

## Aston Academy

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Striving for **Excellence**  
**Empowering** Achievement  
Shaping **Learning**

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Dear parent/carer,

I hope you have had a good week. We have had another busy one. In particular it has been lovely to welcome so many parents/carers into the academy this week. We have welcomed our parents and carers who have children are visiting Disney as part of a maths trip in March and then our Y9 parents and carers who attended an information event around key stage 4 subject choices. I talk a lot about home and school working together to support the children and this week was a great example. Thank you for your continued support.

Our Y11 have continued preparation for their trial exams next week, part of this has been a consistent message from the Y11 team to students. This message was "just one more", be it adding "just one more quote" to an English essay, having a go at "just one more question" in maths, adding "just one more verb/tense" to languages answers. A simple but really good reminder to just do a little bit extra. If we could all do 'one more thing' everyday, large or small, then we would have a very productive and successful week. The team also came up with an amazing stat - our Y11 students have now completed 98% of their compulsory education, which includes KS1,2,3 and 4. They now have the final 2% of time left before summer examinations. So, my wish for our Y11 students is 'just one more' big effort before the summer. Together I know we can make a difference and produce some amazing results.

This week we welcomed back our Trust Chief Safeguarding Officer into the academy. You may remember that we had our external safeguarding audit just before Christmas and on Thursday the Chief Safeguarding Officer visited to check that all actions we discussed are fully implemented. I am delighted to say that the feedback was excellent, which is very reassuring for students, staff and parent/carers. This included record keeping, first aid support and safeguarding checks on all staff, visitors and external partners. A constant cycle of review, implement and check in all areas of our work at the academy mean that we will hopefully continue to make improvements to the provision we offer your children.

Today we were delighted to welcome MP Jake Richards into the academy who worked with Mr Staniland (Y10 lead) and a group of our wonderful Y10 students, around the national agenda of mobile phones and the impact of social media for teenagers. We are very proud that our students have been chosen to provide a voice for Rotherham secondary schools on this topic, and I know that they very much enjoyed the opportunity. We have worked hard over the last 18 months to engage with our local MPs and Councillors. I believe it is really important that the school engage with such figures to ensure that we are both supporting and being supported in policies, discussions and changes that will benefit or impact upon our young people and families. In the last 18 months we have collaborated on such topics as transport links, bus stops, road safety, clubs and activities for teenagers, vapes, keeping safe, youth parliament and post 16 and 18 opportunities. By providing a platform for our students to have a voice is very important to me. An opportunity to make a difference, be heard and be proud of themselves and our local area.

Regarding the use of mobile phones, we have updated our behaviour policy to further clarify our position and response to the Governments discussion around mobile phone use. I am pleased that as a school we have been proactive with our decision around mobile phones - they are 'not seen, not heard' while on site. We have not waited for Government guidance but instead identified the issue and implemented a policy that is effective and makes a positive difference. However, with recent media coverage I felt it a good time to further clarify our stance by including the policy in my Friday update. If you would like to read, please 'click' the link below and in particular read appendix 3 on page 15 - the use of mobile phones.

[Behaviour policy 2026 - inc mobile phone use](#)

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Keeping on the theme of collaborations - as a school we also try to engage well with our other Rotherham secondary schools. This may mean sharing good practice, supporting with student admissions or working with school leaders. On Thursday the Rotherham Secondary Headteachers meeting was held. This gave me an opportunity to join Rotherham Local Authority leaders to receive useful information, advice and support. It also ensures that our school and community have a voice at these meetings.

We discussed and received up to date authority information on the below topics. Something I will be able to feedback to our school leaders to further strengthen our provision.

- Youth Parliament and how our student leaders can have a voice on a regional and national level.
- Under 16 Illegal vaping - an update from public health, trading standards and Rotherham LA safeguarding leads on how schools can further support tackling this national youth health issue.
- Education Health Care Plans and secondary school achievement - From Service Director, Education & Inclusion Dr Niall Devlin

On Tuesday we held our KS4 option choice evenings for students and parent/carers of Y9. This is always a very exciting time when our students can begin to make decisions about their futures. The first of these major decisions is what subjects they would like to study in KS4 alongside our core subjects. If your child is currently in KS3 I thought, you may be interested in looking at the resources through the below link. It contains the slides from our presentation and the subject option choice booklet. It might be of interest to you or your child and encourage some discussions can be had before they reach Y9.

#### [KS4 Subject information](#)

Next week I am very much looking forward to welcoming parents and carers for the Y9 consultation evening. It is our last week of half term 3, we are keen to keep attendance high throughout the final week and really appreciate your support with this, especially as we will have rewards activities planned for the students that week. Our school will open again to welcome back staff and students on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

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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