

Parents' Post

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Spring 1 2025

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Parents' Post. It has been a fun-packed half term, culminating with the fantastic Drama production of Treasure Island last week and the Year 9 Bletchley Park and Oxford University visit.

Thank you to all those parents and those from the wider community who turned up to celebrate the work of the Expressive Arts department, with a special congratulations to Mr Carroll for directing another theatrical masterpiece and the staff that have given up their time to support the production. I would also like to thank the parents that have supported their children over the last 6 months in preparation for the event. The quality of the performances was extremely high and it was lovely to see the students' long hours of practice paying off in this wonderful celebration.

As always, it has been a busy time especially for the school football, rugby and netball teams. The school played their first competitive basket ball match for a long time last week and although they lost by 1 point it is great to see our students getting involved competitively again.

We hope you will enjoy reading this edition and celebrating these successes and much more.

Best wishes,
Mrs F Bowler



Key Stage 3 Art Exhibition at Studio Kind

International Schools Update:

We are actively continuing to work with Amigos, our charity partner based in Barnstaple, surrounding our proposed trip to Kira Farm, Uganda in July 2026 and details will be shared with students shortly.

In other news, the link with Amigos is also attempting to develop further the good work started in 2024 when we built two classrooms in a local primary school. We are looking at helping to build two more so that young children in the local area can complete a full primary education - something which is a rarity in many districts in rural Uganda.

Additionally, we are also about to begin a partnership with Indirapuram Public School, Indirapuram in Uttar Pradesh, India on a STEM project via the British Council. This project, whilst very much in its infancy, is another accolade the school has in working internationally with schools from across the globe on international project with the British Council and will help in our attempts to be redesignated full International School Award holders when we reapply to the British Council later this year.

Memorable Ski Trip to Pila, Aosta Valley, Italy

We are delighted to share the highlights of our recent school ski trip, which took place from 28th December to 4th January in the picturesque Pila, Aosta Valley, Italy.

Wow, what a week! The snow was fabulous for the time of year and in quantious amounts, we had sun all week and fresh powder on the last day. This exciting adventure was a fantastic opportunity for our Year 7, 8, 9, and 10 students to experience the thrill of snowsports, create lasting memories, and bond with their peers.

Accommodation and Location

Our group stayed at the charming Etoile du Nord Hotel, which provided a comfortable and welcoming base for our week-long stay. Nestled in the beautiful Aosta Valley, Pila offered stunning alpine scenery and excellent skiing and snowboarding conditions, making it the perfect destination for our trip.

Activities and Experiences

We had 3 snowboarding groups and 4 ski groups this year, including 2 beginner snowboarders and 16 beginner skiers. By the third day all these guys were up in 'The Bowl' area of the slopes, halfway up the mountain navigating their way down!!! The progress of all students was clear to see, with some showing their skills in the Snowpark and others on the slopes. With 5 hours on the slopes, up at 6:30am every day and going to bed at around 10:45pm, it requires a serious amount of stamina and resilience - the students were amazing!

In the evening, our apres consisted of Pizza Night, town trip and the Braunton favourite 'Karaoke'!!! Please see photos and videos on Instagram.

Highlights of the Trip

- **Skiing and Snowboarding:** Students enjoyed the diverse range of slopes available in Pila, catering to all skill levels from beginners to advanced.
- **Professional Tuition:** Instructors provided expert guidance, helping students to improve their techniques and gain confidence.
- **Evening Activities:** A range of evening activities ensured that students were entertained and engaged throughout the trip.
- **Stunning Scenery:** The breathtaking views of the Aosta Valley added to the overall experience, making it a truly unforgettable trip.

Reflections

The character development was epic over the course of the trip and all students were a credit to themselves, their families and the school. Thank you guys!!

The combination of excellent instruction, beautiful surroundings, and a supportive community made this trip an invaluable experience for all involved. We look forward to many more successful trips in the future!



