

# Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 18 September 2023 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

After our first full week of the new year, I can report great progress to you on the initiatives we have introduced this year.

First, we want students to be punctual to their lessons, so that they can gain the most benefit from their learning time. We have a target of no more than 4 minutes transition time from one lesson or activity to the next. At the same time, we wanted to improve the culture in our corridors, so that all students can move swiftly and safely. Following training for staff and students, it is good to be able to report almost all our students are meeting their 4-minute target every time. Those who take longer than 4 minutes, and who do not have a good reason for this, are asked to make up the time with their teacher. Some students need longer, and we adjust for this by allowing them to leave their previous lesson a few minutes earlier.

Secondly, we want students to pay attention more intently, to their teachers and to one another. We know that what we pay attention to is ultimately what we learn. We are using the STAR acronym, asking students to **S**it up, **T**rack the speaker, **A**ppreciate what has just been said, and **R**ephrase what they have heard. The first two points are important to focus attention on the relevant person; the last two points help students to use the information they have just heard. We know that, for information to be retained and, eventually, learned, we need to do something with it. Otherwise, it is forgotten. Subject leaders and senior leaders are visiting classrooms regularly to monitor how well this initiative is being adopted. Early signs are very encouraging.

Thirdly, we want to make sure that students have proper opportunities to think and apply the new knowledge and understanding they have acquired. We are therefore building in periods of focused, silent, independent work into most lessons. This initiative can only work when the teacher has made sure that students have understood the new material and know what they need to do in their independent working time. We are therefore checking more carefully for understanding before students work independently. In some lessons, such as Technology and Music, we realise that, although the students may be silent, the environment is not. This is not a problem: it is the focused independent work that is important. Visitors to classrooms this term have commented on the calm and focused atmosphere everywhere. This emphasis on independent work will benefit all our students.

Looking at the balance of positive and negative Class Charts points awarded so far, it is excellent to see that 98% of points given are positive. So far, 68,300 positive points have been awarded, against just 1,350 negative points. We have extended the use of Class Charts to the sixth form this year. We notice that 51% of parents and 56% of all students have so far accessed Class Charts this year. We encourage all parents and students to access Class Charts regularly, so they can keep up to date with positive points awarded and homework set. All homework is being set through Class Charts this year.

In order to bring in these improvements, we are continuing to invest heavily in staff development. It has been wonderful to see almost half of our teachers enrolled on our Transforming Teaching programme, run for us by Ambition Institute. These teachers' commitment to their own professional development is inspiring, as they seek to continue to improve the education we offer to your children.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

**Mr A T Fowler**  
**Principal**

### **Wet and Cold Weather**

The hot weather we saw at the start of the new year has disappeared now, replaced by much colder and wetter weather. Please make sure that you keep an eye on the weather forecast, and that your child wears a suitable waterproof coat in wet weather.

*Mr Fowler*

### **Remembrance Day**

Remembrance Day at Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy is an opportunity for staff and students to come together to remember all those who fought to protect and defend us during times of conflict. The highlight of the week is our Remembrance Service, which will take place on Friday 10 November.

Any student who wishes to be involved in the service is welcome and is invited to attend a meeting to express their interest at the beginning of lunchtime on Monday 18 September in MA20. I would particularly like to welcome any student who is involved in any of the uniformed services and clubs, such as the Cadets, Scouts, Guides, Boys Brigade, St John Ambulance etc.

With thanks to Birtley Heritage Group, we also have an opportunity to take a group of students out of school to find out more about the Birtley Belgians and Elisabethville; this will take place at the beginning of October. Any student interested in finding out more about Birtley's local history and the town's involvement in the war effort, and who would like to take part in this trip, should contact Mrs Kemp.

Should you have any questions, please contact me on [jkemp@lordlawson.academy](mailto:jkemp@lordlawson.academy) and I will be happy to help.

