

Our Ref: PRC/JYD

18 December 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and a festive break is on the horizon for you all soon. The overwhelming feeling at Gosforth Academy this week is one of exhaustion; staff and students have worked tirelessly over a long dark winter term and need some much deserved rest.

I must begin by acknowledging the school league tables which were released by the DfE on the 5<sup>th</sup> December. Gosforth Academy's Progress 8 GCSE score was the best in the city and the percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate at Grade 4+ was the best across 156 North-East schools from Northumberland down to Darlington. These measures demonstrate the consistently high outcomes across a range of subjects and one which we should all be very proud of.

Naturally, at this time of year, there is lots to update you on. I have set it out by year group which will hopefully speed things up for you and then finished with some more general things relevant to all of you.

### Year 9

The majority of students have had a great first term at the Academy. We know that it is a big step up from the middle schools but I have been very impressed by the speed in which students have settled in. Next term will be exciting as we start the Key Stage 4 (GCSE) Options process and it's the first time students get to have a say on what subjects they might like to pursue. A date for your diaries is 21<sup>st</sup> January (6pm-8pm) where we will be launching this process.

Following this evening will be a parents evening where you can get some good advice from subject staff about likely chances of success at GCSE. The dates of the parents' evenings are on the website and depend on what form your child is in.

### Year 10

As usual the vast majority of students in Year 10 are a credit to the school. In a term and a half they will be entering their final year of the school and will be sitting GCSE mock exams this summer.

Form classes in Year 10 will be changing after Christmas so that half of the year group who haven't done Science will be doing this in registration. This uses registration time effectively and the Science Department value that extra time in the morning to cover what is a very content heavy specification. Punctuality to registration at 8:40am is therefore of vital importance.

**Preit Chahal** Principal

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## Year 11

### Mock exams

We'd firstly like to alert parents to our Achievement@Instagram social media page which we encourage parents to follow. As you know students will be sitting their mock exams from 13th January 2025 with final exams only 70 teaching days away. Over the last few weeks students have been attending revision sessions in preparation for mocks and class teachers have also been preparing them in lessons. All students should have a revision timetable and be sticking to it as just doing the bare minimum of what school provide will not suffice. It is vital that students do the very best they can in the mock exams as if exams were ever cancelled (and we know too well that can happen) we will be using these to arrive at a grade. Not only this, it is a great marker to see whether you are on track.

Finally, all students and parents should read this guide [Ofqual Student Guide to Exams and Assessments in 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

### Prom criteria

To encourage students to work hard, have good attendance and take full advantage of revision sessions below is the criteria for attending the end of year prom. Students **must**:

- Attend all review day sessions, if invited.
- Participate in three additional revision classes of their choice prior to mock exams in January 2025.
- Have a total of at least nine intervention stamps by Easter and fifteen by the time study leave begins. These can be made up of Review days and Revision classes for both Mocks and Summer Exams.
- Attend 7 additional study mornings after May half term, if invited.

Beyond the academic commitments, we also require:

- Good behaviour in Year 11
- Achieving the silver award under the PRAISE Code (1000 stamps)
- Attendance of 95% or above
- Good punctuality
- Good behaviour while on study leave and throughout the exam period.

### Sixth Form Open Evening-Thursday 9th January 2025

It's never too early to begin to think about progression beyond Year 11, so a date for your diary is our Sixth Form Open Evening on **Thursday 9th January 2025**. This will be followed by a progression appointment in February for every student in Year 11 with a member of our Sixth Form team, when specialist advice and support will be given regarding next steps. Our Sixth Form is always over-subscribed and has a superb reputation with over one hundred students joining from other schools and 40 courses on offer. It has the right balance between pastoral support systems which maximise achievement but a more relaxed setting than Main School making it a perfect bridge between Year 11 and Higher Education/employment.

### Tutor group changes

As you know one of our strategies to maximise achievement is utilising registration time in Year 11. This means our Year 11 tutors are either Maths or English teachers. After Christmas we will be swapping tutor groups i.e. those who were working on English with their tutor will now turn to Maths and vice-versa. Students will be told their new tutor and registration room before the end of term.

## Year 12 & 13

Our Sixth Form is a huge part of the school with 720 students and is larger than some schools in their entirety. We are very proud of the comprehensive nature of what we offer and the diversity of our student population. It is a joy to see them grow into young adults and I know many staff are attracted to work at GA because of the substantial Sixth Form teaching.

I am pleased to hear that our Year 13 students are receiving offers or interviews already, including some from very prestigious courses/ institutions. If you still have not submitted your UCAS then please do this now as time is tight and there are a number of checking phases required before it is finally sent. Year 13 students will be preparing for mock exams which happen before February half term. Following this there is a Y13 Parents Evening on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March where final subject specific advice can be given to parents and students ahead of terminal exams. Again, I would ask all parents and carers to be aware that the mock exams should be approached as if they are the real things as these results will be used if we have to move into a contingency situation. Finally, all students and parents should read this guidance [Ofqual Student Guide to Exams and Assessments in 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

The focus of Year 12 this term has really been to settle into their new courses. Now they really need to push on as next term ends with Year 12 mocks. If students do poorly in this they will be expected to resit in the summer and automatic progression to Year 13 is not guaranteed. This expectation is similar to end of year university exams so hard work, commitment and good independent study habits should ensure success.