Treasure Island – Isaac Hall 2025

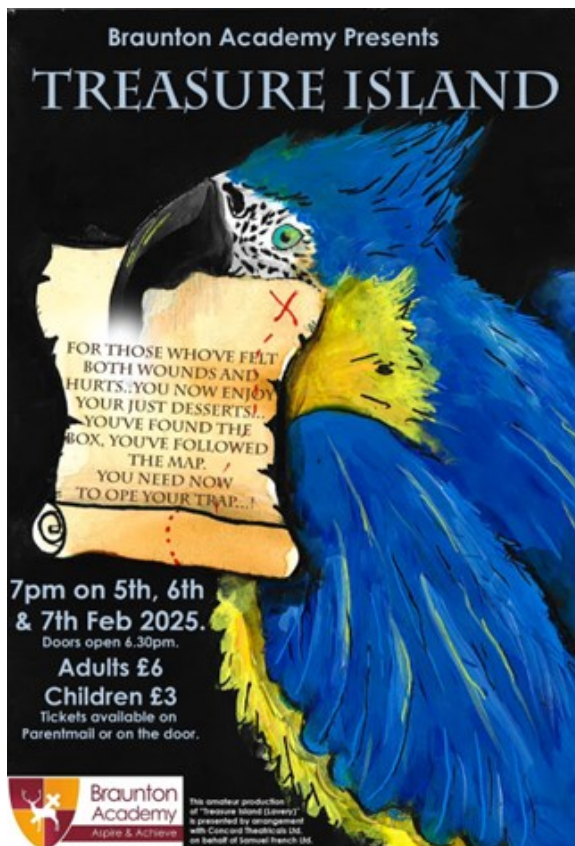
Last week over nearly 700 members of the Braunton Academy community came to watch the National Theatre's adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's '**Treasure Island**'. With a cast of more than 70 students from all age ranges in the school, audiences were treated to a fast-paced, magical and humorous production full of trap doors, hoisted sails and subterranean adventures.

Lead brilliantly by Year 9 student Ava as a magnetic Jim Hawkins, the story unfolded at a gallop taking us from the Admiral Benbow Inn, to Bristol and on to the treacherous high seas, encountering a huge array of comic and cutthroat characters. Of the many standout performances, Josh as Captain Silver struck the right balance between menace and mystery, as did Theo's character 'Grey', delighting audiences with his deadpan humour. The electric Jonah as Ben Gunn emerging from underneath the stage, covered in mud, delivered an electric performance to delight and enthrall in equal measure. Tyler and Rowan captured the danger of pirates to the front row with brawling pirates in a fight sequence to be glad you were not part of! Accompanied by Mr Thomas' atmospheric music, the chorus of Island Spirits set the tone for the effectively creating the menace of the island to open the second act.

The set for this production was very ambitious with trap doors and 'sails' that spanned the height of the Isaac Hall to give the production the scope and feeling of being 'on board ship'. Mr Magson and the site team spent hours enabling these effects, and Mr Carroll, the cast and crew were extremely grateful for the hours of work put into these set elements. We were also extremely grateful to Jon Rodney-Jones and Shannon Ridd for providing some magnificent props, a ship's wheel, a pirate leg among other key pieces.

The cast worked tirelessly for many rehearsals, weekends, and finally for three utterly spectacular performances. It takes a huge amount of work from all of those involved and many staff gave up their time to help sell tickets and provide refreshments.

Thank you for supporting us through the raffle, forming the audience, or taking part. It was a huge success, and we were blown away with generous donations which once again helps to support our growing fund for lighting and stage equipment. Many thanks - Expressive Arts Team.





Ocean Explorer Academy: Empowering Young Conservationists

A new group of intrepid students are taking part in Ocean Explorers over the next few weeks. The Ocean Explorer Academy (OEA) is a bespoke programme designed to inspire and educate students from North Devon local schools. Through a series of up to six immersive and fun sessions, students connect with nature and each other in empowering ways, forming a community of planet-saving superheroes. This programme aims to instil conservation-based mindsets, priorities, and career pathways in young learners.

This half term students have taken part in rock pooling, and a beach clean at Croyde Beach, discovering nature's wonders at Chapel Woods, and clearing the scrub at Woolacombe Burrows to help maintain the natural beauty and ecological balance of this stunning coastal area. As part of Plastic Free North Devon's day of action, the eco club did a litter pick on Thursday afternoon and removed around 30kg of rubbish from the roads and pathways of Braunton. As ever the eco club were amazing. Thank you to Beth W and Andy C from PFND and Clive M for their help.

Congratulations to all the students for their hard work and dedication. Your efforts are making a real difference, and we are incredibly proud of your commitment to protecting our planet. Stay tuned for more updates on the amazing work being done by the Ocean Explorer Academy. Let's continue to support and celebrate these young conservationists as they embark on their journey to becoming the environmental leaders of tomorrow!



