



Blue Coat Church of England Academy

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Principal: Mr D Smith

5th February 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of another busy half term, I want to provide some updates and make you aware of some important developments.

We will be breaking up for half term at the normal time on Friday 14th February 2025. We return to school after half term on Monday 24th February 2025. Next half term is a longer half term than normal, which presents us with some challenges with regards to plans and preparations for the summer examinations. On Friday 28th March 2025 only Years 11 and 13 will be in school as we are running a Road to Success Day to support their final preparations for the summer examination season, which requires additional staffing to make the day run as smoothly as possible. This is a similar event to the ones run in previous years but we have been able to time it to fit around the Easter holiday but as Easter is later this year, we have had to select a date which meets the needs of the students preparing for final examinations.

We will break up for Easter on Friday 11th April 2025. I will confirm the details closer to the time to avoid any confusion with breaking up for half term.

Change of School Information Management System

We have been looking at our systems in school including communications. We have been limited on the changes we have been able to make due to contracts which were in place but I am pleased to confirm that we will be moving to a new system – Arbor at the end of March. We will share further details of how the system will operate during next half term. We will continue to use Satchelone alongside Arbor and expect that this will improve the efficiency of systems in school and support us to improve communications. There are likely to be a few teething problems as we transfer between the two systems but work is ongoing to make the change over as smooth as possible.

To support the effective introduction of the system, we need to make sure the information we hold is completely up to date and we also need to ensure that we have accurate and up to date email addresses for parents and carers. A data collection link has been emailed to parents and carers. If you have not completed it then please complete using the link below as soon as possible:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DataCollectionFormJan25>

If you have more than one child who attends the Academy you only need to complete this survey once.



Parent/Carer Survey

Thank you to all of the parents and carers who completed the survey just before Christmas. The findings have provided further support to some of the changes and developments which were already in hand while also providing some valuable insight to help shape future priorities.

We will consider how we follow-up to offer additional subject-specific support, which will also include information on understanding the report and student next steps, but I wanted to remind you that subject course outlines are on the website under the curriculum section as well as key stage specific support that should help you to support your child. <https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/subject-course-outlines/>

The extra-curricular timetable is also linked here and is updated termly which will ensure a range of opportunities are provided across an academic year: <https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/extra-curricular-activities/>

Physical Activity during Ramadan

With Ramadan fast approaching, we will again be using guidance developed by Dr Irfan Khawaja at Birmingham City University (BCU) which will help us, as a school, to create a more inclusive school environment for Muslim students and staff engaging in physical education (P.E.) during Ramadan. The guidance is to support the delivery of the P.E. curriculum and extra-curricular P.E., providing practical advice for supporting fasting Muslim students and staff during Islam's Holy Month so that they can continue to participate in physical activity.

Students are encouraged to engage in P.E., physical activity, and school sport throughout Ramadan. However, the new timings of meals before dawn and after sunset and adjustment to new sleeping and eating patterns may increase fatigue levels. Within school, students will be reassured that activities have been tailored to accommodate all, and that staff have considered fasting students in P.E., physical activity and school sport. Therefore, we have adapted activities inclusively. Staff will engage in conversation with students, showcasing knowledge and understanding of what Ramadan entails, and to provide a platform through which students can suggest and access support mechanisms they find useful.

Shari'ah (Islamic law) indicates there is no directive saying that Muslims cannot be physically active during Ramadan. There is no evidence to suggest that fasting is harmful to the health of those who are healthy with no pre-existing conditions, providing there are adequate levels of hydration during non-fasting hours (Muslim Council of Britain, 2023).

Additionally, scientific studies (Rahman, 2022) have shown that fasting provides several health benefits, and forms of intermittent fasting have been incorporated into several diet regimes (Muslim Council of Britain, 2023).

Eid

After a couple of years of trialling coinciding a training day with Eid, we have decided that our remaining training day this year would be better placed in the Summer Term when all staff can be involved in preparation for September. I will confirm the date just before Easter.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind parents/carers that only one day of absence for the celebration of Eid will be authorised. We plan to make the day after Eid a special celebration within the school community when everyone will be able to join together to mark the occasion.

School Partners Football League Game – Saturday 29th March 2025, 3p.m. kick off.

Following the success of previous School Partners matches, we have again been invited to participate in the scheme offering reduced priced tickets for Walsall F.C. against AFC Wimbledon. A separate letter from Walsall F.C. has been sent out via email – the deadline to return forms and make payments will be Friday 28th February 2025.

Uniform

I would appreciate your support to make sure that the very high standards of uniform we expect from students are maintained. If buying new shoes for your child over half term, please ensure they are plain black with no logos and definitely no training shoes. The school uniform policy is available on the school website:

<https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1653306725.pdf>

I would particularly like to draw attention to the expectations around hair, make-up and jewellery.

The school P.E. uniform can only be purchased from school, orders can be placed via School Gateway which you can register for and log into via the school website:

www.bluecoatacademy.org/parents-carers/online-payments

Parents/Carers' Evenings

The opportunity to meet with your child's teachers will be coming up for Years 7, 8 and 10. Please note the dates as we can only send invitations to book appointments for one evening at a time so this will appear relatively close to the evening itself.

- Thursday 6th February 2025 – Year 8
- Thursday 6th March 2025 – Year 10
- Thursday 20th March 2025 – Year 7

Yours faithfully

D. Smith
Principal