

Friday, 19th January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Happy New Year to all of our students and families. I hope you had a fantastic break over the holidays. This was intended to come out last Friday, but a week of flu and illness for me meant I sadly missed most of the previous week. To come back to questions like 'Sir, where have you been?!' was lovely, though. It was nice to be missed!

Whilst this is a rather short half term, and by the time you read this, we'll be 40% of the way through it, it's more important than ever that we maximise every opportunity for success every single day. Year 11 are working through their mocks as we speak, with GCSE exams on the horizon, and 2024 promises a whole load of exciting prospects for all of our students and staff.

Attendance

Mr McNally has written to you all in the last fortnight about the importance of attendance and how we can support you to maximise your child's potential.

There are occasional reasons for absence which are unavoidable, but our Academy target of 97% remains absolutely achievable for everyone. Whilst the mornings might be alternating between freezing cold and miserable and bright, frosty sunshine at the moment, students' attendance is crucial; it's so important that everyone is in, every single day.

Attendance since the Christmas break has been as follows:

Year 7	96.4%
Year 8	90.7%
Year 9	91.6%
Year 10	91.4%
Year 11	92.1%

We are still some way off our target, and taking positive steps to come in every day and not miss sessions of school, are the first step. 90% attendance might sound good, but it actually equates to half a year's learning being lost across five years at secondary school. If we can help at all to support you in getting your child to school, please get in touch with us.



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Behaviour

In a few weeks' time, you will be receiving weekly messages about your child's attendance, and also their behaviour. It is crucial that students are able to learn, and teachers are able to teach.

I'm tremendously proud of the vast majority of TCA students' behaviour – they contribute to a fantastic culture of learning and discovery by being nice and working hard in all they do. However, we do need additional parental support with a small number. Keep an eye on your emails and be part of the conversation – we rely on your support as well as affecting what we can in school.

Half term plans (and returning after the holidays)

Early notice that the Academy will close for the half term holiday on Friday 9th February at 3pm, and will reopen for half term four of the year at 8.30am on Monday, 19th February.

How students are learning at the moment

Since September, teachers and classroom-based staff have been really focussing on helping students to improve their long-term memory by using a strategy called the 'Golden Threads of Learning'. In lessons there has been a successful drive to share what we call 'Golden Knowledge' with students. We feel strongly that it is important for students to remember information and to build upon their knowledge over a long period of time. From what we have seen in lessons, students are clearly becoming more independent and are working hard to access the broad curriculum available to them. We will continue to develop this throughout the remainder of this academic year.

Community Iftar

Thornhill Community Academy are hosting their first ever Iftar on the evening of Thursday 14th March 2024. This is a perfect opportunity for parents and students to gain an insight into why our fellow Muslim students fast during the month of Ramadan. The Iftar event is open to all students and families (Muslim and non-Muslim) in every year group. Doors open at 5:15pm, the event will begin at 5:30pm, fast opens at 6:13pm, followed by a prayer (for those who wish to). The event will culminate with the opportunity for all attendees to join for a hot meal. A letter about this event will follow shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Burton
Headteacher