

Parents' Post


www.braunton.academy

Spring 2 2025

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear families,

It is a delight to write to you all and welcome the Year 6 parents who will be receiving the newsletter in anticipation of their child joining us in September. Yet again it has been a busy half term, made more so by our visit from Ofsted. I have included the press release that will be in the local newspapers over the next couple of weeks in this edition. As the Ofsted report rightfully recognised the enrichment and extra-curricular offer at the Academy is extremely impressive, this is again documented in this edition of the Parents' Post. I would like to thank all the staff and community volunteers for their ongoing support to our students and for parents for highlighting the importance of participation in extra-curricular activities.

Next half term sees a lot of parent participation with meetings to discuss the possible change of policy toward smart phones, the parent engagement meeting to share the work taking place in school as part of the Leading Parent Partnership Award and the relaunch of the Academy Parent Teacher Association. We are still looking for volunteers to be involved in the PTA, if you are interested please fill in the questionnaire using this link <https://forms.office.com/e/my78cPa31X> (copy it into your browser).

Thank you to our Principal Students and Prefect Team

We have come to the time of year when I formally thank our Principal Students and their team for the amazing work they have completed in the past 12 months in their roles of Senior Student Leaders. We are always well-supported by our Year 11 students but the team this year have been very proactive in their ideas and actions to improve the school

environment and leave a legacy for other students. I would like to particularly thank Emily and Charlie for their leadership of the School Council who have been involved in some key decisions about the canteen developments in the past couple of months. The Senior Team have also participated in formal interviews for staff appointments and been proactive in representing the Academy at events such as Open Evening and Armistice Day. They are stepping down from their roles now to concentrate on the upcoming GCSE exams. Our Year 10 students are eagerly waiting in the wings to fill the Prefect duty roles, and interviews for the next Principal Student team are taking place on 2nd May ready for the Year 6 induction process. The successful candidates will write to all parents in the next edition.

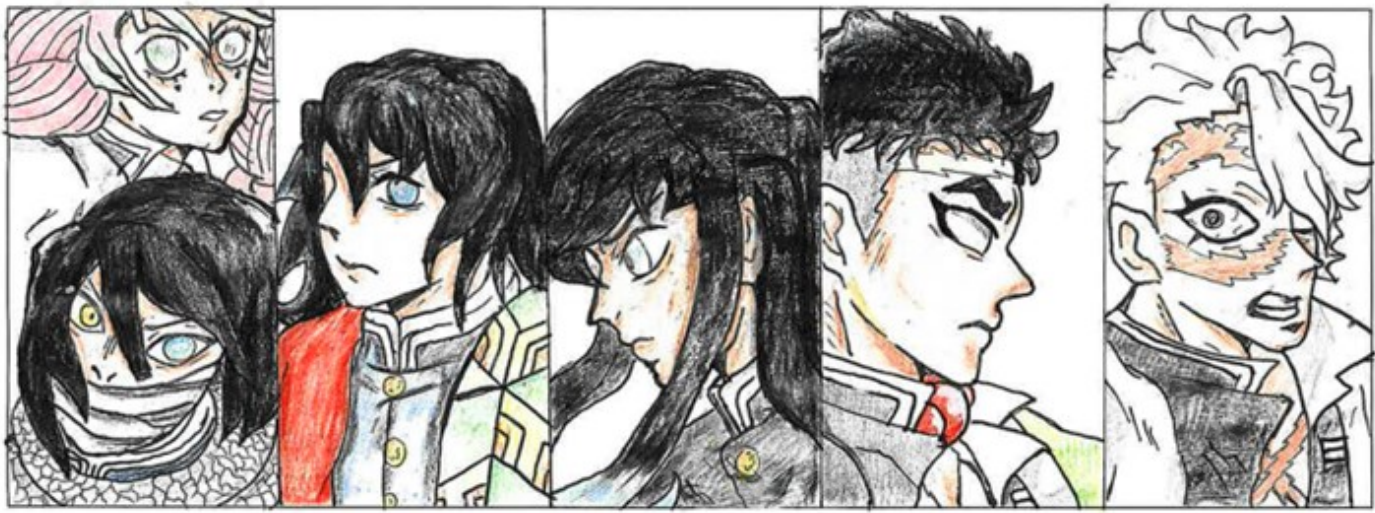


Principal students Charlie and Emily, Vice Principal Students Tom and Issi.

