

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the second half of the term – I hope you have all had a good break. Dare I say spring appears to be on the way with the mornings considerably warmer and lighter already!

I am delighted that our focus on improving attendance is having an impact as we have seen our Persistent Absence rate (students missing more than 10% of their school sessions) fall to 24.5% which mean we are doing better than the national average (25.5%). This has taken a huge amount of dedicated work by all the staff here and I recognise that you as parents/carers have played a big role in encouraging the students to attend every day.

I am similarly delighted with our Year 11, 12 and 13 students and the impeccable attitude they are demonstrating when preparing for their exams. Throughout the week the 'Study Room' is being used by a number of Year 11 students who sit and work in silence focusing on subjects they want to improve. It really is a pleasure to see!

The second set of formal mocks begin in the week commencing 11th March and will last for two weeks. As we keep reminding Year 11 there are, as of today (Monday), only 35 school days left before the first exam in May. This is certainly focusing the minds of our students and we wish them all luck as they prepare for this intense period of their lives.

This is such a short half term – only 4 weeks and 4 days – 24 days in total. We have challenged students to be in every day so please continue to support us at home with this too – we are making a real difference together. If students are in school they can learn!

Best wishes

Liz Furber
Executive Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

Whenever we visit the Academy, governors like to engage with students as much as possible. Over recent months we have met with youngsters from various year groups. Most recently, we had the privilege of meeting with groups from Year 11 and Year 13, which are clearly important years, especially in terms of public exams.

Whilst it might not be a trait that we, as parents and carers, always see at home, they were extremely polite, articulate and ambitious. We discussed the subjects they enjoyed, those which they found slightly more challenging, and their aspirations. When you hear young people saying they want to be a barrister, an investment banker, a police officer, a teacher or a clinical psychologist, you know there is real motivation. There are similarly those who want to learn a trade, like becoming an engineer, a mechanic or an electrician, perhaps pursuing those routes through an apprenticeship.

As part of our challenge role, we also asked what characteristics made for a good teacher. One of the wonderful characteristics among these students was that they were happy to name their best teachers but, instead of naming any poorer teachers, they referred to the subjects in which they struggled. That is a sign of great maturity and integrity.

Apart from some of the best characteristics of a good teacher being subject knowledge, engaging and well-prepared lessons, and circulating the teaching space, the primary attribute of a good teacher that they stressed most was someone who cared about them and who knew them well.

As a Church School I would hope that we all care deeply about every single student who attends the Academy because, just as Jesus assures us that 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered', so should we know the hopes and aspirations of everyone entrusted to us.

Best wishes

David Fraser
Chair of Governors

Cashless Catering Account

When accounts are topped up through ParentPay, the funds do not always transfer to students' cashless accounts straight away. If you know that your child's account needs topping up, please do this in plenty of time as students can only buy items up to the value of credit showing on the tills.

There is also a daily spend limit of £5 which means that students are not able to purchase any additional items once this is reached, even if their account has further funds available. If you would like your child to be able to spend more, or less, each day, please let us know as we can make adjustments to individual accounts.

Looking Ahead

6th March

Y9 Pathways Evening

11th to 22nd March

Y11-Y13 Mocks

15th March

Careers Day

26th March

Y9 Vaccinations

26th March

Y11 Parents' Evening
(face to face)

27th March

Y11 Parents' Evening
(virtual)

29th March

Easter Holiday

15th April

First Day of Term

Admission Arrangements

A requirement of the DfE is that schools must determine and publish their admission arrangements one full academic year in advance.

We have determined our admission arrangements for academic year 2025/2026 and these can be found on our website.

Studybugs

Studybugs is our new absence reporting tool for parents/carers and will be replacing the absence reporting area of Edulink from Monday 4th March.

Studybugs links directly with systems in school and updates us straight away about your child's absence. It will also help us remind you sooner if you have not reported your child's absence.

To access Studybugs, you will need to download the Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, via <https://studybugs.com/about/parents>.

If you are having difficulty setting up your login, please get in touch.

Water Bottles

Students should have a refillable water bottle with them each day and we ask parents/carers to remind students about this. There are water fountains around the building where students can refill these during the day to help them stay hydrated.

