

Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of the year I am sure we all have a feeling of deja-vu as the COVID cases start to climb exponentially again! We have though managed to have some normality this term with mock exams occurring and end of term enrichment activities taking place. On Wednesday Years 7-10 had a Christmas enrichment day and all attended a year group Christmas dinner. Year 11 visited the Birmingham Christmas market as a reward for their excellent results in the mock exams and yesterday all of the lower school went to the pantomime in Dunstable.

It is wonderful to once again be able to reward our students for their excellent attendance, behaviour and progress. Many students will be given reward vouchers in the end of term assemblies and it is important to reward students to show them this is the way forward.

In January staff will return for an INSET day on Tuesday 4th January and all students return to the Academy on Wednesday 5th January. All students will be tested when they arrive but it is important that they are tested at home with a LFD before they come in. With the announcement of 88,000 positive cases of COVID today it seems impossible to predict what January will hold for us all.

I do hope that we are all able to enjoy Christmas with our families and that we return safely in January. We can only put our faith in God that he will keep us all from harm during this current wave of infections.

With every best wish for Christmas and the New Year.

Best Wishes

Liz Furber
Executive Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of another challenging calendar year, and hope for a far more normal Christmas than last year, I couldn't help but reflect on two stories that hit the news earlier in the month, and how they mirrored, in very different ways, different parts of the Christmas story. The first was the tragic death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. St Matthew's Gospel tells about King Herod's call for the 'slaughter of the innocents' when he learned of the birth of Jesus. In this case, we hear an appalling story of actual parents, not some ruthless tyrant, who brutally tortured an innocent child at a time when he should have been receiving love, care and protection.

The second was the story of Helga Mcfarlane, the Scottish woman who offered a flat to total strangers, the Vesal family who were refugees from Afghanistan. She wanted to repay the kindness shown to her own mother who had to flee from Germany during World War 2. Not only was there 'room at the inn', but this is permanent accommodation where the family can live safely and the children attend school. This was an act of total kindness and compassion for people fleeing tyranny in their own country.

Here we have people at different ends of the spectrum of humanity - and we continue to be both amazed and shocked by how people treat their fellow human beings. One just has to believe and hope that there are more Helga Mcfarlanes in this world than there are the parents of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes.

Once again, thank you for all the support you have given to the Academy during the past year. We continue to experience challenging times, with much uncertainty about what the new year will hold, but this is a special time for celebration and reflection, and a time for families to be together. Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of the Governing Body, to wish you and your family a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Best Wishes

David Fraser
Chair of Governors

January Virtue: Gratitude

Skill: Staying Positive

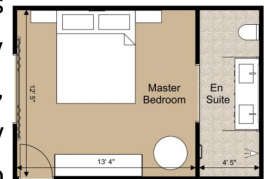
Year 7

In January, Year 7 students will begin to look at travel writing in English. They will look at both **positive** and negative experiences of travel and holidays as well as demonstrate their own **gratitude** for any positive experiences and holidays they have had. Both Spanish and French are linked in terms of looking at school, with Spanish focussing on what is studied at school and French focussing on giving opinions about school. Both modern foreign languages will look at the virtue of **gratitude** in terms of being **grateful** for school and access to a free education compared to other countries and cultures.



Social Sciences will focus on change across both geography and history. In geography, students will look at case studies of development in countries such as India and will consider the **gratitude** we should demonstrate for living in a developed country, **staying positive** about this bigger picture even when socially and economically there are still struggles. History focusses on the creation of the Tudor dynasty and looks at how society had to **stay positive** during a period of significant change. In philosophy and ethics, students will be looking at what would define a Christian God compared to other religious Gods.

In the STEM subjects, maths moves forward in developing numbers skills in decimals and measures, such as metric measurements. Students will have a lesson planning a scale drawing on a bedroom and will reflect on how **grateful** they are for the space they can have access to. Computer science lessons will look at Flowol, developing students' **gratitude** for the apps that they use every day as they gain a better understanding of the work that goes into app design. In science, students will be conducting experiments and learning about separating mixtures as they reflect on how **grateful** they are for these processes as it allows us to have access to clean drinking water, for example.