New Staff

We look forward to welcoming Mrs Reed to the Senior Team next term; she takes on the role of the Academy's Operations Manager and PA to the Principal. Mrs Reed will oversee the day-to-day operational management of the school site and support staff. We will also be welcoming Mrs Begley to the SEND department.

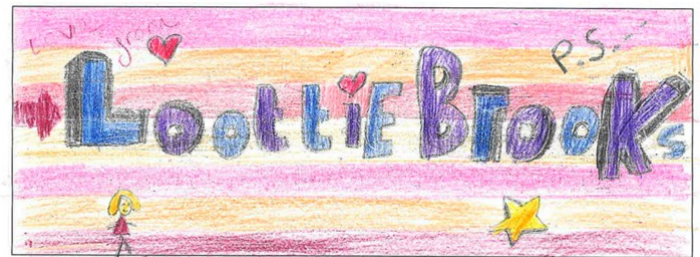
Mrs F Bowler, Principal



World Book Day Competition

This was hosted by the school library service, and this year asked students to design a mug based on their favourite book or favourite character. Lots of our students entered, showcasing their amazing creativity and celebrating books such as *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The Extremely Embarrassing Life of Lottie Brooks* and *Heartstopper*.

Against all other local schools, our very own Starr in Year 9 won the KS3 award with her *Demon Slayer* design (above)! Starr received a book voucher, the mug of her design, and £100 worth of books for the school library. Amazing effort!



World Book Day Treasure Hunt

In the run up to World Book Day (Thursday 6th March), Miss Rockey ran a Treasure Hunt across the school, where students had to find the answers to 15 book-related questions and hand in their completed sheets for a chance to win a Waterstones book voucher.

Emily in Year 8 was picked as the winner, also securing more house points for Woolacombe!



Miss Rocky recommends: **The Final Year** by Matt Goodfellow

Life can be tough in your last year of primary school. Tests to take, preparing for the change to high school. Nate is ready for it all, knowing his best friend PS is at his side - they've been inseparable since Nursery.

But when they are put in two different classes and PS finds a new friend in Turner, the school bully, Nate's world turns upside-down. As he struggles to make sense of this and forge new friendships, he's dealt another blow when his youngest brother, Dylan is rushed into hospital.

His new teacher, Mr Joshua, sees a spark inside of Nate that's lit by his love of reading and writing and shows him how to use this to process what's going on. But with so much working against him, and anger rising inside him, will this be enough? A powerful and lyrical story about finding your place in the world and the people that matter within it.



Staff Fancy Dress

As has now become tradition in recent years, the Staff of Braunton Academy once again took part in our own World Book Day fancy dress. Students really enjoyed seeing staff in their costumes, and it opened up lots of opportunities for bookish chat! Prizes were given for the best department (P.E - Where's Wally) as well as best staff member (Mrs McLoughlin - Professor McGonagall). From Oompa Loompas to Gandalf, I'm sure you will all agree that everybody looked fantastic and lots of effort was made.



SparxReader Tutor Winners

The winning tutor groups for their SparxReader efforts:

7AM

8ZB

9SF

Well done!

The prizes are given on the last day for the tutor groups who've gathered the most SRP over that period of time, so it's all to play for again during the next half term!

sparx
Reader
www.sparx.co.uk

Is Your Child a Young Carer?

At Braunton Academy we are dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of all our students.

We acknowledge that some individuals may need more support than others, especially in difficult times. Some of these students may be supporting family members or friends with their health and wellbeing. These students are known as young carers.

A young carer is a child or young person under 18 who provides support to another person who:

- Has a long-term health condition
- Has an additional need or disability
- Has a mental health condition
- Has a drug or alcohol dependency
- Requires extra help as they grow older.

This support may be caring directly for a sick/disabled adult or child, looking after younger siblings due to parents' needs, dealing with family admin, or other responsibilities.

We want to ensure that young carers at our school are identified and get the recognition and support they deserve, helping them to thrive. We have partnered with Devon Young Carers to make sure that these students can access all support that is available.

We are aware of some young carers in our school already, but we know there are likely to be many more whom we are not yet aware of.

We are encouraging parents and carers to let us know if their child is a young carer, and we also invite students themselves to come forward and talk to us about their caring role. We can then work together to explore ways in which we can support them. You can let us know by contacting our Young Carers Champions - Miss Redwood and Mrs Swain.

Starting from Tuesday 22nd April, we will be running a Young Carers club/drop-in session on Tuesday lunchtimes in week B. All young carers, whether registered with Devon Young Carers or not, are welcome to attend. Please contact Miss Redwood or Mrs Swain for more details.



