

## Aston Academy

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**Principal:** James Graham BSc (Hons), PGCE

**CEO:** Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

5 December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Happy Friday, another week complete. December is always an extra busy and exciting time of year and school is no different. Although Christmas rewards are entering final plans, we are also ensuring that academic progress does not halt. In particular we have been very impressed with our Y10 students and their attitude to their first round of SSAs. You might remember that SSAs are Standardised Summative Assessments. These are 45/50 minute progress checks that are completed in the classroom with the support of the classroom teacher. SSAs are unseen progress checks that test learning over time. As well as checking learning the experience will help build Y10 student resilience and confidence needed to perform under exam conditions in Y11. Well done Y10 and their fantastic pastoral team.

You will know that we are always seeking opportunities for our students and school to mix and work within our local community. I am proud that we can include many examples of our community outreach in today's update. Christmas certainly offers plenty of opportunity for mixing, sharing and celebrating together. Aston Academy music students have been leading the way on this. Our singing group performed at Magna with members of the Royal Opera to a packed audience of family and friends. The opera was based on Rotherham, and the students had a fabulous day performing with other secondary and primary schools including our very own Waverley and Brookfield. Some students were interviewed for ITV too! Then on Wednesday our music students took part in a performance at Rotherham Minster with other local primary and secondary schools. It was part of a series of events by Rotherham Music Service for the children's capital of culture. As usual the students did themselves, school and our community proud by singing and playing a selection of songs and music. Thank you to Mrs Perry for organising our participation and running the rehearsals.

No rest for our musicians, our orchestra will then perform Christmas songs and other items at the Snowflake Fayre on Friday 12 December. Please make a note of this date as you may want your child to attend with a little extra pocket change to spend at the Snowflake Fayre. So far, the school has raised over £35,000 for Sheffield Children's Hospital and the Snowflake Fayre is another really popular event that raises money for this great cause as well as a treat for all our students.

Some reminders regarding the Snowflake Fayre on Friday 12 December:

- Students to bring cash into school and will have the opportunity to visit the Fayre during the day. There will be a tuck shop, various stalls and games etc to get involved in! All year groups will be assigned times to attend and be brought to the Fayre by their class teacher.
- Christmas Jumper Day - parents can make a £1 contribution on Gateway from 5 -12 December. Students to wear a jumper instead of a blazer but over their normal school uniform (shirt/tie etc).
- Each tutor group is running a collection of items to donate to the Snowflake Fayre. These might be: unwanted gifts, bath sets, candles, boxes of chocolates/sweets/selection boxes, books, toys etc that can be used on the day. We really appreciate any donations as they support the Fayre being a success!



On Monday our Y13 Health and Social Care students attended the Sheffield Children's Hospital Christmas light switch on ceremony. This was a lovely evening where they learnt about how the funds raised positively impact the hospital and directly improve the care children receive there. They then made their way outside to watch the hundreds of snowflakes be switched on. It's fantastic to see our large snowflake directly above the main entrance! We are proud to have raised over £35,000 towards the Snowflake appeal since 2017! Special praise to PE staff Mrs Ward and Mr Sutcliffe and thank you to all who organise, run, support and donate to this life changing cause.



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Today the whole school has practiced our 'lock down' drill. you will have received a letter earlier today giving some extra details of our lockdown. A practice helps students and staff become familiar with one of the strategies we could use if we are concerned about the safety of our school community. I was extremely proud of how well the students and staff responded to this drill. We also took time today to speak to all the students to remind them how we can safeguard each other and avoid any behaviours that may results in risk, harm or injury.

As we begin to think about the end of one year and beginning of another, I want to ensure we start the year with a bang. One way we can achieve this is for all our students to be equipped and ready on Monday 5 January to return in full uniform and with equipment necessary for lessons ahead. I believe that all students in KS3 & KS4 should wear their academy uniform with pride. Again, it links to that word - *community*. A sense of belonging, pride and common goal. We strongly believe that uniform creates a sense of identity, equity, and unity for our students. It helps to make students feel part of our community and by wearing the academy uniform it demonstrates that our young people are adhering to our core values and our drive to be successful.

It is an expectation that all students should wear their uniform every day and adhere to this policy. We expect that our parents/carers support our Uniform Policy and work with us in partnership to ensure that uniform and appearance adheres to the our guidelines. See our Uniform Policy [here](#).

If necessary, please can you work with the academy to ensure your child returns to school in January with a full uniform and any items corrected that have been missing or incorrect before the Christmas break. We have a uniform shop that is open every morning to lend uniform to students who have missing or incorrect pieces. However, this should not be relied upon; it is there for the 'one off' and not a substitute for replacing uniform longer term. In particular can I highlight that every student should wear a tie, and footwear should not be trainers (unless a medical reason has been discussed and agreed). Christmas is also a time for presents and special occasions. However, for the return to school please remind your child that, apart from one pair of stud earrings no other jewellery (including facial piercings) should be worn for school.

We understand that at times, there may be issues with uniform. If this is the case, we ask parents / carers to contact the year team via the emails below:

- Y7: [aa-y7leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-y7leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)
- Y8: [aa-y8leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-y8leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)
- Y9: [aa-y9leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-y9leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)
- Y10: [aa-y10leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-y10leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)
- Y11: [aa-y11leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-y11leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)
- Post 16: [aa-post16leadershipteam@astonacademy.org](mailto:aa-post16leadershipteam@astonacademy.org)

We ask all parents/carers to support our uniform policy. We believe that parents/carers can support us by sending their children to school in the correct uniform, to arrive on time and with the correct equipment and ready to maximise their learning opportunities. Working in partnership is key to student progress and success. Can I also put a plea out for any pre-loved, clean uniform that can be donated to the school for use in our uniform shop or to make available to our families. Please drop any donations into reception, or alternatively please contact your child's year team and we will be happy to collect.

Our Y13 students will soon enter the final year of school education before making the leap into university life, apprenticeships or employment. What an exciting time this must be. Many of our Y13 students have been busy working on their UCAS applications. UCAS is where online applications are submitted if students would like to apply to attend a university to study their chosen course. A reminder from our Post-16 team to Y13 students and their parents that the 'equal consideration' deadline for applying to university is Wednesday 14 January 2026. If applications are sent by this date, universities guarantee to consider them. Students can apply after this date, but this guarantee will no longer apply. Students should complete their application and book an appointment with Mr Hall in the Post-16 office to review the application and send to UCAS.

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Finally from me, a reminder that we finish for our Christmas holidays on Friday 19 December at 3.00pm. Our staff will be ready to welcome the students back on Monday 5 January (Week B) from 8.10am to begin what we hope will be a fantastic 2026 for them.

Have a wonderful weekend, when it arrives.

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

Best regards,



**Mr J Graham**  
**Principal**

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