The Arts rotation for Year 7 this half-term is for art, music, drama and design technology. In art, students will be looking at natural form. In drama, students will be looking at story-telling and scripted performance, whilst in DT they will be researching and designing a 3D-printed plant pot. Music focusses on film scores and composition of film scores. Throughout the Arts subjects, students will be encouraged to **stay positive** as they develop their skills and work towards their end goal.

Further details of the curriculum content for each year group is available on our website.

January Virtue: Gratitude

Skill: Staying Positive

Year 8

In English in Year 8, students will study 'The Hunger Games' for the coming months. During the month of January, students will focus on the characters in terms of their **gratitude** to the tributes for participating in the hunger games, but also with a finer focus on the **gratitude** specific characters show each other as they support one another. Students will also look at how the participants in the hunger games are able to **stay positive** in the face of great adversity and what this can look like. Students that study Spanish will be looking at what they like to eat and how to describe this, as well as reflecting on how to **stay positive** whilst reading a menu in another language as this is often more difficult than just understanding the vocabulary. In French, students will be looking at what sports they like and how staying healthy creates a **positive** attitude and the importance of **staying positive** about being healthy, even when we are tired.



The Social Sciences will greatly focus on the skill of **staying positive** by reflecting on the past and current issues in society. In geography, students will be looking at the development gap between the rich and the poor and that, in order for change to happen, the poorer citizens must **stay positive** and allow time for change to happen. Philosophy and ethics looks at the concept of 'Life is Hard' and what this can mean for different philosophical and religious teachings as students learn about how resilience and **staying positive** is demonstrated by a wide variety of people in a wide variety of ways. Year 8 history looks back to the American Civil War and the Abolition of Slavery, discussing how **grateful** people were for the actions of others that allowed the societal change to happen.

Maths lessons focus on development of algebra, specifically skills related to expressions and equations. Students will reflect on their **gratitude** for securing their algebraic



knowledge in Year 7 to an extent that allows them to make progress and challenge themselves in this topic, whilst still remaining **positive** as the content stretches their knowledge to the next level. In computer science, students will be looking at website development and will discuss their **gratitude** for website development once they have a better understanding of the level of skill involved in this process. Science will focus on the Earth's structure and types of rock as well as expanding that knowledge further out to also look at the universe.

The Arts rotation for Year 8 this half-term is art, music, textiles and food. In art, students will be looking at portraiture, observational drawing and abstraction. In textiles, students will be creating a chocolate bar soft sculpture, whilst in food they will be conducting investigations into which milk produces the best ice-cream. Music focusses on jazz and blues music as students learn chords and melodies. Throughout the Arts subjects, students will be encouraged to **stay positive** as they develop their skills and work towards their end goal.

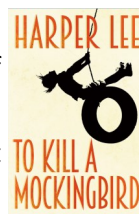
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Skill: Staying Positive

Year 9

Throughout January, Year 9 students will be studying 'To Kill A Mockingbird' in their English lessons, with a focus on how the characters were able to **stay positive** even in the face of adversity. In modern foreign languages, both Spanish and French will look at describing a balanced and healthy diet, whilst also encouraging students to show **gratitude** for the food that they have access to as well as **staying positive** in leading a healthy lifestyle, even when the urge for junk food is there.



In Social Science, students will look at rivers in geography and at Empires Pre-WW1 in history. Students in history will also reflect on how society **stayed positive** in the build up to WW1.



Maths continues to focus on multiplicative reasoning for Year 9, bringing together a variety of topics from number, ratio and shape, as students learn to **stay positive** and persevere in order to see the topics all thread together under the concept of reasoning. In computer science, students will be looking at algorithms and how they are used in designing computer programs, leading to **gratitude** for the work that goes into designing computer programs, especially those we use on a daily basis and do not even think about. Science covers a lot of content throughout January including inheritance, climate change and Earth resources. Students will reflect on their **gratitude** to scientists who made breakthrough discoveries in the field of genetics and DNA. Students will also demonstrate their **gratitude** to others for recycling as they learn to **stay positive** in the face of climate change as it is this resilience that will lead to future change in the current global warming situation.