Fundraising for Expressive Arts

£670 was raised for the Expressive Arts department by holding a quiz at The Rock Inn in Georgeham.

A massive thank you to Paul and Emma Truman for organising it, and to all the staff at The Rock for being our hosts, and to everyone that came and enjoyed the evening.



GCSE Food and Nutrition

The year 11 classes have completed an outstanding final exam for their NEA 2. The standard of work has been phenomenal, and all students worked with the highest standards of food hygiene, food safety and professionalism. Well done Year 11!



Talking About the Fire with Chris Thorpe

Year 10 and 11 GCSE Drama students spent the afternoon working with Chris Thorpe on approaches to theatre making and creating their own work. Laughter, learning and inspiration—that what it is all about! #GCSE Drama ☺



beafor
in Branton

enlightening our past, lives and future

China Plate and Staatstheater Mainz present

Broadway World *****
Time Out *****
The Stage *****

Chris Thorpe is one of the UK's most thoughtful theatre-makers, tackling subjects and issues that others shy away from.

Chris Thorpe

Talking About The Fire

Nuclear weapons could destroy us all, right now – so why aren't we talking about them? Created by seven-time Fringe First winner Chris Thorpe and Claire O'Reilly (Abbey Theatre) and developed with Tony Award-winning Rachel Chavkin.

Tuesday 1 April
Isaac Hall
Braunton Academy
EX33 2BP
7pm (doors 6.45pm)
Tickets: £10, Students £5
Running time: 90 mins no interval
Age suitability: 14
Contains strong language and themes of nuclear warfare

More info and book tickets: beafor.org

Principal Students' Farewell

As we approach our final few months at Braunton Academy, we write to you to reflect on our roles as Principal Students, and to thank all the Prefects for their support over the past year. As some of our final projects, we have thoroughly enjoyed creating the new menu and collaborating with the Student Council in our meetings to project student voice. Additionally, we have a very glamorous, fun-filled prom that we have been planning for a few weeks with the student Prom Committee, all the way from lighting and music, to balloons and casino games! Now, as we begin our GCSEs we have mentored the Year 10 applicants and spoken in their assembly to encourage applications! It has been a privilege to represent our school and the values we sustain; we both feel more confident in our communication skills, and we've grown as individuals. We wish the rest of Year 11 the best of luck in their exams! Emily and Charlie.

House Competition - Easter Egg Decorating

Congratulations to everyone who entered.



Saunton House

Winner, and 1st place overall



Croyde House

Winner, and 2nd place overall



Woolacombe House

Winner, and 3rd place overall



Putsborough House

Winner, and 4th place overall

Routes Into Languages Competition

Three of our students went to Pilton Community College for the annual Routes into Language Speaking competition. Cienna (Spanish), Lucy (Mandarin) and Arthur (French) prepared and performed speeches in their chosen foreign languages in front of a panel of six judges and a host of students and teachers from the whole of Devon.

Our students were a credit to the Academy, showing resilience, independence and great communication skills. The quality of performances this year surpassed previous years, making the judges' job a hard one! Lucy was awarded runner-up in her (very full) category, and Cienna elicited the most applause, while Arthur got one of the current winners' encouragement to come back again next year as she is looking forward to hear him again.



We not only enjoyed listening to a range of languages all day, but were also treated to multilingual and multicultural performances before lunch, with songs and dances that awed us. We're looking forward to taking more students next year and maybe putting on performances of our own too! Thank you to all the students who volunteered and had to be put on the waiting list, unfortunately we are limited to a couple spots per category, but hopefully you'll have your turn next year. And a big hearty 'well done' to Cienna, Lucy and Artie, you did us proud! Gracias/Merci/Danke/Xièxiè

International School Update

Our students have been working with our partner school Indirapuram Public School, in Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India on a STEM challenge. This is where, with the help of the British Council, we have set our partners a challenge! We have asked them to come up with ideas to design a waste catchment tool for our waterways here in North Devon. This is part of the guided partnership work we are doing with the British Council that will contribute towards our forthcoming application for the International School Award.

We have already spent time looking at posters from our partner school about their local area. We have a planned teams video call meeting scheduled, and we look forward to using this time to discuss similarities and differences between our schools, environments and local cultures.



British Council Partner School

The school's Eco Club has been paired by the British Council with a partner school - Indirapuram Public School, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, India - and we had our first zoom call with them this week.

