

Aston Academy

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Dear parent/carers,

A very happy new year and best wishes for a successful 2026 together. Our message to students and staff this week has been around building upon the strong foundations we created together throughout 2025. These strong foundations will enable us to meet our primary goal - to provide the best possible provision for our students, ensuring that they feel safe, feel supported to thrive and have a feeling of belonging

If these three things are in place, then the children will achieve inside and outside the classroom.

in 2026 we will continue to work with and invite into school external partners to check our systems, demonstrate best practice and support our areas for development. We wish to further enhance the work withing relationship with you, our parent/carers to ensure that home and school are aligned in supporting the children. We will continue to be forward thinking in our approach but sensible with our decision making. I want Aston Academy to be the best school in Rotherham; we should all want this for our children and community.

2026 is the year of the fire horse, an event that happens every 60 years. The fire element can amplify the Year of the Horse's focus on energy and enthusiasm. It is suggested by this that many people may find they have leadership energy to infuse in relationships at home and in the workplace. I hope that the energy, enthusiasm and positive relationships between staff, students and parent/carers will ensure 2026 is a very successful year for all.

The inclement weather has been a challenge for everyone as we return after the Christmas break. Despite the cold and icy beginnings, we have started January strongly. Present, punctual and ready to learn will mean your child has the best possible chance to achieve their potential at the academy. A well done to our Y11 cohort who have maintained 95% attendance this week, they also had 95% attendance on the final Friday before the Christmas holidays (traditionally a school's worst day for attendance!). I would be confident to say that these attendance figures would be above any other Rotherham school. Well done to our amazing Y11 students and team.

To further support attendance, we received some information this week that could potentially support families with bugs and illness that often 'go round' at this time of the year. We received a letter from Pharmacy First highlighting this free NHS service which may assist in getting students back to school following a minor illness. It allows children and adults to get quick access to healthcare advice as they can walk into a pharmacy and access the service, removing the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment. For more information, visit nhs.uk/thinkpharmacyfirst

We have further reports of inclement weather in the area, running into next week and perhaps beyond. Our school community travel from a wide area, so I am very mindful that any decision relating to the day-to-day operation or our school needs to be made early and communicated clearly. Our school bus companies have our direct numbers and if there is any disruption to travel either early morning or any other time, we will be first point of contact.

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During inclement weather we continue to monitor conditions closely and if I see the weather causing genuine safety concerns, we will contact families directly and promptly. Please be reassured that there is no need to contact school; if any closure or change to arrangements is required you will hear from me directly. Any updates or decisions will be communicated directly to you in usual way; we will also post onto Facebook and ClassCharts.

Before Christmas we had a number of students take part in the Bebras computing challenge which is designed to introduce computational thinking to students. It is organised in over 30 countries and designed to get students all over the world excited about computing. Each participant gets 45 minutes to answer 15 multiple-choice questions that focus on computational and logical thinking.

Aston Academy did brilliantly in the challenge. 49 students achieved a merit; 36 students achieved a distinction and five Y8 students achieved a gold standard. Well done to Ralf, Jacob, Violet, Chloe, Yazan.

Like I have written before it is very important to me that our students realise that they are capable of competing against any peer in Rotherham, Yorkshire, nationally or even worldwide. Our competitions such as the Beras challenge, maths and science challenges or sporting competitions offer our children the chance to compete and achieve. I love the idea of our community being represented nationally. Well done to all staff and students involved.

You may remember that in my last letter before the Christmas holidays I wrote about the amazing Snowflake Fayre that the students enjoyed. I am absolutely delighted to let you know that we raised £3606 making a total of £6040 raised in 2025 for Sheffield children's hospital. A very proud achievement by Aston Academy and a huge personal thank you from me to our wonderful staff and students for supporting this cause. I would also like to thank you, our parents/carers who provided some extra spending money at certain times throughout the year to enable students to donate.

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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