

Our Ref: PRC/JYD

25 October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Those who work, or have family in education, will know an eight-week half-term is about the most gruelling it gets. Thankfully, even today, I am seeing students and staff smiling but I'm sure they will all be ready to have some rest and relaxation next week. Below are a few updates with how things have gone this half-term.

Behaviour

I have been delighted by the way the majority of students are conducting themselves around school and in lessons. From the Sixth Formers who are studying silently when they have free periods to Year 9 students who seem to have taken the transition in their stride. Every Monday Period 7 I see students selected by form tutors to come and see me for extra praise, it's a range of students from those who have no planner comments and lots of stamps to those who have made vast improvements from previous weeks. This always reminds me of how incredible our students are. Please could parents continue to check their child's planner and have meaningful weekly conversations with them about any stamps, comments, and homework they receive? This really makes a difference and thanks to the vast majority who do this routinely.

Attendance

Attendance continues to be a big focus for us and obviously parents play a huge part in making sure their child is in school. Sixth Form lesson by lesson attendance looks to be hovering around 95% for Year 12 and 92% for Year 13 which is superb based on comparisons with last year's figures and their age group. Main School attendance is tracking the national figure but over the last few weeks has gone above national at 93% which is great given we don't have Year 7 or 8 to bolster our figures. Clearly, we would like it to be even higher than that and ask for your support in getting your child in to school. Equally, if you need some support from the school all our pastoral staff have been trained in Emotionally Based School Avoidance and we also have an Attendance team who are happy to help, please just call the school and they will put you through to the right people.

Preit Chahal Principal

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Contingency Plans-Exams 2025

Year 11 and Year 13 students only have two terms left until they embark on external exams. Ofqual release guidance on collecting evidence on students' performance to ensure resilience in the qualification system. Guidance is provided for schools on how to gather and retain evidence of student performance for use in the unlikely event that exams are unable to go ahead. One part of the guidance is that:

School are encouraged to use performance in mock exams to arrive at a teacher assessed grade should it be required and my advice to all students in these year groups is to treat every assessment that you do as if it were to be used to arrive at your overall grade.

Additionally, so parents can plan holidays the contingency day is Wednesday 25th June so no Year 11 and Year 12 (vocational) and Year 13 should be booking any holidays until after this date. For Year 11 students who wish to stay on to our Sixth Form our Bridging course will also run from 4th July to 11th July.

Review Day

Review Day will be held on Tuesday 12th November for Year 9, 10 and 11.

Appointments have been emailed out via School Gateway, if you have not received an invitation to sign up for your School Gateway account, again please contact us at dataupdate@ga.newcastle.sch.uk

Once again, we look forward to welcoming a host of employers, educational organisations and training providers for our annual Careers Convention. This will provide an opportunity for all Main School students and parents to interact with exhibitors.

School Catering

The school catering system will be moving to a fully cashless system by Monday 11th November and will no longer take cash at the tills/servery. The reval machines will no longer take cash but can still be used to check balances. All payments to student accounts will have to be through the online system. More information regarding this separate item will go out later via School Gateway.

Coats

This is a reminder that after October half term lower school students must arrive at school wearing either a Gosforth Academy coat, fleece or both. Just having their coat with them is not adequate, it must be worn. Coats/fleeces can of course be supplemented with gloves, hat and scarf if the weather is particularly cold. Gosforth Academy coats and fleeces are the only coats that are permissible to wear to and from school throughout the academic year.

I am aware that some families may at times face difficulties getting uniform as children grow throughout the year, if at any point you are facing any difficulty in providing uniform for your child, please contact your child's pastoral team.

Achievements

It has been an immensely busy half term and below gives you a flavour of just some of the great things going on:

- Modern Foreign Languages Exchanges have taken place with German and Italian students visiting Gosforth Academy this term.
- Year 10 Social Studies trip to Bewerley Park, Harrogate and will be returning this evening.
- Over 50 early entry UCAS applications have been sent, including to Oxford, Cambridge and for Medicine/Dentistry and Veterinary Science courses.
- Sixth Form Geographers visited Iceland earlier this term.
- Coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support
- Drama trip to Sunderland Empire to see War Horse after half term.
- Our Sixth Form rugby team remain unbeaten so far this season.
- Year 10 Netball team won the Newcastle City Cup tournament.
- Over 100 students have signed up for Duke of Edinburgh.

Service of Remembrance: 4.30 pm, Thursday 7th November

Gosforth Academy will be holding a *Service of Remembrance*, 4.30 pm, Thursday 7th November, in the Main Hall. The event will be student led, with readings, music performances and a reflective period of Remembrance.

Staff, parents, volunteer cadets, members of our armed services and the wider community, will be invited to attend. The event should finish around 5.15 pm (with light refreshments provided in the hall beforehand). There are still some tickets left so if you would like to attend please collect a ticket from our main reception by Wednesday 6th November bearing in mind it is shut over half-term; tickets will be issued on a first come first served basis.

Culture Week

Finally, we have enjoyed celebrating culture week this week in Sixth Form with students sharing different foods, music and wearing traditional dress. We are very lucky to have such a diverse school community who work together in harmony; with everything going on in the world we need to celebrate that.

Students and staff deserve a restful half term so they return ready and refreshed for the run up to Christmas. In our Year 8 Open Evening this week I took the opportunity to tell prospective parents how lucky we are to have such supportive parents which is the icing on the cake when running a successful school, so many thanks to you too.

Yours sincerely,



Preit Chahal
Principal