If your child forgets to bring their bottle, plastic cups for water are available from Student Reception before/after school and during break and lunchtimes.

Free School Meals

If you think you meet the free school meals eligibility criteria, please call Central Beds Council on 0300 300 8306. You will need to have the following information ready:

National Insurance numbers and dates of birth for you and your partner; dates of birth for your children; if you receive support from the National Asylum Support Service, your NASS number.

More information can be found at [Free school meals](#) | [Central Bedfordshire Council](#).

From the Chaplain

Focus verse:

“At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”

Mark 1:12&13

Our focus verse comes at the point immediately after Jesus was Baptised in the River Jordan by his cousin John the Baptist. Jesus has been marked for the most significant part of His life, when He goes out to prepare Himself in the desert wilderness for 40 days of preparation, which is what Christians remember during Lent.

It is a time in the church calendar where we can take stock of who we are as individual people, our family units, and wider communities. The season is associated with self-denial and penitence reminding us that God has led His people through difficult times in the past;

- when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt,
- when Moses led them from that captivity into the wilderness for 40 years, and
- when these Israelites were in exile in Babylon.



God remained faithful to His people throughout those times and, whatever our particular concern at this time might be, as He was faithful to His people before, He remains faithful to us still today.

The word “Lent” is not specifically found in the Bible although the surrounding principles and practices very much are. For example the idea of marking foreheads with ash on Ash Wednesday is a reminder of our mortality and humility, the idea of giving something up (or fasting) reminds us of our reliance on, and the providence of, God, and the focus on prayer as a way of reconnecting with God. Even if you do not consider yourself a Christian these three things of humility, abstinence, and getting in touch with our spiritual side are all beneficial for our wholeness and wellbeing.

All this might be relatively easy to say but as the cost of living and energy bills remain a struggle for many people it might not sound particularly appealing or helpful! However, there is a very good reason why the Christian calendar places Lent immediately prior to Easter; Lent is a time of taking stock before celebrating Easter - the very heart of the Christian faith! That hope of Easter, that even death has been defeated, gives us hope that even the most trying of circumstances one day will be over. Note also that in the wider story, as Jesus struggled through His human challenges, “angels attended him”! God does not abandon us during our struggles!

Prayer:

Dear God,

Please help me to use this time of Lent to self-examine my attitudes towards You, others, and myself. Thank You, that when I do get things wrong, I do not have to carry around the burden of guilt when I share them with You. And during struggles help me look with hope to the future.

Amen.



Rev. Tim Davis; School Chaplain

Academic Calendar - 2023/2024

School Holiday						Bank Holiday						Pupil Day						Training Day							
September 2023						October 2023						November 2023						December 2023							
Mon		4	11	18	25	Mon		2	9	16	23	30	Mon			6	13	20	27	Mon		4	11	18	25
Tue		5	12	19	26	Tue		3	10	17	24	31	Tue			7	14	21	28	Tue		5	12	19	26
Wed		6	13	20	27	Wed		4	11	18	25		Wed		1	8	15	22	29	Wed		6	13	20	27
Thu		7	14	21	28	Thu		5	12	19	26		Thu		2	9	16	23	30	Thu		7	14	21	28
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	Fri		6	13	20	27		Fri		3	10	17	24		Fri	1	8	15	22	29
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	Sat		7	14	21	28		Sat		4	11	18	25		Sat	2	9	16	23	30
Sun	3	10	17	24		Sun	1	8	15	22	29		Sun		5	12	19	26		Sun	3	10	17	24	31
January 2024						February 2024						March 2024						April 2024							
Mon	1	8	15	22	29	Mon		5	12	19	26		Mon		4	11	18	25		Mon	1	8	15	22	29
Tue	2	9	16	23	30	Tue		6	13	20	27		Tue		5	12	19	26		Tue	2	9	16	23	30
Wed	3	10	17	24	31	Wed		7	14	21	28		Wed		6	13	20	27		Wed	3	10	17	24	
Thu	4	11	18	25		Thu	1	8	15	22	29		Thu		7	14	21	28		Thu	4	11	18	25	
Fri	5	12	19	26		Fri	2	9	16	23			Fri	1	8	15	22	29		Fri	5	12	19	26	
Sat	6	13	20	27		Sat	3	10	17	24			Sat	2	9	16	23	30		Sat	6	13	20	27	
Sun	7	14	21	28		Sun	4	11	18	25			Sun	3	10	17	24	31		Sun	7	14	21	28	
May 2024						June 2024						July 2024						August 2024							
Mon		6	13	20	27	Mon		3	10	17	24		Mon	1	8	15	22	29		Mon		5	12	19	26
Tue		7	14	21	28	Tue		4	11	18	25		Tue	2	9	16	23	30		Tue		6	13	20	27
Wed	1	8	15	22	29	Wed		5	12	19	26		Wed	3	10	17	24	31		Wed		7	14	21	28
Thu	2	9	16	23	30	Thu		6	13	20	27		Thu	4	11	18	25			Thu	1	8	15	22	29
Fri	3	10	17	24	31	Fri		7	14	21	28		Fri	5	12	19	26			Fri	2	9	16	23	30
Sat	4	11	18	25		Sat	1	8	15	22	29		Sat	6	13	20	27			Sat	3	10	17	24	31
Sun	5	12	19	26		Sun	2	9	16	23	30		Sun	7	14	21	28			Sun	4	11	18	25	

