

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

With your commitment, we will make a difference



December 2025

Some Term 1 proud moments...

Compared to the same period last academic year, this term we have improved in the following areas:

- Our school has been awarded the gold Student Resilience Award, recognising how much the school does in promoting student resilience,
- We have been confirmed as a Sports Leader Centre of Excellence – only 37 centres awarded this status out of 2,700
- Attendance improved again – currently above all other Rotherham and South Yorkshire school averages, more students at 96% - 100% attendance
- Our best Y11 attendance since pre-COVID
- Support for our students – more students receiving support with reading, more students accessing wellbeing support, greater opportunities for student personal development.
- New extra-curricular clubs to attract more students such as the hugely popular board game club and Dungeon & Dragons
- More variety, frequency and resources spent on student rewards and praise
- Parents/carers are feeding back that communication is improving between school and home (we will always want to keep improving this!).

These and many other gains, small and large, mean that together the academy, student and home are making a positive difference. THANK YOU.

As well as thanking you, our parent/carers for your term 1 support, my newsletter is a great place to thank the many wonderful staff at Aston Academy. The teachers that not only deliver the lessons but provide all the extras – from trips and revision to clubs and rewards. A thank you also to the tremendously hard work that our pastoral and inclusion teams provide each student to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential. I would also like to highlight the work of the wider team – for example the site team, finance, IT, exams, admin, cover, attendance and safeguarding teams. Each team must contribute to ensure that your child gets the best provision. We know there are still plenty of development areas and we are excited to continue on our journey. A special mention also to Mrs Janice Flowers who, amongst many other tasks, ensures that communications like this one, social media and much more looks great and keeps us all updated.

My staff and I spoke during our September INSET day about our focus for the upcoming term was to build upon the strong foundations we had created in the last academic year. These foundations have included making our policies much clearer to all – such as attendance, behaviour, praise, uniform and holiday absence - focusing on curriculum and pathways that support all our students to learn. This includes curriculum pathways that better support GCSE subject choices, support with English and maths, more time for personal development, more support for reading within lessons, tutor time and as interventions. We wanted more capacity for mental health support, our trained staff supported by external teams such as Kooth, MIND and With Me In Mind. We have really tried to place the communication and positive working relationships of home and school as an absolute priority. This means that we held many more events to allow parents/carers to visit as well as an increase in our weekly communications through a variety of methods. All this means that this academic year we have been able to focus on building upon this strong foundation, really focusing on how we can ensure our students thrive and achieve. We have added to our routines with sensible, targeted and evidence led progressions such as Y7/Y8 morning and afternoon line ups, uniform and equipment shop available before school, Mastery Booklets introduced for Y7, more targeted support for students identified with specific needs. We have introduced more consistency in lessons by using direct instruction and cues (click [here](#) for more information on teaching cues). This half term we have installed Bromcom for all staff. Bromcom is a desktop system that will allow staff to share and access important information about your child. Sharing up to date information with your child's teachers and key staff means better support and provision for our students. In 2026 we look forward to embedding these systems and routines further while continuing to seek ways to improve our identified areas for development. Together we will make a difference for the children in 2026.



What we are looking forward to in Half Term 3...

- Our consultation evenings for Y9 and Post 16. A great chance to visit the academy and speak to staff about your child's progress.
- We begin our GCSE options processes for current Y9 students – options evening. Our current Y9 students get the opportunity to select the subjects they want to study for GCSE.
- Further prep for our Euro Disney and Easter ski trips – we can't wait for our students to experience these amazing opportunities.
- Confirmation and first meeting of the new Duke of Edinburgh Bronze student cohort, with Silver to follow.
- Y11 February trials begin as our GCSE students continue to build towards the summer exam series.
- Our first Parent Forum will be launched in term 2 – please keep an eye out for information in my Friday letters.

Merry Christmas

Have a wonderful Christmas and new year. Thank you for your support from myself and all staff at Aston Academy.

During the holidays, if you have a concern that is of a serious nature, which may have serious consequences, please email aa-safeguarding@astonacademy.org.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO THRIVE

For a student to thrive they must feel known and safe within our school. They will feel part of our team, which in turn creates the feelings of belonging. When our students and staff have a sense of belonging and all striving towards the same goals then achievement is increased. The decision we make as a school are focused upon supporting our students to thrive, belong and achieve.

