

December 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

December 2022 Newsletter

As we reach the end of the first term of this academic year, I want to celebrate our students' achievements and congratulate them on a very successful start to the school year.

Since their return in September, our students have taken part in and contributed to the success of many events both within and outside of the academy. These include:

- World Mental Health Day and Anti-bullying Week activities
- Netball, cross-country, football and athletics competitions
- Year 11 Parents and Carers - Revision Evenings
- GCSE Spanish - Barcelona Trip
- Top of the Bench Science Competition
- Remembrance Day Assembly
- Careers Fair
- Duke of Edinburgh Award - Presentation Evening
- Carols at Marske Christmas Fair
- Student Voice Election and Conference

We have welcomed a diverse range of visitors to the academy with our students participating in events delivered by the RNLI, Richard McCann, Medical Mavericks, Eva and Cleveland Police amongst others.

A busy events calendar is planned for the Spring and Summer terms, including trips to Iceland and France for our geography and French students, and we will share regular updates on our social media channels.

Reading for Pleasure

We want to make reading something that all students enjoy and we have been working on some exciting projects to help students develop a love of books and reading.

- The Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 students **Dropped Everything And Read (DEAR)** last week, using the books they have been reading as a class during tutor time.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 06995649.

Registered office address: Potovens Lane, Outwood, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2PF.

VAT number: 158 2720 04. Outwood Grange Academies Trust is an exempt charity.

A list of Directors' names is open to inspection at our registered office.

- Our staff have produced lists of their favourite fiction and non-fiction books for their subject area and the books can be borrowed from the LRC in the new year.
- Students will be getting their own reading logs after the holidays and there will be prizes and rewards to recognise their achievements.

Resilience and Wellbeing

Building resilience in our students is a key focus as we move through the post-pandemic period. Not only will students be better equipped to learn but they will have developed an essential skill set that will support them in their ongoing education and future employment. This resilience is built through the work students undertake in their tutor groups and Life lessons and by their involvement with external visitors and events.

Within school our Mental Health and Wellbeing programme is led by Mrs Hudson, and is supported by our ambassadors - Mr Beacham, Ms Pressley and Ms Firth. Students can access the Trust's Mental Wellbeing website 24 hours a day (<https://mentalwellbeing.outwood.com/home>) and speak to their Learning Managers for information on support services.

Changes to the Uniform Policy

The Trust have just confirmed that they will be making changes to the uniform policy and we will be writing to you again with additional information in the coming days. If possible, please do not order any additional clothing until the changes have been confirmed. The changes are not anticipated to increase the costs of the uniform and will not require you to purchase new or additional branded items but should provide families with more cost-effective options.

Support for Families

Many families are facing financially challenging times and we would like to remind parents and carers about the Hardship Policy. This fund is a discretionary source of financial help available to registered full-time Academy students who have difficulties in paying for:

- Curriculum trips, visits and year group residential (up to 100% of the cost)
- Uniform, shoes or sports kit
- Other materials or equipment required for their academic studies
- Expenses to attend seminars, interviews or work experience placements
- Emergency travel expenses



Staffing Changes

We have been very pleased to welcome new staff this term:

- Max Engel - Teacher of Maths
- Andrew Evetts - Cover Supervisor
- Danielle Lenaghan - Reprographics and Admin Assistant
- Annie Lince - Inclusion Administrator
- Rachel McQuillan - Communication Support Worker
- Shannon Passmore - Attendance Officer
- Josh Story - IT Apprentice

Sadly we are saying goodbye to some of our team and we wish them well as they start new roles within and outside of the Trust:

- Benita Shaw - SENDCO
- Andy Burton - Y10 Learning Manager
- Louise Clewlow - Teacher of Maths
- Lisa Fleming - Attendance Officer

Preparing for the New Term

I would like to ask you to take a few minutes over the holidays to look at the information on the next few pages with your child so that they can refamiliarise themselves with our expectations and return to school in the new year, ready to learn.

And finally.....

We know that the holiday period is a time of celebration for many but for some people it can be a challenging time of the year. If you or your child need support during the holidays your child's planner contains the contact details for organisations that provide year-round support and assistance (page 10).

I would like to wish you and your family all the very best for a safe, and enjoyable winter break and look forward to seeing the students back in the academy at 8.20 am on Tuesday 3 January.

Yours faithfully



Seana Rice - Principal



Behaviour and Expectations

We are incredibly proud of the academy's students and know that many of the children at Bydales display positive attitudes and behaviours, consistently meeting the high standards we expect.

Uniform

Our standards and expectations remain high and students are expected to be in full academy uniform throughout the year. An update to the uniform requirements will be provided in a letter from the Trust in the next week and we would ask you to not purchase any additional uniform until this is received as the changes are likely to increase the range of options available to you.

There will be no changes to our basic requirements however:

- Students must wear plain black shoes that can be polished - trainers, open toes shoes and canvas shoes are not acceptable.
- Socks/tights must be plain black with no visible holes.
- No jewellery is allowed - this includes earrings or other piercings, bracelets, rings and necklaces. A wrist watch can be worn (not a smart watch) and a Medic Alert necklace or bracelet if required.
- Hair must be a natural colour and bands/bobbles must be plain black or purple, and must be kept in a pocket or school bag when not in use.
- Nail polish and any type of false nails are not allowed.
- No hoodies can be worn on the academy site and any coat worn on the journey to and from school must be large enough to go over the blazer.
- Students can wear a plain black or school v-neck jumper with full length sleeves. Any non-Outwood jumpers must be unbranded.
- All students must have a bag that can fit in a planner and an A4 workbook.

If a student forgets or loses part of their uniform, spare items can be borrowed for one day from Reception without a sanction being applied.

We are incredibly grateful for the donations of blazers, ties and items of PE Kit that we have received this term as these are helping to support other students.



Attendance

We know that a dip in attendance figures at this time of year is not unusual for a school, as seasonal illnesses take their toll. The absence levels we have seen since half-term however have been unusually high and we are concerned about the amount of learning that is being missed compared to previous years.

Your child's planner contains an attendance log (page 30) where students record their weekly attendance levels and chart their progress across the term and we hope that you will find this information useful also.

We appreciate the support you give us by encouraging your child to attend school when they don't necessarily want to and by ensuring that they return promptly when they have been absent.

Students Missing from Lessons

When students are in school they are expected to be in their timetabled lessons unless they have permission to be absent. Each student has a page in their planner (page 174) that their teacher signs before they leave the class. Students who do not have this pass are considered to be missing from the lesson or internally truanting.

Where students are regularly missing lessons or portions of lessons without a valid reason, the academy will ask parents/carers to attend a formal meeting to discuss the concerns around internal truancy and agree a plan to improve attendance at lessons.

Community Relations

It is essential that the academy maintains a positive relationship with the community and we expect our young people to behave appropriately on their way to and from the academy. The majority of our students meet these expectations and we receive praise on the way they conduct themselves and for their actions in the community.

This term we have received a number of complaints from the community, the majority of which relate to the behaviour of students cycling to and from school.

These include concerns over extremely reckless cycling on the pavements and roads, the deliberate blocking of traffic and incidences of anti-social behaviour including objects being thrown at cars, drivers being videoed and verbal abuse towards drivers and pedestrians. This is absolutely unacceptable and we will apply sanctions to students who are identified as taking part in these activities.