Finally, the Sixth Form are not too old for festive fun! The Students Union have arranged a Christmas Jumper day today with all proceeds going to 'Save the Children'. Yesterday was our Netball Team vs Rugby Team netball match which was a competitive affair, but the netballers just clinched it!

### General messages to ALL parents

#### Contact from Neighbourhood Policing Team

I'm sorry this isn't really in the festive spirit but I would hate for any of our families to be victims of crime over the holidays. I've been asked to share the below details with you which come directly from our Neighbourhood Policing team:

- We have received a number of reports of burglary in the Gosforth area, including the Great Park and Kingston Park areas in recent weeks.
- We are carrying out a full investigation into the reports and have an increased our presence in the areas to carry out enquiries and reassure the public.
- Ten people have been arrested in relation to the investigation, with four people now charged with a range of offences, 1 is currently in Police Custody.
- Those four people have been charged with a total of 17 offences so far, three of those have been remanded in prison.
- Four people have been released on police bail pending further enquiries.
- Our advice is that residents ensure their vehicles and property are always left securely locked when leaving them and any valuables kept out of sight. Your local team will be in the area, please stop them for a chat or to pass on any information you might have.
- Our investigations continue, and we are hopeful that more charges will be brought. Whilst we cannot discuss individual cases with anyone other than the person involved, we are working hard to ensure your communities remain safe.
- If you see something suspicious in your area, send us a direct message on social media or use the live chat function or report forms which are on our website.

- In an emergency, or if a crime is taking place, always call 999.

Related to this we continue to work with our neighbourhood policing team on any aspects they would like Newcastle City schools to focus on and next term that will be around knife crime. Please do not

### **Attendance**

Gosforth Academy staff work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. Excellent attendance and punctuality prepare your child for the world of work and supports the development of friendships and relationships. Gosforth Academy wants your child to have the education and skills they need to live a happy and fulfilling life. Regular school attendance is essential for all our students to make good progress. Every student at Gosforth Academy, in line with the Government's expectations, is expected to maintain an attendance level of 97% and above. All stakeholders have the responsibility to ensure this is achieved. There is the expectation that all students will attend the academy when it is in session.

The table below shows how school attendance equates to days absent from school.

#### Attendance over One School Year

<i>98% attendance</i>	<i>less than 4 days absent from school</i>
<i>95% attendance</i>	<i>less than 10 days absent from school</i>
<i>90% attendance</i>	<i>4 weeks absent from school</i>
<i>85% attendance</i>	<i>5 ½ weeks absent from school</i>
<i>80% attendance</i>	<i>7 ½ weeks absent from school</i>

We hope that you appreciate how crucial good school attendance is to your child's progress and achievement. Good advice on whether to send your child in can be found here [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Communication with school**

When looking at review day comments and how we can strive to get better some of the comments are around communication. Please can I remind you that curriculum outlines are on our website and the planner is our main line of communication between home and school and that can be checked every night by parents. Additionally, parents are free to ring school whenever they wish to speak to pastoral or curriculum staff so if you are worried about anything or need clarification please don't wait until a review day or parents evening to raise any issues. The staff list can be found on our website but if you contact our switchboard they will put you in touch with the right people. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

### **Christmas events**

Contributing to the wider community is important to us and we instil this in our students. May I thank Mr Tate and Mrs Soulsby for organising a Christmas Party for residents at the local care homes. This is always a very well attended event and I have been inundated with emails thanking our staff and students. Mr Vickers led on the food bank appeal which is done via tutors and I know many parents have contributed to that which is greatly appreciated sending a massive 622kg to Newcastle Foodbank. Mrs Elliott in the Music Department took a group of carol singers to Gosforth Shopping Centre and the Grainger Market. Our famous Christmas assemblies will be enjoyed by all students before we break up and this year's theme is *giving people time* which seems appropriate in such a frantic world- the staff choir, musicians, singers

and readings are all part of a 30+ year tradition at Gosforth Academy and these assemblies are always a wonderful way to finish the year.

Students will break up for Christmas at **12:25pm on Thursday 19th December** and return on **Monday 6th January 2025 at 9:30am**. A reminder that the school coat must still be worn after Christmas and will become optional after February half term when we can hopefully look forward to some slightly warmer weather!

On behalf of everyone at Gosforth Academy I hope you all have a fabulous break and wishing you all the best for 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Preit Chahal', with a horizontal line underneath.

Preit Chahal  
Principal