More extra-curricular opportunities, timely rewards praising a wider variety of achievements, sharing celebrations through assemblies, social media, Friday updates, the role of your child's group tutor, improved student attendance, clear routines that remove uncertainty and support consistency, robust and effective safeguarding, the role of our pastoral teams in being first point of contact, academic pathways and a curriculum that support all our learners.

ANTI-BULLYING TRAINING

On Tuesday of this week our student leadership group travelled to Swinton Academy to be part of a trust wide Anti-bullying initiative. Students from all 3 of our ACET's secondary schools; Aston, Swinton and Shirebrook came together to complete training on anti-bullying in order to become ambassadors in our schools. They shared ideas on how we can combat bullying and started working on a trust-wide campaign. It was lovely to meet students from other schools, our students represented themselves and their school in the best way possible. Well done to all of our Year 10 students who took part.

ACET CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

This week, we have launched our ACET Children's Book Award to Y8 and Y9 students who have made the top reading pathway. Some Y7 students received the same presentation prior to half term.

Well done to these students for achieving this pathway! We look forward to working with them on this exciting journey!

PUPIL RESILIENCE AWARD - GOLD!

This week Aston Academy has been awarded a Gold Accreditation for the Pupil Resilience Award! This award recognises how our school actively promotes resilience across the curriculum and in every aspect of daily school life. Through thoughtfully designed lessons, teachers encouraging students to embrace challenges, to learn from mistakes, and persist through difficult tasks.

A special thank you to Mrs Adams and Mrs Rhodes who secured the top award, I must also thank Mrs Booker who began the journey in 2024.

More information can be found in the Principal's Friday update letter.

POST 16 EVENTS

Well done for Year 13 for completing your November trial exams.

Thank you to Davi, Federico and Gustavo, our guest international students, who spoke fluently to Year 12 about explained the differences between Italian and Brazilian education and society and England in this week's briefing. It was good to hear they thought British people are polite and friendly and that public transport was very good here!

Finally, well done to Evelyn for winning the best fancy dress award for Children in Need!

ROTHERHAM MINSTER

These lovely students took part in a performance at Rotherham Minster yesterday 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 and Aston proud, singing and playing a selection of songs and music.

We are extremely excited to share the news that Aston Academy has once again been selected as a Centre of Excellence for Sports Leadership by the Leadership Skills Foundation.

This is recognition of the hard work, resilience and ambition shown by all students who have completed one of the courses during the last academic year.

We are very proud of you, well done!

NETBALL NEWS!

Our wonderful Y7 and Y8 Netball teams both had victories over Oakwood this week. All players performed brilliantly and demonstrated excellent skills throughout. Star players were Darcy and Lexi. Well done, we are very proud of you all!

SHEFFIELD CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

We were privileged to be invited to the Sheffield Children's Hospital Snowflake light switch on event last night. It was great to see where the fundraising goes and the huge impact it has on improving the facilities, research and treatments available at the hospital. We are looking forward to our own Snowflake Fayre and Christmas Jumper Day next Friday!

CAREERS EVENT

Today Year 11 and Year 10 had time with colleges and providers discussing future course and entry requirements. They were very well behaved and our guests thought they asked some mature questions.

REMEMBRANCE EVENT

On Tuesday 11 November our year 10 student council members led a remembrance event after school for staff. They read out extracts, key historical information and poems as a way of remembering the fallen and honouring all those who have given their service. It was a very moving presentation in which all of the students spoke with clarity and confidence.

Well done to all involved!

Anti-Bullying Week 2025

Well done to all students and staff who wore odd socks on Monday of this week in support of anti-bullying week.

Tales Untapped

An opera imagined by the young people of Rotherham

Debuted at Magna Science Adventure Centre and created with more than 2,000 young people from the borough, 'Tales Untapped' celebrated Rotherham becoming the world's first Children's Capital of Culture in 2025.

A group of our students took part yesterday - performing with members of the Royal Opera and musicians from Rotherham Music Service to a packed audience of family and friends. They sang a series of songs with the Royal Opera soloists that included 'Rotherham refrain' and 'Stinky Salmon'!

As usual the students did Aston proud with their effort, enthusiasm, and manners. An absolute credit!