



Aston Academy

Principal: Mr J Graham BSc (Hons), PGCE
Executive Principal: Mrs R Hibberd BEd (Hons), MA
CEO: Mrs R Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

Vice Principals:
Miss C Anyon BA (Hons), PGCE
Mrs S Moore BA MEd
Mr P Wilson BSc (Hons)
Ms F Haywood BA (Hons), PGCE

Aughton Road
Swallownest
Sheffield
S26 4SF

Tel: 0114 287 2171
info@astonacademy.org
www.astonacademy.org



24 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Another busy school week draws to a close. January is often called the 'bleakest' month of the year; I prefer to focus on the opportunities for a fresh start. You might have heard of 'Blue Monday,' often referred to as the most depressing day of the year. Interestingly, 'blue Monday' was this very week, the third Monday in January. Therefore, it is even more important to encourage students to be committed, stay motivated and stick to routines. Data suggests our positive new year resolutions last for approximately 18 days. Next week it will be important that both home and school encourage our students/children to embed and stick to these positive routines and habits.

Our school routines within lessons, such as our non-negotiables or the habit of student attendance help students to build resilience, develop positive habits and become lifelong learners.

Good attendance becomes a habit. Our attendance continues to be above the levels of last academic year and for some of our year groups, above the national average of 92.5%. We can see consistent habits of regular attendance and the positive impact that has on the students learning, enjoyment of school and wellbeing.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
94%	94%	92%	91%	89%	93%	87%

Well done to our students, but I would challenge some of our Y11 and Y13 students who are regularly missing days, to ensure that they make a January resolution to improve attendance. After all, 2025 is the year Y11 and Y13 will sit their final external exams, such an important few months and poor attendance will be a barrier to success.

In my January Friday updates I have been explaining our lesson 'non-negotiables'. You will remember that these are key teaching techniques or tasks staff use in each lesson to promote knowledge and understanding. These are the routines and habits students experience every day to support learning. Our third non-negotiable is questioning.

Cold Calling is a type of questioning where students cannot volunteer to answer a question - the teacher chooses someone. We have a 'no hands up' policy which means that every student needs to prepare an answer in their heads in preparation for them being chosen to answer out loud. This technique is very important to ensure engagement in listening and learning and the checking of understanding from the teacher. In line with cold calling, we have a 'no opt out' policy too which means that even if a student is unsure of the answer, they have to use all the information they have to formulate an answer, developing their ability to infer. Our aim is to ensure students have the confidence to answer a question to the best of their ability without fear of getting it wrong. A wrong answer builds debate and discussion in the lesson, developing extended knowledge around the question. Please ask your child about the last time they answered a question using inference - did they get it right or wrong? Ask them to explain the question and the correct answer.



Resilience Pride Respect Ambition Responsibility

Be Exceptional

Next week I look forward to meeting our Post 16 parents and carers for consultation evening on Monday. Our staff are offering so much support for our Y13 students in preparation for summer exams so please make sure you have booked appointments if you are a Post 16 parent. Next week we also begin the GCSE option process with our Y9 students, parents please watch out for an invitation to our options evening in February. We will also be sending out details to our Y8 parents/carers about work shadowing opportunities for Y8 students in the summer and will continue to share details with Y11 parents about how best to support their child in preparation for summer exams.

The combination of home, school and student will make a difference.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Graham', written in a cursive style.

Mr J Graham
Principal