Year 9 will be focussing on different elements of the Arts depending on the rotation with all students accessing art and music. In art, students will look at developing their multi-media skills, such as typography and illustrations, whilst music focusses on music composition for the purpose of musical accompaniment. Students who are studying design technology will be researching and designing a bridge, considering their understanding of forces in science, and these students will also study drama with a focus on a group performance project. Students who are studying food will be making pastries, specifically puff pastry to make sausage rolls and filo pastry to make vegetable spring rolls, and these students will also study textiles with a focus on printing and dyeing fabric for an insect design applique. Throughout the Arts subjects, students will be encouraged to **stay positive** as they develop their skills and work towards their end goal.

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Skill: Staying Positive

Year 10

Year 10 students are focussing on English Literature throughout January, specifically developing their understanding of the play 'An Inspector Calls'. Students will look at the way the characters interact with each other, as well as looking at how the story line demonstrates what **gratitude** looked like in 1945 and how that may be different from now. Students will need to remain **positive** as they develop their analysis skills. French



and Spanish are both looking at the people around us, with French developing this further into specifically looking at marriage and family. Both languages subjects will encourage students to be **grateful** for the people around them and show them how to describe their close friends and family in a **positive** way.

In Social Sciences, students who have chosen geography will be looking at the climate and the impact of climate change. They will be discussing how to tackle climate change and the **positivity** that is needed in order to successfully make change in this area. History students will be looking at Health and Medicine in the 19th and 20th Centuries. They will look at how medicine changed over time and continues to develop, but only through the **positivity** of scientists to want to make this change. Students will also be encouraged to reflect and compare the 19th and 20th Century healthcare with our current healthcare and discuss their **gratitude** for what we can access in this country. In philosophy and ethics, all students will be looking at different aspects of Christianity and Islam. Christianity will focus on the teachings of salvation and atonement as well as the practices of worship and pilgrimage, whilst Islam will focus on the teachings in the Holy Books, and the practices of Sawhm, Zakat and Hajj. Students will also look at the practice of prayer in both religions.



STEM subjects will continue to build on the knowledge learned in Year 7 through to Year 8. In maths, foundation students are looking at fractions and percentages, with encouragement to remain **positive** throughout their work on fractions as this is often a subject students struggle with. Higher students, however, will be moving onto angle work and trigonometry, reflecting on their **gratitude** for having a solid underpinning of the angle rules of shapes, as well as developing the ability to stay



positive whilst developing their learning in trigonometry. In science, biology looks at animals and plants and how we should be **grateful** for the variety of organisms and their contribution to the way the world works, chemistry looks at the periodic table and being able to complete chemical calculations, and physics looks at electricity and electrical circuits, with a focus on electricity in the home.

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January Virtue: Gratitude

Skill: Staying Positive

Year 11

In Year 11 English, students are now spending their time revising and consolidating their learning for both literature and language papers. Students will demonstrate **gratitude** for the detailed feedback provided by their teachers in order for them to improve and will ensure they **stay positive** as they work through their green-pen responses to develop their skills and understanding, leading to improved grades.

French students will look at holiday and travel and learn how to discuss their **gratitude** for holidays or experiences that they have had, whilst Spanish students will be looking at careers and career opportunities and encouraging students to show **gratitude** for the variety of careers available to them.

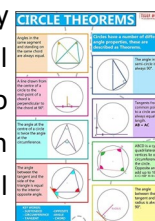


Students who study geography will be looking at resource issues and the impact of access to resources such as water. Students will reflect on their **gratitude** for having readily available resources, like water, and being able to take for granted that they will always have access to this. In history, students will look at the impact of WW2 on society, but with a focus on the improvements to the post-WW2 society and the **gratitude** the people had and that we should continue to have. In philosophy and ethics, all students will look at different beliefs about family, marriage, gender equality and the existence of God.

Maths students, whether foundation or higher, will need to focus on **staying positive** as they continue to challenge themselves and develop their previous learning. Foundation students will



be looking at quadratic equations and graphs and linking this back to their previous learning of substitution and plotting graphs in algebra in Year 10. Higher students will be moving onto circle theorems and will need to **stay positive** as they tackle problems involving more than one



circle theorem and, potentially, other angle rules as well. In science, biology will look at ecosystems, chemistry focusses on rates of reaction, fuels and Earth science, and physics looks and electricity, magnetism and then bringing them together to look at electromagnetism.