Staffing Update - Leavers: Mrs Bodimeade

Mrs Bodimeade joined the Academy in February 2002 after relocating to North Devon, and started working in the canteen and tuck shop before becoming a Teaching Assistant in May 2004, supporting students with learning difficulties in lessons and then on to being Deputy SENCo responsible for overseeing students working in the inclusion centre. Mrs Bodimeade was the "Pinkery Mum" for about 10 years, which was a real privilege, making thousands of hot chocolates during this time. She has regularly supported many school activities such as trips, Drama productions, concerts, prom, has been a staff governor, organised fundraising for charity, and was also part of the staff choir. Her biggest achievement has been her positive impact on those students who find school challenging academically and emotionally, and will be sorely missed by staff, students, and their parents alike. We wish her all the very best for the future.



Staffing Update - Leavers: Mrs Hellmund

This half term we are saying a fond farewell to Mrs Hellmund, our HR Manager and my Personal Assistant. Mrs Hellmund has been at the Academy for four years and is moving back into corporate HR services. I would like to thank Mrs Hellmund for her personal support to me, her work supporting the operational management of the Academy, and most importantly the work she has done in promoting the wellbeing of our employees. She will be missed by us all.



Mrs Hellmund's role is being incorporated into a new Operations Manager role, the appointment has been made and Mrs Reed will be joining us after the Easter break.

Staffing Update - Welcome to Mrs Pearce, Teacher of Engineering

Many of you already know me from my time at Braunton Academy, where I have spent the past five years working as a part-time teacher and technician across the Expressive Arts and Design and Technology departments. I am thrilled to be returning to a full-time teaching position in a subject I am deeply passionate about and eager to develop further. My journey with Braunton Academy actually began over a decade ago, and in the years since, I have had the opportunity to teach overseas in both Germany and Cyprus. Before that, I taught in South Devon, where I led the delivery of Electronics GCSE and A-level and Motor Vehicle Maintenance BTec. I am excited to bring my experience and enthusiasm back into the classroom and look forward to working with students to inspire creativity and innovation.



Staffing Update - Welcome to Mrs Rudman, Teacher of Technology

Over my 25-year teaching career, I have gained experience teaching a range of subjects, including Art and Design, Technology, Food, and Textiles. I had the opportunity to move overseas and was fortunate to live in both Cyprus and Gibraltar. Upon returning to the UK, I worked as a supply teacher, and this year, I was given the exciting opportunity to work at Braunton Academy, where I am thrilled to bring my passion for teaching a range of creative subjects to this vibrant school community. I am committed to inspiring creativity and aim to develop every student's confidence to try new things. In my spare time, I enjoy making the most of the amazing natural environment in which we live. You will often find me walking the dogs on the beach or the burrows, or relaxing in the kitchen, cooking up dishes inspired by my travels.



Staffing Update -

Leavers:

Mr Bennett

We say goodbye to Teaching Assistant Mr Bennett who has supported many SEND students during his time at Braunton Academy.

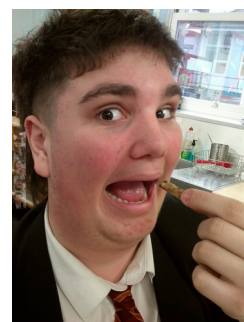


Mr Bennett is moving away to pastures new, and looks forward to working in the sports industry, supporting and training young people. He has already been coaching football in the local area for a number of years and has huge potential to reach his own personal goals in life.

We wish him all the best of luck!

Bushtucker Trials

This term Year 10 have been looking at alternative forms of protein; we even got to sample some crickets and some cricket cookies. We looked at which countries eat insects as part of their diet and what the movement looks like for incorporating insects into a western diet on a large scale.



Eco Club Cake Sale

Our rhino and tiger have arrived! This is the money we raised from the cake sale that means we can sponsor these two endangered species through the WWF.

Historical Fiction Competition

The History Department held an historical fiction-writing competition allowing students to showcase their creativity and flair as well as their attention to historical detail and accuracy. All the entries were incredibly impressive with the winning prizes eventually going to Coco for the Most Convincing Historical Setting for her account of the British Civil Wars in 1649 from the perspective of Princess Elizabeth, Charles I's daughter, and Clodagh and Hetty for Best Individual Story for their story of Mouse, a young cabin boy on the Santa Maria during Christopher Columbus' voyage in the Americas. Well done to all entrants; the standard of writing was fantastic!