We introduced one another to our schools, areas and lives before focussing on a STEM project challenge we have set each other.

More news to follow soon!



The LeftBehinds - National Theatre

As if the success of 'Treasure Island' last half term wasn't enough to satisfy our students' enthusiasm for theatre, Braunton Academy hosted the National Theatre in Isaac Hall for their production of 'The Leftbehinds'.

As described by the National –

'The apocalypse has left nothing but dust, danger and loss. The LeftBehinds, a group of orphaned survivors led by Kit, must embark on a desperate mission to find the remaining pieces of an ancient android.'

A gnarly, adrenaline-fueled adventure, The LeftBehinds is an unforgettable journey of courage, friendship, and the fight for a future.'

Students from Year 8, and both of Mr Carroll's GCSE classes, were blown away by the amazing dynamism of the fast-paced story telling by the cast. Set in the round, the audience were taken on an amazing journey with rouge androids, post-apocalyptic gun-toting cowgirls and an adorable blue fox!



Petroc are continuing to offer free courses for adult learners. FREE SHORT COURSES FOR ADULT LEARNERS!

Are you looking to learn new skills, or change your career path?

From engineering and health & social care to accountancy and hospitality, our free adult courses are packed with practical knowledge and real-world applications. Whether you're looking for professional development or personal enrichment, we've got you covered!

Discover a range of courses in subjects like barbering, music, design, and healthcare from the list here.

Business, Finance & Management

Construction and Electrical

Digital & IT

Early Years, Education & Teaching

Engineering & Motor Vehicle

Health & Social Care

Language & Communication
(including BSL)

Sport, Health and Fitness

STEM, Science and Environmental

Tiverton Campus

Former Students' Successes

Congratulations to Rosetta Westbrook, who has recently launched the Barnstaple Heritage Trail map, having started her own digital and graphic design business, Get The Zest Studio. She also produced the Literary Map of Exeter and Devon in 2023, and was interviewed as one of Exeter Living magazine's Rising Stars.



Sharon and Jon Wensley (right) are passing on the baton as Kieran Sinclair and Harriet Buttery become the new owners of the long-established Branton newsagents. Credit: Viral PR



Congratulations to Kieran Sinclair and Harriet Buttery who take over Wensley's Newsagents in Branton village, following Jon and Sharon's well-deserved retirement.

Please keep us updated with news about how our former students are doing - there are many out there whose stories we'd love to share!

Villiers String Quartet Visit

We were delighted to welcome the renowned Villiers Quartet, the Quartet-in-Residence at the Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building at Oxford University, to Branton Academy for a special concert. The string quartet, known for their virtuosity, dynamic performances and for releasing acclaimed recordings of works by a range of composers, performed a captivating selection of pieces for our Year 7 and GCSE Music students, as well as a group of local primary school students who attended. The performance was a wonderful opportunity for our students to experience live classical music and appreciate the skill and artistry involved, while members of the quartet also interacted with students through questioning and walk throughs of the compositions they performed.

After the concert, the Villiers Quartet held a short Q&A session with our GCSE Music students. This was an invaluable experience for the students, who had the chance to ask questions about the musicians' careers and the challenges and intricacies of performing in a string quartet. The musicians shared insights into their practice routines, their lives and experiences as working musicians, and their passion for music.

The event was a great success, and we are grateful to the Villiers Quartet for sharing their time and expertise with our students. We are also very thankful to Devon Music Education Hub, Dartington Trust, and DAISI, for making this event possible. We look forward to more opportunities to enrich our students' musical education through such inspiring experiences.



Bletchley Park and Oxford University

Forty Year 9 students took part in a trip to Oxford University and Bletchley Park in order to widen their horizons and stimulate their minds. We arrived at Oxford University, Exeter College and we were shown around the college with its splendid old buildings and history before taking part in a mathematics workshop at a very advanced level. We were treated to a lecture from Professor James Munro, a fantastic Maths Professor at the University, and the students were enthralled by his wit and love for maths. For those mathematicians among you we studied quadratic equations and vectors.

Following lunch the students took part in a debate. This proved very successful indeed with groups working together to argue for or against certain views. It was very vocal and a great exercise.

At the end of the afternoon, we walked to the Oxford University Natural History Museum where the students were free to wander and look at the huge number of fascinating exhibits in their collection.

