

10 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Mid Term Letter**

I am writing to you at a very important time for our Academy and more importantly the students in it. Our Year 11 students are coming nearer to their GCSE examinations, our year 10 students are half way through their GCSE courses, and year 9 have just completed their guided pathway choices for the next two years.

During the last term we have had visits from the Royal Navy Chefs, sporting fixtures and excursions to Durham University and Middlesbrough FC as we begin to compensate for the restrictions COVID-19 placed on schools.

However, the Academy is also in a position where improvement is required. We have a wonderful new building being prepared to welcome the 145 students that will be joining our school community next year. Over the coming weeks students in Year 7 and 8 will have the opportunity to achieve their Gold ACE awards, demonstrating the behaviours and attitudes we expect of our students.

This community needs a school that is determined to raise standards and transform the lives of its students. I'm sure as a parent/carer this is what you would want from your child's school. We are working closely with Stockton LA and their school and community support programmes. We are focussing heavily on driving improvements in student literacy, as well as using tutoring to address gaps in learning that have arisen through a number of factors but most of all the long term impact of COVID-19, absence and lateness to the Academy. A reminder to you all that students should be across the 'purple line' by 8.20am and seated in their tutor room by 8.25am. Student morning lateness will continue to be treated the same way as absence.

Students missing more than one day every two weeks are identified as a Persistent Absentee. This student would miss a minimum total of 18 days (nearly 4 working weeks) of education across the year. It is vital that you support us in ensuring your child attends school. We are aware that absence due to illness cannot be avoided. However if there are other difficulties that are making attendance a challenge please do not hesitate to get in touch with Claire Armstrong via email: [c.armstrong@bishopsgarth.outwood.com](mailto:c.armstrong@bishopsgarth.outwood.com) so that the school can offer support.

As we return after the half term break I would like to thank you for how you have supported us last term with our expectations on uniform. The students have looked smart, and have taken pride in their appearance. Being prepared for the Academy day with correct uniform, basic equipment and their planner is vital to a positive start to the day. For the small number of students who fail to meet our uniform expectations or fail to bring their planner and equipment, sanctions will be put in place.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 06995649.

Registered office address: Potovens Lane, Outwood, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2PF.

VAT number: 158 2720 04. Outwood Grange Academies Trust is an exempt charity.

A list of Directors' names is open to inspection at our registered office.

We will always endeavour to provide uniform for students if they do not have the correct uniform, however persistent breaches of this will lead to direct communication with yourself through a member of the pastoral or inclusion team. The planner is an essential way of ensuring that students are organised. It helps them track their progress and attendance, provides a method to request to leave a lesson with permission, whilst it also provides large amounts of reference materials used in lessons e.g. the periodic table for science as well as being a location to input any detentions they are due to attend. It is an essential tool for which you can communicate with your child's teachers.

This half term we will be focussing on standards around uniform, jewellery and equipment. Therefore at the 'purple line' students will be checked for rings, earrings, piercings, necklaces and bracelets. Students wearing these items will be asked to submit them to be looked after until the end of the day. I would be most grateful if you could support us by ensuring your child leaves these items at home when attending school. Also, as always, we expect students to be in the correct uniform and have a bag, equipment and planner. Being prepared is the quickest way to success.

As a parent, one of the most important things I request of my own children's schools is that they keep them safe during the day. I expect this of myself and the staff here at Outwood Bishopsgarth in regards to caring for your child or children. However, at times some children are not acting safely or responsibly as we expect them to do. The safest place for them is always in a lesson with their teacher. Actions such as going into a toilet cubicle with another student cannot be accepted. Likewise, I have already written separately to some parents about punctuality, absence and/or truancy from lessons. These issues are of great concern, and I welcome your support in ensuring that your child does not undertake these types of behaviour. We will continue to inform you via SMS if your child has truanted a lesson during the day, as well as inform you via the same method if your child has been issued with an afterschool detention or time to be spent in the reflection room. It is your child's responsibility to attend these sanctions.

May I draw your attention to my previous communication about contacting the Academy. The following email addresses can be used to contact the Academy for key areas of concern. Please be mindful that we will endeavour to reply to you within 48 working hours. If you receive any email correspondence from ourselves it will always end @bishopsgarth.outwood.com.

Useful email addresses:

m.rasmussen@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Year 7 Learning Manager
p.hunter@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Year 8 Learning Manager
k.palethorpe@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Pastoral Lead for Lower School
j.hall@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Year 9 Learning Manager
s.smith@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Acting Year 10 Learning Manager
c.fisher@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Year 11 Learning Manager
m.dixon@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	SENDCo
c.armstrong@bishopsgarth.outwood.com	Education Welfare Officer

enquiries@bishopsgarth.outwood.com

General Enquiries

We will continue to ensure that you are informed of any sanctions your child is due to attend via SMS and your child will be provided information in their tutor time each day of sanctions they have been issued with and for what reason. Any student who lets their sanction escalate to a C5b, will be expected to attend the reflection room until 3.00pm, ensuring the sanction includes the initial detention that was missed,

Finally, may I take this opportunity to inform you that Mr Merifield will be returning to Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth as the Executive Principal. I am excited to be working with someone who knows the school and community well. I would like to extend my thanks to Miss Eddery and Mrs Laher for their support of both staff and students during last term and wish them well in their new ventures.

I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events in the Academy. I am particularly excited about the Inclusion Led 'Nibbles and Natter' events that are scheduled for this term to support families of our most vulnerable students.

As always please do not hesitate to get in touch with colleagues if you would like to discuss any concerns you may have, or to pass on positive feedback to the staff in the Academy.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR', with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Mr Jason Rhodes  
Head of School.