*Mrs J Kemp*

*Cover Supervisor and HI Liaison*

## **Performing Arts update:**

There are a number of events and important dates happening within the Performing Arts department this term. To ensure you do not miss any of these, I have listed key dates and events below:

### **GCSE Friday Creative Rehearsals /Intervention**

Year 11 Performing Arts GCSE creative rehearsals/intervention for Drama, Dance and Music students have now begun. The rehearsals will continue every Friday evening and run from 3.20pm – 4.20pm. This is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their work and collaborate with their exam performance groups to ensure performance work is of the highest standard.

### **Year 11 GCSE Dance**

Year 11 GCSE Dance students will participate in an online theory lesson with the James Cousins Dance Company on Thursday 5 October 2023, 9am – 1am. This is an exciting opportunity for students to collaborate with a professional GCSE dance company. We hope this experience will elevate students' understanding of the anthology work 'Within Her Eyes' in preparation for their external theory examination.

Year 11 GCSE Dance students are currently rehearsing their solo exam performances (Breathe and Flux) in preparation for their examination day on Wednesday 11 October 2023.

### **Academy Production 2023: Shrek the Musical, Junior**

Shrek the Musical, Junior rehearsals are now well underway in the Performing Arts Department. Over the summer holidays our main cast have perfected their lines, practiced their choreography, and developed their fairy-tale creature characterisation. Rehearsals this week have been extremely exciting as we near our performance dates.

We have welcomed over 20 new Year 7 students into the cast, who have impressed the Performing Arts team with their ability to pick up their musical numbers within two rehearsals. An amazing job Year 7, it is wonderful to have you in the cast!

The final opportunity for Year 7 students who wish to join the cast of Shrek is this coming Monday, 18 September, students must attend the rehearsal 3.20pm- 5.30pm. After this rehearsal, the cast will be finalised as we head towards more focused rehearsals.

Evening performances of the production will be Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October inclusive, starting at 1pm. Further information re' ticket sales and arrangements will follow in upcoming bulletins.

For further information regarding Shrek or any other Performing Arts queries, please contact Miss Brown via email at [sbrown@lordlawson.academy](mailto:sbrown@lordlawson.academy).

*Miss S Brown*

*Subject Leader – Performing Arts*

## Upcoming School Events – Updated

At the beginning of every term, we will publish a list of upcoming school events in this bulletin. Communication of some events, such as Parents' Evenings, will also be communicated separately via email, so please ensure you look out for these.

The events for this term are:

Thursday 28 September:	Prospective Year 7 Open Evening, 4.15 to 7.45pm – for pupils in year 6.
Thursday 5 October:	Year 7 Meet the Tutors evening, 3.30 to 5.00pm – for parents/carers of year 7 students.
Monday 9 October:	School Photographs – for students in years 7, 8 and 9.
Tuesday 10 October:	School Photographs – for students in years 10, 11 and 12.
Thursday 19 October:	Year 10 Parents' Evening, 3.45 to 6.45pm – Appointments will be online.
Monday 23 October:	Academy Production – Primary School Performances during the day.
Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October:	Academy Production – Shrek the Musical, Junior. Evening Performances. Ticket sales information to follow.
Saturday 28 October to Sunday 5 November:	Half Term – School closed for staff and students.
Monday 6 November:	School reopens for staff and students – students to be in school for 8.40am.
Monday 6 to Friday 17 November:	Autumn Assessments for years 11 and 13.
Thursday 16 November:	Year 12 parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.15pm – Appointments will be online.
Friday 24 November:	Occasional Day – School closed for staff and students. School will reopen for staff and students Monday 27 November.
Tuesday 28 November:	Careers Fair (all year groups) throughout the school day.
Tuesday 5 December:	Flu Vaccinations for years 7 to 11.
Thursday 7 December:	Sixth Form Open Evening, 5.00 to 7.00pm – for students considering their post-16 options and future academic pathways.
Thursday 14 December:	Year 7 – Pantomime at Theatre Royal Newcastle: Pinocchio.  Year 13 parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.15pm – Appointments will be online.
Friday 22 December:	Last day of school for staff and students – Christmas holidays begin Saturday 23 December. School reopens for students on <b>Monday 8 January 2024 (not Tuesday 9 as in last week's bulletin).</b>