent INSET day, last Friday, provided an excellent opportunity for staff to

collaborate, share expertise and further strengthen the quality of education that students receive every day.

We focused on Wave 1 Quality First Teaching in all classrooms. Wave 1 refers to the strategies and techniques used within the classroom to ensure that all students make progress, remove barriers to learning and support students who find a topic or concept difficult. This includes students who may face additional barriers to learning due to an educational need or diagnosis, where specific teaching techniques and classroom routines can better support their learning. We know that this holds the key to students feeling known, valued and equipped with the support they need to thrive.

Looking ahead to Half Term 2, we have many exciting events and activities planned within the academy, which we will keep you updated on as they arise. Whilst we place great value on consistent routines that help students feel secure and confident, we also know that, sometimes, a little change keeps things fresh and enjoyable.

One of the ways we do this is through our amazing catering team, Mellors. Next half term, they have a few surprises in store for students. The first is a Taste of Mexico lunchtime experience.

This November, our catering partner, Mellors Catering Services, will be bringing a taste of Mexico to Aston Academy through an exciting themed lunchtime experience. Students will have the opportunity to explore a range of Mexican-inspired dishes, learn about the traditions and history behind popular foods, and broaden their culinary horizons by trying something new. Designed to celebrate culture and encourage adventurous eating, this initiative promises to create a vibrant lunchtime atmosphere and a real fiesta of flavour for all to enjoy. I'm sure there will still be some staple favourites available for those who are a little less adventurous!

It is a great example of how a small change in routine can brighten a day. Good food shared with others nourishes more than the body; it lifts the spirit, builds connections and supports wellbeing.

I saw the quote below in a restaurant over the summer and it made me smile:

"You can't make everyone happy, but you can make tacos. And that's pretty much the same thing."

As always, the combination of home, school and student working together is what makes the greatest difference. Thank you for your continued support of Aston Academy and for everything you do to support your child's education.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Kind regards,

James Graham

Principal

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