

Aston Academy

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Dear parent/carer,

This week started with fantastic news from across the sea: our cheerleading team and Miss Cant have been competing at the cheer national finals in Florida. The team have had an amazing time and are returning home as 2026 Champions! To top this off, they were also awarded Level's Best, which means they were voted the best out of every team competing in their level. The girls also achieved two *zero-hit routines*, meaning that during these routines the team had zero deductions, delivering a perfect performance. Well done and congratulations to the Champions!

We had our first pop-up shop from our new uniform provider, Schoolwear Solutions, on site. This is a great way to purchase uniform directly from school, with lots to try on and Schoolwear Solutions staff available to support. I have included two links below that provide further details about our uniform and how to purchase items. I have already spotted some of our new-logo blazers around the site, and they look fantastic.

<https://www.schoolwearsolutions.com/our-schools/aston-academy/>

I also recommend visiting Aston Academy's uniform page on the school website, where you will find a helpful step-by-step video guide showing exactly how to place your order online. We are lending more and more ties from our uniform shop each morning; if your child is missing a tie, a new one will need to be purchased. The equipment shop is available for those rare occasions when a student has forgotten an item of equipment or a piece of uniform is missing. Usually, we would expect these issues to be resolved quickly, typically within the following days.

Uniform and Equipment

I am also posting again the dates of the pop-up uniform shops that we will be hosting on site. Please make a note of these in your diary, as they offer an excellent way to purchase uniform items for your child:

- 30 April, 10am – 4pm (all year groups)
- 12 May, 4pm – 6pm (all year groups)
- 20–24 July, 10am – 4pm (new Year 7s and siblings)
- 14 August, 10am – 4pm (all year groups)

As part of our focus on healthy lifestyles and mental health, we have challenged students to walk or run as many miles as they can throughout the month of May. Walking is a simple yet powerful way to support children's overall wellbeing. Physically, regular walking helps build strong muscles and bones, improves cardiovascular fitness, and supports maintaining a healthy weight, reducing the risk of chronic diseases. Mentally, it can boost mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve focus and concentration—helping children feel more ready to learn. Walking also offers valuable social benefits, whether chatting with friends on the way to school or enjoying time outdoors with family, strengthening relationships and communication skills. Encouraging children to walk more often, even in small ways each day, can make a meaningful difference to their health and happiness. Perhaps this could become a family activity, with everyone getting their steps in while enjoying the outdoors and the sunshine.

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Students will need to log their mileage and provide evidence to their tutor, who will then record it. Staff have also been invited to join the challenge to create a whole-school community effort. Collectively, we will see how many miles we can achieve!

Well done to Year 7 this week, who completed their English, Maths, and Science SSAs under 'GCSE-style' exam conditions. We are extremely proud of how they handled this challenge. There were lots of nerves initially, but these soon turned into resilience. This was their first practice, and over the coming academic years they will have many more before sitting their GCSEs in summer 2031. I hope they will be as prepared as our Year 11 and Year 13 students, who begin the main body of their external summer exams next week. We wish them luck and know they will be fantastic.

Finally, I wish good luck and a safe trip to our 50 Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh students who leave this morning for their practice expedition this weekend. This is a fantastic experience and opportunity for our students. Thank you also to the staff who give up their weekends to support this—what a commitment. A very proud Principal!

Next week, we look forward to our fifth Reading Week for Year 7 to Year 10 students. The theme is Sci-Fi, in celebration of *Star Wars* Day. It is really important that students see how passionate our staff are about reading and how we prioritise reading across the curriculum, while also promoting the mental-health benefits of reading for pleasure. Each day will focus on a different sci-fi novel, with lessons developing a range of reading skills.

Finally, for parents who are already planning for the upcoming academic year, I would like to share some additional dates when school will be closed to students:

- INSET Days: 1st and 2nd September (students return on 3rd September)
- ACET Secondary INSET Day: 9th October
- Disaggregated school closure: Friday 23rd October
- Disaggregated INSET Days: Friday 27th November and Monday 18th January

Below is a link to the Rotherham term dates for further information:

School term dates – [Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

A reminder that this year's Spring Bank half-term begins on Monday 25th May, with students returning at 8.10am on Monday 1st June. The summer holidays begin on Friday 17 July at 12.30pm.

I will sign off in the sci-fi theme of our reading week—*Star Wars*. One of my favourite Yoda quotes:

“Do. Or do not. There is no try.”

Our cheerleaders were prepared—and they *did*. We know our Year 11 and Year 13 students are also ready to *do* in their exams. Good luck, team Aston and all our families are fully behind you.

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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