

Aston Academy

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Empowering Achievement
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Dear Parent/Carer,

A short week but another filled with opportunity and progress for staff and students at the academy. I hope that the children enjoyed a longer weekend and made the most of their time off on Friday and Monday. With cold and flu season taking hold, a few days of rest and relaxation for the students may have been perfectly timed, we have certainly noticed a decrease in our illness absence this week.

Since we last communicated, the academy have enjoyed two very well attended parent information evenings. The first was the exciting launch of our Y10 work experience week. All our Y10 students will have the opportunity to take part in a week long work experience of their choice in the summer term. A wonderful opportunity to sample the world of work, perhaps push themselves out of a comfort zone and gain experience in a field they may wish to pursue in the future. We can't wait to see where they choose to go for their experience. As a school, we greatly value the role of work experience and the important part our curriculum plays in preparing students for the world of work. Our Y8 students will have the opportunity to complete a day work shadowing later in the academic year and all our Y12 students have a further week of work experience in the summer term. This is a big investment by the school but one, I hope you agree, where the benefits to the students far outweigh any financial cost.

Our second evening was the Y11 revision festival on Wednesday. We had over 220 families attending to ensure their Y11 child received some valuable resources from each subject area. These contained past papers, mark schemes, revision guides, revision resources and much more. Thank you to our Y11 team and the many staff who supported in creating the resources and distributing them on the evening. It was wonderful to see students leaving the evening with arms full of resources and revision materials. With Y11 trials beginning on Monday 3 November, we have ensured they are well resourced to revise.

On Friday during our INSET day, Aston Academy hosted all teaching staff from Swinton Academy and Shirebrook Academy for a day focusing on building resilience and social confidence through oracy in the classroom. The day involved whole-school training around this area focusing on two specific cues - 'turn and tell' and 'using whole sentences'.

- Turn and tell is a cue we use to signal an opportunity in the lesson for students to 'turn and tell' students next to them a specific answer based on knowledge that they have just learnt. The theory is that this teaching technique helps to increase participation and think ratio, builds confidence before answering in front of the whole class and provides rehearsal/repetition, which in turn increases learning.
- Our second new cue was insisting that students use whole sentences when responding verbally to questions in lessons. The thinking behind this cue is that if consistently applied it will support students written and verbal communication, help students explain reasoning and think more deeply about questions, increase confidence and articulation when speaking and better prepare students for written assessment using full sentences.

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I have consistently said we want to be the best school in Rotherham for your children and ensure that our students can compete academically against any peer in the country. One of the ways to ensure this is for staff to continually seek the best teaching methods. The INSET day provided such an occasion.

Yesterday at Aston Academy was 'Restart a Heart Day 2025' and we were really proud to be supporting the Yorkshire Ambulance Service in raising awareness about the dangers of Cardiac Arrest. We had over 200 students from Year 7-13 receiving life saving CPR training throughout the day. Massive thanks go to all the wonderful volunteers from the NHS and ambulance service for giving up their time to share their experiences and knowledge. A huge thank you also to our wonderful PE team for ensuring that this opportunity was available to our students. Another 200 young people who are equipped with life saving skills - something to be very proud of.

Sticking to the theme of PE, to support all our students, whether that is during PE lessons or PE extra curricular, we are always happy to receive pre loved sports equipment in good condition. In particular sports trainers, football boots and shin pads. We never want any of our students to face barriers to full participation and these items will always be gratefully received and put to good use. Any items can be dropped off at reception or your child could leave them with the PE staff in our G block.

On Monday 20 October, Diwali will be celebrated in the UK and around the world. Diwali is one of the most recognised and celebrated festivals in Hinduism, but it is also celebrated in Sikhism and Jainism. The word Diwali literally means 'rows of lighted lamps' and remembers the return of Prince Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years in exile and his victory over the demon king Ravana who kidnapped his wife Sita. The festival symbolises the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali is celebrated over five days, with each day having its own significance. Traditions include lighting diyas (lamps) and candles, decorating homes with rangoli (colourful patterns made from powdered dye or flower petals), sharing sweets and gifts with friends and family, fireworks, and taking part in special prayers and rituals.

This week at Aston Academy our assemblies have included the topic of Diwali and next week, all KS3 students will be taking part in a special RE lesson on Diwali. Thank you to our RE/Sociology lead Mrs Naylor for providing the resources to ensure that our students and staff are aware of this special occasion. If you are celebrating, happy Diwali.

A reminder that next week is our final week before half term, the final day concluding at 3.00pm on Friday 24 October. The gates open again on Monday 3 November at 8.10am.

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

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best regards,



Mr J Graham
Principal

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