

12 December 2025

End of Term Letter

Dear Families

It gives me great pleasure to write to you as the Autumn term draws to a close. Firstly, I want to thank parents, staff, and students for your support in my first term as Principal. I wrote to you all at the end of my first half term in October and described the school's activities and successes in relation to our open evening, year 11 sunset sessions, rewards trips, and our induction for year 7 students.

In this letter I would like to reinforce messages around higher expectations of our students and raising standards in relation to our academic results. I have stated previously that we have increased our targets for student achievement. We want them to aspire to the highest grade that their potential suggests they can achieve. Please ask your child what their target is in each subject. Ask them what they are currently working at and discuss with them how they can bridge the gap between their current grades and their targets. We aspire for our students to progress to top universities and secure well-paid, meaningful employment. Alternatively, we aim to support them in accessing high-quality apprenticeships that offer strong career prospects. We will be working relentlessly to improve standards of behaviour and particularly attendance to support this. The greatest factor on student outcomes is the culture of a school. This means conduct, behaviour and attendance and we will make no apologies for setting our standards sky high.

It pays off. We have calculated that already our year 11 students have attended more than 3000 hours of extra revision through our sunset provision. This is a fully taught intervention that staff are delivering. There is no cost. This is already a higher figure than students attended in the whole of the last academic year. The impact of this is that our Year 11 students have achieved higher grades in their October Mock exams than the year 11 students did last year at the same point, IN EVERY SUBJECT. Well done year 11. If your child is not attending sunset, please ensure that they do as this is the best chance for them to achieve the best results. We are ensuring that they receive extra English and maths tuition through Tutor time, and we will be starting an intensive programme of small group tuition with a private tutoring company after Christmas.

We are trying to update Parents regularly about our forthcoming merger with Dixons multi academy Trust. To date, in addition to written communication, we have held a parents evening and ran a consultation session with staff, students and parents to explore the different branding ideas that will help shape the identity of the new Academy. We are hopeful that we will be able to share very soon the new school logo that was chosen via a whole school vote. On 12th December we will begin the consultation on what our new uniform will look like. Again, we will be involving all groups of stakeholders. Please do not be concerned about cost or other factors. We are very mindful of working to a sensible timeline and ensuring that parents do not incur financial costs for the merger. Following this initial consultation, we will update parents about the next steps.

Finally, can I say a big thank you to parents, students and staff for supporting the school values in all endeavours. Whether that be trips to the Opal coast in France or closer to home with Geography field visits or History visits to the Imperial War Museum North; in sporting fixtures and dance (including trips to the Lowry Theatre) and with our provision for student's personal development including events like the Careers Fair. Finally, I would like to thank stakeholders for providing and partaking in enrichment opportunities that enhance the curriculum such

as our Year 11 Christmas Carol performance and events that celebrate the talents of the young people of GAA such as the Winter Showcase.

End of Term Arrangements: School closes for the Christmas break on Friday 19th December 2025 at 12.10pm. Students can wear a Christmas Jumper if they choose to for a donation of 50p that will be donated to charity. Our form reps have been working hard on organising this. Students will have an extended break where they will be able to access hot food and any student on FSM will have their entitlement during the extended break.

Start of Term Arrangements: When we return in January, we will have our traditional staggered return. The staggered return allows us to support transition back into learning and embed our high culture of engagement and expectations.

- Monday 5th January 2026; Years 11 and 10 only in school. Normal start time.
- Tuesday 6th January 2026; Years 11, 10 and 8 only in school. Normal start time.
- Wednesday 7th January 2026; all students in school. Normal start time.

General reminders for the start of the new term: All students must wear the academy blazer and tie; their shirt tucked into their skirt or trousers and be in black shoes. Footwear must look like a sensible Academy shoe and not be able to be mistaken for 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, any footwear by Nike, Adidas and Converse are trainers and are not permitted to be worn in school.

When you are purchasing a school skirt, please ensure it is not made from Lycra and that the length of the skirt is at least at mid-thigh level. Any student wearing an incorrect skirt, either due to material or length, will be provided with an appropriate school skirt to wear. If a student is wearing a skirt it must be worn with black tights. 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, but we do have a limited number of ties in stock that can be purchased directly from school for £5.50. Each year group has a distinct colour stripe on their tie, and this moves through the years with them e.g. if your child is currently in year 7, they have a tie with a green stripe and they will continue with this colour stripe until they leave in year 11. If you are experiencing any issues with acquiring uniform, please do contact the relevant year team who will be happy to support. Due to health and safety 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 – no body piercings of any other kind are permitted. All jewellery must be removed for PE lessons, it is not recommended that students have new ear piercings over the holidays as they will be asked to remove them for PE.

As we approach the school holidays some students may want to have false nails. This is up to families during holiday time but in school acrylic nails are not permitted for safety reasons. If a student is wearing acrylic nails, they will be placed in isolation until they are removed. Please bear this in mind in terms of time for this to be removed before the return to school in January.

May I take the opportunity to wish students and their families a restful and well-earned break over the Christmas period.

Yours faithfully



Matthew Little
Principal