

July 2025

Dear Families,

I hope that this letter finds you and your families well.

2024 – 2025 has been a really pleasing year for us here at GAA. Through your support and encouragement our students have achieved strong outcomes in several areas and we are anticipating a strong set of GCSE outcomes in the summer. Our improvements and the journey we are on as a school was noted by our successful Ofsted visit in March 2025. As we head into the summer break, I continue to have appeals for families wanting to secure a place in our school. We had 396 applications for our Year 7 September 2025 entry for the 270 places and at the time of writing we are receiving appeals for every year group.

As you will be aware, our new Principal, Matthew Little, is starting with us in September 2025 and I know he is going to write to you later this week to introduce himself. I am sure that as always, our GAA community will make him feel very welcome. I am also pleased to say that at a time where recruitment for staff is hugely competitive, we are fully staffed for September with great teachers and support staff.

End of Term Arrangements

School closes for the summer break on **Friday the 18th July 2025 at 12.10pm**. Please note that the school bus services will be in operation at that time and therefore students will be able to make their way home in the usual way. Students will have an extended break to allow them to have lunch at school.

Start of Term Arrangements

When we return in September, we will have our traditional staggered return as per the table below. The staggered return allows us to support transition back into learning and embed our high culture of engagement and expectations.

Date	Description
Monday 1 st September 2025	Staff INSET day; school closed for students
Tuesday 2 nd September 2025	Staff INSET day; school closed for students
Wednesday 3 rd September 2025	Year 7 in school only. Prompt 8.30am start
Thursday 4 th September 2025	Year 7 & 11 in school only. Prompt 8.30am start
Friday 5 th September 2025	All year groups in school. Prompt 8.30am start.

I would like to remind parents that the school gates will close at 8.30am promptly and any students who arrive after 8.30am will be marked late and receive a same-day correction. All students must be through our main gates by 8.30am to be ready for a silent respectful entrance to Morning Mood at 8.32am.

School Uniform

The wearing of our uniform is an important element of school life. It is an expectation that all students wear the correct uniform at all times. All students must wear:

- Academy blazer (GAA branded)
- Academy tie (GAA branded; please note year groups keep their respective coloured tie as they progress through the years)
- White shirt (tucked in)
- Skirt with black tights (minimum 60 denier)

- Trousers
- Black shoes

Footwear must be a sensible academy shoe and not be able to be mistaken for a trainer. Shoes must be plain black only with no white or contrast piping. Please be aware some shops do sell black trainer type shoes within their school shoe section and this style of shoe is not permitted. As a rule of thumb, any footwear by Nike, Adidas and Converse are trainers and not permitted to be worn in school.

When purchasing a school skirt, please ensure it is not made from lycra and that the length of the skirt is just above the knee. If wearing a skirt, it must be accompanied by black tights. Any student not wearing the correct uniform will either be required to go home and change or will be provided with appropriate uniform from us in school.

The academy jumper is optional for all students. Students are not permitted to wear any outside attire inside the academy building, this includes hoodies and non-academy jumpers. Ties can be purchased from our uniform suppliers, however we do have a limited number of ties in stock that can be purchased directly from school. Students keep the same colour tie throughout their time with us in school, therefore the tie colours for 2025-26 are as follows:

Year Group	Tie Colour
Year 7	Green
Year 8	Purple
Year 9	Red
Year 10	Silver
Year 11	Yellow

Due to health and safety rules, only limited jewellery is allowed to be worn by students. Students can wear one pair of stud earrings in the ear lobe only, a watch and medicare bracelets only. A plain or clear nose stud is permitted, however no body piercings of any other kind are permitted. As we approach the holidays, some students may want to have false nails. This is up to families during holiday time however in school acrylic nails are not permitted for safety reasons. If students arrive in school with such acrylics, they will be placed in our internal isolation space until they are removed. Please bear this in mind in terms of timing for these to be removed before returning to school in September.

The uniform rules detailed above read rather instructional and may seem overbearing. However, uniform is a vital part of our school identity and significantly reduces incidents of bullying, inappropriate behaviours and unkind comments. By having a consistent approach to uniform, it ensures that all our students are equal in their appearance within our school community, and it eradicates the inappropriate social pressures that often come with teenage years.

Behaviour Updates

To increase standards and avoid lost learning time we will be introducing two minor tweaks to the behaviour policy. It is an expectation that all students come to school fully equipped and ready to learn. Each morning during form time an equipment check is carried out and any student who does not have the correct equipment gets it replaced for the day without question. However, a number of students are then still not having a pen in lessons. This is wasting a lot of learning time and is also costing the school a large amount of money that could be being used much more productively. From September, any student who does not have a pen to use in lessons will be issued with a same day 20-minute correction to be served after school.

We have had a similar issue with school ties. As you know ties are expensive to buy and some students are viewing ties as being disposable. The tie is a compulsory part of our school uniform and must be worn at all

times. If a student arrives at school without a tie, they will have to swap an item for a school tie to wear that day and they will also be issued with a same day 20-minute correction to be served after school.

Please remember that you can track your child's positive and negative logs via the ClassCharts App. This is free to download and if you are in need any support with this please email your child's year team.

I genuinely hope that you all have a lovely, peaceful and restful summer break, however I recognise that the extended break can cause challenges for some families experience personal traumas. Please be reminded of our support pages on our website and be aware of the following contact details, all of which are there to support families in times of personal crisis:

- Tameside Children's Social Care: 0161 342 410
- Oldham Children's Services: 0161 770 7777
- TOGMIND (Katherine St, A-U-L): 0161 330 9223
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Please may I encourage you to support your children to continue to read, discuss learning and help prepare them for their return. However, I also hope that you will find time as a family to fully switch off, recharge and relax. It has been a genuine privilege to be the Principal of your school this last term and witness the sheer brilliance and inspiration of our young people. Wishing you all a happy, peaceful and family filled summer break.

Yours faithfully

Deana Owen

Acting Principal