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Students return on
Wednesday 5th January 2022

Enrichment Day



Year 7 had a fantastic enrichment day, playing on the ice, riding the reindeer, shooting cans and making bath bombs. The students learnt that even Mr Pettengell and Mr Wilson found skating hard! A wonderful experience for everyone involved.



Year 7, 8 and 9 then had a fantastic trip to the panto to see Aladdin. All the students were a credit to the Academy. They had lots of laughs and fun and look forward to going back next year to see Cinderella! Have a wonderful and safe Christmas break.

Rob Gould
Head of Year 7

Golf Club Trip



On Friday 3rd December a group of students from Year 8 and Year 9 spent the afternoon at Tilsworth Golf Centre. The trip was as a reward for the students' excellent attendance and they were given the opportunity to use the driving range to hone their golf skills. The students thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon at Tilsworth Golf Centre and were a credit to the Academy throughout.

Ian McCarthy
Assistant Principal—Personal Development—SEND & PP

KS3 Pantomime Trip

On Thursday 16th December we took the whole of Lower School to see Aladdin at the Grove Theatre (oh yes we did!). Visiting the land of "PharoahAway" we were transported to a magical experience of fire dancing, genies, spirits and mummies! The students were engaged from the moment of the first boo right down to the last hurrah (and so were the staff!). It was a wonderful experience that helped our students witness the skill of **creativity** being applied to a well-known story and adapted for our audience. This was shown on our walk back to the Academy where students were heard to be recalling their favorite moments, the highs, the lows, the laughs and the thrills



and it can be encapsulated by what Oscar Wilde said, "I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being." Our students were drawn together in a sense of shared wonder, a moment of pure enjoyment and we were privileged to be a part of it.

Tom Golds
Assistant Principal—Personal Development—Lower School
Careers & Oracy Lead – Quality Nominee

Festive Blessing

Focus verse:

“They (Wise Men) entered the house and saw (Jesus) with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11



These are some familiar words from the Christmas story when the Wise Men, Magi, or Kings from the East came to visit Jesus as a child. Note that Jesus would have been anything up to about 2 years old at this stage from evidence we find elsewhere in the text. As such, Jesus as a toddler, is presented with these gifts. But rather odd gifts: gold; a fitting gift for a king,

frankincense; a symbol of worship where the fragrant incense is used as a pleasing aroma unto the Lord, and myrrh; used as an embalming agent in the burials suggesting something significant about his death. What we can learn from these offerings is that they were given to Jesus because they had meaning and significance. They weren't just random gifts but were prophetic. How could a young child be a king and be worthy of worship? And perhaps giving embalming minerals to a baby can almost seem like a perverse gift! Throughout the Bible we read that God gives good gifts to people. Not necessarily material things like a new car, the latest video game, or a cheque, but always things that people will need. He offers comfort to the mourning, rest for the weary, love for the hated, strength for the weak etc. and his Holy Spirit to all who ask to help us be the very best version of ourselves that gives glory to God. Whatever hopes and plans you may have over this festive period; whatever emotions you may face (because the reality is that Christmastime can be a very difficult time for many people) please be aware that God holds you in the palm of his hand and wants to give you every good gift to help you thrive. Sometimes we just need to ask and open ourselves up to see these things. Have a merry Christmas and happy New Year to you all!



Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the opportunities to learn, grow and develop; for the words of encouragement in the bible, the gift of your Holy Spirit to us, and the gift of Jesus as the Christ child. Please help us to support each other so that all in our community can prosper. We particularly ask for care for those who might be lonely or are dreading this time of year. In everything we do, help us to act with responsibility. In all our relationships, help us to care for others with compassion and respect. In our lives, help us to grow in understanding and faith in you with the example set to us in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Rev. Tim Davis
School Chaplain

Canteen Spend Limit

As you are aware, there is a limit to how much students can spend each day in the canteen and this is currently set at £4.00 per day. From Wednesday 5th January, this will increase to £5.00 per day. If you have already asked for a different spend limit to be set, this will not change when we apply this increase.

If you do not want your child's spend limit to be increased or would like it to be set to a different amount, please let us know and we can adjust this for you.