Following a Crêpe breakfast we boarded the coach the journey to Bletchley Park, the home of the British Codebreakers in WW2. During our five hours there students took part in an hour's workshop on codebreaking and ciphers, and saw up close and in use, an original German Enigma machine. We explored the park, saw where Alan Turing worked along with his team and visited the shop before leaving.

This trip will be offered next year for selected year 9 students with invitations being sent in September 2025.



Devon Youth Council Election

All students had the opportunity to formally vote on ballot papers this term in the annual Devon Youth Council election.

Of nine key areas of concern, students overwhelmingly voted that 'Places To Go, Things To Do' was the area that they would like the local council and politicians to try to improve in our local area for our young people.

The Environment came second as the students' second priority.

Braunton Academy ballot results – thank you for voting.....

140 out of 547 votes cast were to say your main concern is regarding the need for more affordable activities and places for young people in our local area.

This will now be fed back to the Devon Youth Council.



Forest School Project

A number of our Year 7 students were involved in a forest school project run by Green Paths, and completed the course using the school's Vocational Outdoor Learning Environment (The VOLE). All of them achieved the Stage One of their Junior Forester Award. Well done to them all!



National Trust Cow Project

A group of Year 8 students have had the wonderful opportunity to be part of the National Trust Cow Project working in collaboration with Green Paths Environment Education. The theme for this year is No Mow May and the students are working with other young people in the community to paint one of the cows that will then be put on display in the local community.

We will update you when it is confirmed where this will be. The Academy will be supporting No Mow May by leaving some of our green areas around the site.



Careers Events

It has been a busy few weeks with careers events. On Thursday 13th March we welcomed Ellen Withington from Cambridge University to speak to the Year 9 students about applying to university. She talked specifically about Cambridge and the variety of courses on offer, but also more generally about how to access funding for university and what student life is like such as joining societies and the different types of accommodation.

On Friday 14th March we welcomed 10 businesses to a Careers Speed Dating Event. The Year 8 and 9 pupils had researched the companies beforehand and had chosen 4 to visit. They then had a 10 minute talk from the ones they visited, followed by a question and answer session to understand more about the companies, opportunities and career paths. A Year 8 student said, "I found it really interesting learning about the jobs that are available in businesses in North Devon". Mr Killner from the Engineering Trust commented on how polite and engaged our students were and how many great questions they asked in his sessions.

Finally, on Tuesday 18th March we held a session for Year 9 students, led by the Army Recruitment group, focussing on teamwork and resilience. This was followed up by an assembly for the Year 10's highlighting the different roles and opportunities within the Army.



House Competition: Pancake Race

A fantastic turn out for the House Pancake Races 2025! There was some tough competition in the Year 7 race with Saunton ploughing through with a win, even trying to beat the others with a fifth person on their four-person team! Some over enthusiastic flipping from the Croyde team in the Year 8 race meant that the Tech department are putting in a request for a new frying pan to replace the handle-less one we returned! A clear win for Putsborough though! A lot of dropped pancakes in the Year 9 race allowed Woolacombe to sail through to win, although I'm not sure how Mrs Craig sneaked into a team! Finally, after a lot of persuasion with chocolate for the prize, we got the Year 10 teams to take part with Woolacombe again coming away with success. Well done to everyone who took part and thanks for the encouragement from the spectators, lots of fun!

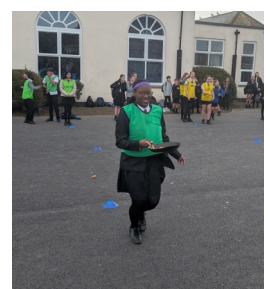
Results:

Year 7: 1st Saunton, 2nd Croyde, 3rd Putsborough, 4th Woolacombe

Year 8: 1st Putsborough, 2nd Croyde, 3rd Woolacombe, 4th Saunton

Year 9: 1st Woolacombe, 2nd Croyde, 3rd Saunton, 4th Putsborough

Year 10: 1st Woolacombe, 2nd Putsborough, 3rd Saunton, 4th Croyde



The Braunton Academy equestrian teams had a fantastic first round at the weekend!

We had a team 5th in the 50cm, a team 1st and 3rd 🏆 🏆 in the 60cm and a team 2nd 🏆 in the 70cm.