VACANCY FOR EXAM INVIGILATORS

We are looking to appoint a team of enthusiastic and flexible individuals to act as Exam Invigilators. Although the role is mostly seasonal during the summer, exams run throughout the year, providing ongoing opportunities for temporary employment. Ideally candidates will need to be able to commit to several hours a week throughout the school year. However, please specify on the application form any dates that you are not available.

Full training will be provided in preparation for the next set of exams.

Pay scale: **J.E. Grade B3 - £12.45 per hour**

For further details, please search under the 'Work With Us' section of the Academy website www.braunton.academy and fill out an application form and send back to recruitment@braunton.academy

Please note, we do not accept CVs

Safeguarding: Braunton Academy is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its students, therefore an online check of publicly available information will be completed to assess shortlisted candidates' suitability to work with children. The successful applicant will also be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and full identity and qualification checks. Please refer to the Child Protection Policy on our Academy website <https://www.braunton.academy/policies>

Canteen Update

Over the past few months, we have worked with students, staff and parents to review our catering offer and make improvements. This has led to the Academy Trustees approving a trial with Educatering, a local school catering service that support schools in the South West. Approximately 90% of the food they provide is sourced from the South West with a considerable amount coming from the North Devon area. The aim is to improve the quality of our current offer and at the same time, support local businesses and reduce our carbon footprint. The consultation that has taken place has included tasting sessions for students and Year 7 parents at the recent Parents' Evening. The feedback from our families and the School Council has been very positive and we hope that you will support us during this trial and continue to provide formal feedback when we send out a survey in the Summer term. We are looking at going live with Educatering on Monday the 3rd of March 2025,

About Educatering

At Educatering, we are dedicated to transforming school dining by providing fresh, locally sourced, nutritious meals that inspire healthy eating habits. Our ethos is built on quality, innovation, and a commitment to creating enjoyable, inclusive mealtime experiences for all students. We believe that good food fuels both learning and well-being, which is why we focus on high-quality ingredients, ethical sourcing, and environmentally responsible practices. Through collaboration with schools and communities, we aim to make a lasting impact - ensuring every child has access to wholesome, balanced meals that support their growth and development.

We are looking at improving the service by providing a new hot servery location in the dining hall to assist to flow of students during their lunch period. The Student Council and staff have been involved in the new three-week menus structure and are looking forward to providing well balanced meals to our students.

Free drinks – please ensure your child has a water bottle with them every day.

We aim to support families to assist spending on meals by providing free squash during break and mealtimes affording an extra 75p for food. Due to this **after half term we will not be selling any packaged beverages**, with this in mind could you assist with this process by providing a suitable drinks container for your child. Students entitled to a free school meal will have these supplied for them.

Lastly, we are closing our current snack shack and relocating it within the dining area, to minimise the impact on litter and the eating around the school site that has recently attracted more sea birds to areas of the school. We hope you are as excited as we are about this new journey and look forward to hearing from you as part of the review process next term.

National Theatre Visit

As if the success of 'Treasure Island' last week weren't enough to satisfy our students' enthusiasm for theatre, on Wednesday Braunton Academy hosted the National Theatre in the Issac Hall for their production of 'The Leftbehinds'. As described by the National – 'The apocalypse has left nothing but dust, danger and loss. The LeftBehinds, a group of orphaned survivors led by Kit, must embark on a desperate mission to find the remaining pieces of an ancient android. A gnarly, adrenaline-fueled adventure, *The LeftBehinds* is an unforgettable journey of courage, friendship, and the fight for a future.'

Students from Year 8 and both of Mr Carroll's GCSE classes were blown away by the amazing dynamism of the fast-paced story telling by the cast. Set in the round, the audience were taken on an amazing journey with rouge androids, post-apocalyptic gun toting cowgirls and an adorable blue fox!



Visit to Plymouth University

We were delighted to offer our students the opportunity to visit Plymouth University for their Science and Engineering Showcase. The event, held on Thursday, 23rd January, was a resounding success.

Students who attended the same event two years ago had described it as brilliant, and this year's experience lived up to those high expectations. The showcase featured interactive displays and workshops across various STEM areas, from Robotics to Wildlife to Earthquake prediction. It was an inspirational day for our students, providing them with valuable insights into potential university courses and careers in STEM subjects. The day began with a tour of Plymouth University, followed by an engaging visit to the showcase.

We are proud of our students for their enthusiasm and participation, and we look forward to more such enriching opportunities in the future!



Key Stage 3 Art Exhibition at Studio Kind

We were thrilled to announce that the creative talents of our Key Stage 3 students were on display for two weeks at Studio Kind, located in the vibrant Barnstaple Pannier Market. This exhibition was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work and artistic achievements of our young artists. Thank you to everyone who came along to support our young artists.

