

Aston Academy

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Dear parent/carer,

We close another half term and reach the halfway point in the academic year on Friday 13th. Some believe this to be a very unlucky day; it's believed that this superstition may have began in the Middle Ages. Some think it's related to the Last Supper, when 13 people were present at the meal before Jesus's crucifixion on Good Friday. Others think it's related to the Knights Templar, who were arrested for heresy on Friday 13 October 1307. I am sure our students will see it differently and consider it very lucky date as it marks the beginning of their half term holiday!

I wish to thank all our parents and carers for their support, feedback and at times patience in areas that have raised unexpected issues or caused you concern. Throughout, I have certainly felt the positive impact of school and home working together.

I began my role of Aston Academy principal 530 days ago and I hope you agree that together we have made considerable positive impacts and change. Our work has made considerable positive impacts on learning within the classroom, student attendance, extra opportunities, student academic achieving and student support, praise/reward and clarity of policy and routine. I am proud that students at Aston academy achieve well, they are supported with many opportunities to thrive by staff that give considerable amounts of time to offer the best possible experience for our children. We have really tried to foster a sense of belonging. Students feel belonging when they feel known, feel safe and feel successful. Our student voice and daily feedback is telling us that more and more of our students have that sense of belonging.

However, we are also very aware that we can always do better in every aspect of our provision. To provide the best provision for your children we must constantly seek to improve, seek out the best practice, be sensible but proactive in our decisions while at all times being bold enough to change aspects of our provision if it is not working for our children.

For example, we recently took some time to look at our curriculum intent. A school curriculum intent is a vision or rationale outlining the purpose and ambition of what we want our students to learn. Our intent is simple: *to develop ambitious, responsible and resilient learners who are proud of who they are, confident in what they can accomplish, and fully prepared for their next steps in education, work and life.* We have recently updated our Curriculum section of the school website, including the change to our curriculum intent. Please click the hyperlink below to view.

[Aston Academy Curriculum Intent](#)

On Tuesday we were delighted to welcome parents/carers into the academy for our Parent Forum. This was the first time we have tried a forum such as this. The parent forum is another way we are trying to increase the opportunities for communications between school and home. You will remember I sent invitations out earlier in January and offered the opportunity to come into the academy to speak directly to myself and our senior leadership team - to pose questions, discuss aspects of our provision, gain more information or to provide your own feedback and thoughts. We know that communication is something we have improved upon, but we are also aware that in a large school we must continue to seek ways to improve communications further. I hope that parent/carers who attended the evening feel it was useful.

I will take time over half term to summarise some of the conversations we had and share these in my Friday update as I am sure there are other parents/carers who would have asked similar questions and will appreciate the update.



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Over the last two weeks we have welcomed guest speakers into our assemblies to speak with our Y8 and Y10 students. We enjoyed apprenticeship information being shared with students where they learned about what apprenticeships are, the benefits of doing them, entry requirements and which sectors these are available in. This week we have had SYP speak to our Y10 students around stalking and harassment. They received information to make them recognise when this may be happening and how to seek support if they find themselves a victim of such behaviour. On Thursday our Y8 students had a mental health and wellbeing talk from Kooth.

Kooth is a free, safe, and anonymous digital mental health platform for children and young people (typically aged 10-25) in the UK providing 24/7 access to self-help tools, peer support, and text-based counselling from BACP-accredited professionals. It operates without waiting lists or thresholds, offering immediate support for low-to-moderate mental health needs. This is a wonderful service and partners we are proud to work with as we build more provision to support with mental health. Below is a useful link if you would like to know more or share with someone you feel would benefit from Kooth support.

[kooth sign in](#)

Looking ahead to the start of half term 4 it is important that our students arrive ready to learn, this will include bringing a suitable school bag (able to safely hold equipment, books needed for that day), full school uniform (including tie and blazer) and stationary so they can access every lesson fully. When students enter school each day from 8.10am our pastoral teams are there to welcome students as they come through the gates, they say good morning, check uniform (including asking students to remove any non-policy jewellery) and ensure that the child is ready for the day ahead. Your support with this means that the beginning of each school day is a much more positive experience for the children and staff.

Finally, from me, as the month of Ramadan begins, we extend our warmest wishes to all families in our school community who are observing this special time. Ramadan is a month of reflection, kindness, and togetherness, and we celebrate the values it represents within our diverse school family. We recognise the importance of this period for many of our students and parents and wish you peace and blessings throughout the month. From all of us at the school, we wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and fulfilling Ramadan.

My staff and I will be ready on Monday 23rd February to welcome your children back into the academy for the start of half term 4, our gates open at 8.10am. Have a wonderful weekend and I hope the children enjoy their half term.

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

Best regards,



Mr J Graham
Principal

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