Academic Calendar - 2024/2025



School Holiday							Bank Holiday							Pupil Day							Training Day																																		
September 2024														October 2024														November 2024														December 2024													
Mon		2	9	16	23	30		Mon		7	14	21	28			Mon		4	11	18	25			Mon		2	9	16	23	30																									
Tue		3	10	17	24			Tue	1	8	15	22	29			Tue		5	12	19	26			Tue		3	10	17	24	31																									
Wed		4	11	18	25			Wed	2	9	16	23	30			Wed		6	13	20	27			Wed		4	11	18	25																										
Thu		5	12	19	26			Thu	3	10	17	24	31			Thu		7	14	21	28			Thu		5	12	19	26																										
Fri		6	13	20	27			Fri	4	11	18	25			Fri	1	8	15	22	29			Fri		6	13	20	27																											
Sat		7	14	21	28			Sat	5	12	19	26			Sat	2	9	16	23	30			Sat		7	14	21	28																											
Sun	1	8	15	22	29			Sun	6	13	20	27			Sun	3	10	17	24				Sun	1	8	15	22	29																											
January 2025														February 2025														March 2025														April 2025													
Mon		6	13	20	27			Mon		3	10	17	24			Mon		3	10	17	24	31			Mon		7	14	21	28																									
Tue		7	14	21	28			Tue		4	11	18	25			Tue		4	11	18	25			Tue	1	8	15	22	29																										
Wed		1	8	15	22	29		Wed		5	12	19	26			Wed		5	12	19	26			Wed	2	9	16	23	30																										
Thu		2	9	16	23	30		Thu		6	13	20	27			Thu		6	13	20	27			Thu	3	10	17	24																											
Fri		3	10	17	24	31		Fri		7	14	21	28			Fri		7	14	21	28			Fri	4	11	18	25																											
Sat		4	11	18	25			Sat	1	8	15	22			Sat	1	8	15	22	29			Sat	5	12	19	26																												
Sun		5	12	19	26			Sun	2	9	16	23			Sun	2	9	16	23	30			Sun	6	13	20	27																												
May 2025														June 2025														July 2025														August 2025													
Mon		5	12	19	26			Mon		2	9	16	23	30			Mon		7	14	21	28			Mon		4	11	18	25																									
Tue		6	13	20	27			Tue		3	10	17	24			Tue		1	8	15	22	29			Tue		5	12	19	26																									
Wed		7	14	21	28			Wed		4	11	18	25			Wed		2	9	16	23	30			Wed		6	13	20	27																									
Thu		1	8	15	22	29		Thu		5	12	19	26			Thu		3	10	17	24	31			Thu		7	14	21	28																									
Fri		2	9	16	23	30		Fri		6	13	20	27			Fri		4	11	18	25			Fri	1	8	15	22	29																										
Sat		3	10	17	24	31		Sat		7	14	21	28			Sat		5	12	19	26			Sat	2	9	16	23	30																										
Sun		4	11	18	25			Sun	1	8	15	22	29			Sun		6	13	20	27			Sun	3	10	17	24	31																										