

Aston Academy

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Dear Parents/Carers of Year 7,

Another busy week has flown by - and although the weather has been pretty grim it has been lovely to greet Y7 each day for another week of fantastic attendance.

In today's assembly we discussed the growing number of apprenticeship opportunities to mark Apprenticeships Week. Post 16 pathways and next steps may seem a long way away for Year 7, so we focused on the qualities of employability that they can work on each day: good communication skills, organisation, punctuality, curiosity, commitment, courtesy...all of the qualities that we congratulate our fantastic Y7 on every single day.

NGRT & Reading

Pupils have been completing their NGRT tests - measuring their reading age, reading speed and comprehension. This information will help us to measure their progress in reading and organise any support required - however, we know that whatever their current reading stage, a daily reading habit is essential for good progress in all subjects.

I am always reaching out in person and online for donations of reading stock so that we can ignite and maintain a love of reading for all pupils. This week has been too wet for our outdoor bookswap area - but with Spring just around the corner we can look forward to lots of browsing, borrowing and discussing books. Some of our pupils come to life when talking with expertise about fishing, so I feel sure that they will be delighted with some of the donations I have organised from Angling World and Carpology. If you have any suitable pre-loved fiction or non-fiction books or magazines that would be suitable for our ever-evolving Y7 reading stock, then please send them in and we will get them into the hands of children, where they ought to be!

Mobile Phones

You will have seen the topic of phones in schools in the news again this week. We are fortunate to have gotten ahead with this at Aston, and our policy is very clear: any mobile phone seen or heard on site during the school day is confiscated. I was pleased to see people nod their agreement way back in our August induction days when I assured you that Y7 would be phone-free. Confiscations in Y7 are exceptionally rare because we have been so clear from the outset. Phones should be fully switched off, not just switched to silent mode, and zipped away - dangling out of a blazer pocket is not acceptable. Thank you, as always, for your support.

Litter picking support

Our split lunch system means that pupils have time to enjoy their food indoors before moving to the head yard. We feel that sitting and enjoying one another's company is an important part of encouraging a sense of belonging to our school community. We also, weather allowing, want to see pupils outdoors getting some fresh air. While we have provided additional bins, we do need to keep on top of litter. First impressions matter and I really want our school site - especially the Y7 areas - to reflect the pride we take in our school. We are really grateful to those pupils who offer to give five or ten minutes over their break to help keep the yard litter free. The cleaner it is the cleaner it stays. We are always happy to reward volunteers service with 'community' and 'kindness' achievement points.

Praise & Reward Assembly

Ms Carroll will be carefully reviewing Classcharts and gathering feedback from staff next week to ensure that those pupils who get it right all day every day are recognised for their efforts. Please encourage the highest standards - as Mr Graham says every week, the combination of home, school and pupil working together is incredibly powerful.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Kilgannon
Assistant Vice Principal

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