Holocaust Testimonies

Year 9 History students were lucky enough to participate in a virtual reality project with the Holocaust Education Trust to help preserve the testimonies of the last remaining survivors of the Holocaust (Shoah). Eight Year 9 students carried out interactive VR interviews with a Holocaust survivor, which has been created so that students in the future will be able to listen to survivors' first-hand accounts and engage in interactive question-and-answer sessions, when those people are no longer around to share their experiences.

They were among the first students in the UK to carry out these VR interviews with Holocaust survivors and share their feedback to help with this incredible technology which will help to share real life accounts for years to come. Well done to Jack, Evie, Josh, Ariel, Jacob, Scarlett, Mazy, Will, and Ella for testing these resources and preparing the most obscure questions to help to perfect this technology.

UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge

56 students took part in the prestigious UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge for years 9, 10 and 11. This event is worldwide and many countries from South Korea through Europe and the Americas take part. We were successful with the award of 6 Golds, 13 Silvers and 17 Bronze Certificates. There was also notable success from Archie who not only walked away with the 'Best In School' title but has been invited to take part in the follow-on round in March placing him in the 0.001% in Maths. A fantastic achievement.

Other notable successes all receiving 'Best in Year' Titles were. Micah, Louis and Ashan, with Gold Certificates.

The Junior Maths Challenge for years 7 and 8 will take place in April with qualifying beginning after half term. Practice papers can be found on the UKMT website.

Police Visit to GCSE History

The History Department were lucky enough to harness the policing expertise of Chair of Trustees and former Police Chief Inspector Julie Fry MBE who came in to speak to the GCSE History cohort about the development of modern methods of policing, as part of their unit on Crime and Punishment. The students were incredibly well-engaged and keen to speak to an officer about modern methods of law enforcement, and it was a great way to give students an insight into the profession.

Library News

Each term we collate a list of 150 news books to exchange with the School Library Service to keep our stock fresh. These come from keeping an eye on new releases, copies that need replacing, as well as student requests and recommendations.

Here are some of the new titles arriving this term from our exchange:

The Houdini Inheritance by Emma Carroll
Champion of Fate by Kendare Blake
Fifteen Doctors 15 Stories - BBC Doctor Who
The Reappearance of Rachel Price by Holly Jackson
Hunt for the Golden Scarab by M G Leonard
100 Things to Know About Sport - Usborne

Most popular books taken out of the Library so far this term:

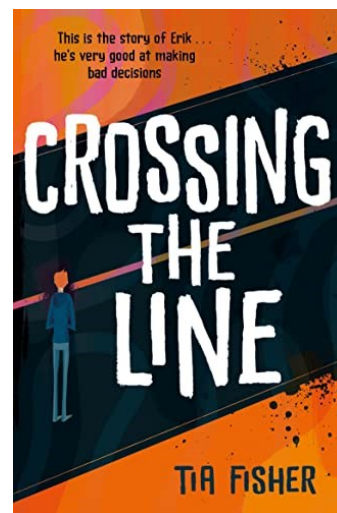
Twilight by Stephenie Meyer
Paper Avalanche by Lisa Williamson
Such Charming Liars by Karen M McManus
The Catastrophic Friendship Fails of Lottie Brooks by Katie Kirby
Diary of a Wimpy Kid - Hot Mess by Jeff Kinney
Frozen Charlotte by Alex Bell

Miss Rockey recommends: *Crossing the Line* by Tia Fisher

Erik's life has been falling apart ever since his dad died. Homework and being good at school stop feeling important when you're the new man of the house. When Erik's bad behaviour attracts the wrong crowd, he's sucked into a terrifying new world of drug dealing, trap houses and violence.

Making money feels good but Erik soon learns that a small favour can become a huge debt.

And when his sisters' lives are threatened, Erik will have to cross one more line to save them.



Eco Club Book Swap Shelf

Eco Club have been working hard this term to create shelves in the Library where students can trade in and trade out books, dropping off the ones they no longer read and picking up something new - without an environmental impact! It is especially handy for reusing revision guides, as we have many returned to us at the end of each academic year.

We've had lots of generous donations from students and parents, so please remind your children that they are more than welcome to pop into the Library to use this shelf, the books do not need to be scanned out unlike the school library books.

