

26th January 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope this letter finds you well after what I hope has been an enjoyable and restful festive period. Reflecting on the academic year so far, it has been a privilege to work with our GREAT students. Over the past four months, they have impressed me daily. Furthermore, as we look forward to 2024 and the years to come, I am looking forward to further supporting the young people within our year group. I am also excited to watch them develop into fantastic ambassadors for our school and citizens within our community.

One of my goals for the year group is to help the children to develop into independent young people. As we reach the teenage years, please encourage your child to have their uniform, bag, and PE kit organized the night before. They should set their own alarm clock and check Microsoft Teams each morning for any relevant messages. It is important that children are encouraged to develop their organization and communication skills. These are essential for future life and will set them up for a successful day in school.

As their Head of Year, it is important to me that students are well-rounded individuals with hobbies and interests outside of their studies. Extra-curricular activities are valuable to children developmentally and socially. Future employers look favourably on the skills children gain from participating in them. These include teamwork, resilience, commitment, and improved communication skills. If your child is not currently involved in any, there are many free ones offered at GAA. I hope that you will support and encourage your child to attend an extra-curricular activity to enhance their skill set. Please remind your child that these opportunities are shared on their Microsoft Teams page and through the form time curriculum.

As a school, we encourage that students follow the GREAT values (Genuine, Respect, Achieve, Excellence and Together) at all times. These values are required in the adult world and enable people to be the best version of themselves. Staff at GAA will continue to reward students with GREAT points on ClassCharts. It also shows any consequences or after-school corrections that have been put in place. This way, you can see what time to expect your child to finish school and arrive home. Please download the app and contact the Year 8 team if you need a new access code.

I am proud to lead a diverse year group, and this diversity is reflected through the range of contexts students experience within their curriculum. This year, the young people are reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Mark Haddon as their class reading book. The story follows Christopher Boone as he investigates the killing of his neighbour's beloved pet. The students also have some interesting assemblies coming up with themes including LGBTQ history, World Book Day and Easter/Eid celebrations. During social times, students can also access our school library. Our librarian, Ms. Selwood, prepares engaging literacy activities based on the weekly theme. Previous themes include Poetry and Diwali.

A gentle reminder of two key school policies. The school mobile phone policy is Not Seen, Not Used, Not Heard so please consider this when attempting to make contact with your child throughout the day. For urgent messages, please ring reception who will divert your call to a member of the Year 8 team who will be more than happy to help. I will remind students that if they need to contact home, they must come to the pastoral office. They should not use a personal device. Additionally, the Academy's uniform policy is clear. It is expected that students attend school in full school uniform every day including black school shoes and tie. Acrylic nails and eyelash extensions are prohibited so please consider this if allowing your child to have these treatments done. If there are any issues with uniform, please make us aware as soon as possible so we can work with you to find a solution.

As always, the Year 8 team at GAA continue to look forward to working with you and your child this year and to supporting your child to learn, grow and achieve on their academic journey. Please contact the Year 8 team on silverpastoral@gaa.org.uk if you have any concerns or questions.

Yours faithfully,

Miss N. Jones

Head of Year 8