Miss Rockey, Librarian





brauntonacademype 🏆 Girls results

Our netballers won 9, drew 1 and lost 1 against North Devon Schools at Park on Tuesday.

Our u12 and u14 footballers won all of their matches in their first round of group games!

Well done girls! 🍷

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brauntonacademype Well done to our Cross Country runners who took part in the Devon Schools Cross Country event at the weekend! Special mention to Kush B who placed in the top 5 and Carys W who placed in the top 15! 🏃 🏃

3 w





brauntonacademy 🏆 Sporting round up:

Basketball - The academy played their first competitive fixture against Pilton on Tuesday where they narrowly lost by 1 point!

Girls Football - Our U12, 14s and 16s were in North Devon Semi final action on Wednesday where our U12s and u14s beat Chulmleigh and Biddeford and our U16s lost to Park

Rugby - All of our rugby teams were in competitive action against Pilton this week with the clean sweep taking place, ours 7s, 8s and 9s all won!

Netball - Our year 10 girls placed 3rd in the North Devon tournament on Tuesday coming up against some excellent opposition!

Excellent participation and competition this week! Well done to all who represented the academy! 🍷

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brauntonacademy 🏆 Sporting Results

This week our Rugby Teams played Park School, our girls football teams played in their second tournament of the season held at Pilton and our netballers travelled to Park.

Rugby results:

- 7s drew 5-5
- 8s won 35-15
- 9s lost 33-5
- 10s won 64-0

Girls football:

- U12 played 3 won 1 lost 2
- U16 won 1 and lost 1

Netball:

- 7As won 2 drew 1
- 7Bs won 2
- 8As won 2
- 8Bs won 1 lost 1



brauntonacademy 🏆 Year 9 footballers progress to next round of Devon Cup

Our Year 9s made a great start to their Devon cup journey with a 4-1 win against a very tough Torbridge side! Well done Year 9 🏆

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brauntonacademy 🏆 Year 7 footballers progress to next round of Devon Cup

Our Year 7s made the long journey to South Devon this afternoon to face South Dartmoor in the Devon Cup! The team came out 3-0 winners and now progress through! Well done Year 7 🏆

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brauntonacademy 🏆 Cross Country

Kush B in year 7 represented Devon in the south west cross country championship at the weekend. Kush placed 6th overall and his Devon team placed 2nd! A brilliant weekend for Kush!



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Why Attendance Matters

Academic Achievement: Students with high attendance rates generally achieve better grades and perform well in exams.

Social Development: Attending school regularly helps students build and maintain friendships, develop social skills, and participate in extracurricular activities.

Consistency and Routine: Establishing a routine of regular attendance helps students develop good habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. It teaches responsibility, punctuality, and the importance of commitment.

Support and Resources: Being in school ensures that students have access to the support and resources they need, including teachers, counselors, and learning materials. This support is crucial for their academic and emotional well-being.

Reporting Absences:

To report an absence due to illness or other unavoidable reasons, please notify us before 8.45 am on the day of the absence on the ParentMail app: Absence/Child's name/Add/Reason and duration of absence.

Missing school... missing out!

Don't let your child be the one to miss out!

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent number of missed:		
	Days	Weeks	Average lessons
95%	9	2	54
90%	19	4	114
85%	29	6	174
80%	38	8	228
75%	48	10	288
70%	57	11.5	342
65%	67	13.5	402

"We are only a few minutes late" - Does it matter?

Being late for school reduces learning time and does not prepare your child or young person for their future working lives.

- Arrival 5 minutes late every day = 3 days of learning missed each year
- Arrival 15 minutes late every day = 10 days or 2 weeks of learning each year.

Attendance Ladder



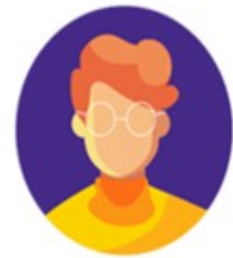
Every student. Every day.

What can I do to help?



As a parent or carer you can help by:

- ensuring your child understands the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality
- taking an interest in their education – asking about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems they may have at school and inform their Student Support Officer to pass on concerns quickly
- not allowing them take time off school for minor ailments – particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work
- arranging appointments after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school
- being open and willing to work with us to improve your child's attendance



As a student, you can improve your attendance by:

- speaking to a trusted adult about the reasons why you might not want to come to school
- trying hard every morning to get up and get to school, unless you are really unwell
- getting an early night, feeling tired on a morning can make getting to school harder
- make sure you get to school on time every day