Individual placings were brilliant too with:

In the 50cm Olive S. and pony Sunny came 3rd 🏆
Alice S. and her pony Sammy came 4th 🏆

In the 60cm Flo A. and pony Taz came 1st 🏆
Dan E. and horse Pencil came 2nd 🏆
Isla W. and pony Jess came 3rd 🏆
Sienna M. and pony Skye came 4th 🏆

In the 70cm Isla W. and pony Jess came 3rd 🏆



Our Year 7 and 9 football teams travelled the long journey south to play Stoke Damerel (Plymouth) in the Quarter finals of the Devon Cup. Both teams were outstanding and the Year 7s came out 3-10 winners and our Year 9s came out 7-2 winners! Both teams now have a home tie in the semi-finals!

We took 2 teams of Year 8 netballers to a North Devon tournament at Park School. Our A Team came 2nd only losing to West Buckland and our B Team won their tournament.

Our Year 9 rugby players took on Chulmleigh in the semi-final! We won this game and now progress to the final! Well done all!





Massive congratulations to both Carys and Kush who both competed for Devon in the inter-counties cross country event which took place in Nottingham. Both athletes competed against over 300 others in their events! Well done both!

Our Year 7&8 Athletics team retained their indoor Athletics North Devon crown! Outstanding performances from every student. Well done!

U12 and U14 girls are crowned North Devon champions! Our girls put on an excellent display of both skill and determination to beat Park and Pilton in the North Devon Finals.

Year 8, 9, and 10 rugby teams all beat Torrington in the league.

Year 9 footballers sealed their place in the quarter final of the Devon Cup after beating St James 6-0



U13 Girls crowned North Devon Champions





brantonacademype 📌 Year 7 make Devon Cup Quarter Final

Our year 7s beat Ivybridge on Wednesday 3-0 to progress through to the quarters. We now have both year 9 and 7 in the Devon Cup Quarters! Well done all 🏆

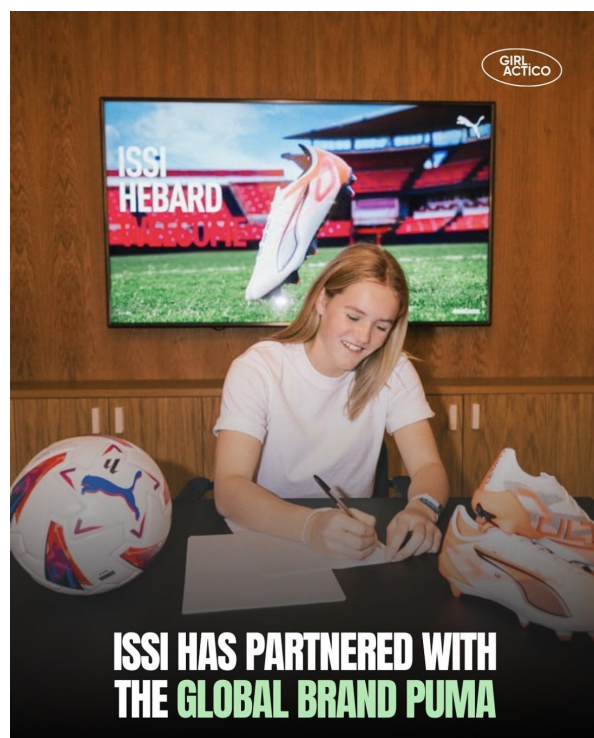
U17 Euro Qualifiers

Issi is currently competing in the U17 Euro Qualifying tournament for England **and** has partnered with Puma!

Game 1 v Sweden WON - Issi played the full 90 minutes and was Vice Captain

Game 2 v The Netherlands - Issi was Captain! But unfortunately, the team lost 1:4

Game 3 v Finland - sadly, lost 3:1



North Devon Netball Tournament -Year 8

The A team came runners-up having played some very competitive matches, only losing one game throughout the whole competition. The B team won all 7 of their matches to be crowned champions of their competition. The girls' dedication to their training and positive attitude has been excellent all year. Very well-deserved.



North Devon Rugby Sevens

Years 8, 9 and 10 competed at the North Devon Rugby Sevens competition at West Buckland School.

Year 8 won all of their games in the tournament festival, in preparation for 'competitive' rugby next year.

Year 9 were runners-up and therefore qualified for a place at the Devon tournament some impressive performances.

Year 10 were outstanding, and beat everyone in their path to retain the title they won last year. They also qualify for the Devon stage of the competition.

Well done to all boys involved. Not only did they play some excellent rugby; their discipline, respect for their opponents and general behaviour during the day was exemplary. A big thanks to Mike Stocks who managed the Year 8 team through the day.



Term Dates Reminder

Summer Term starts: Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Bank Holiday: Monday 5th May 2025

Half Term: Monday 26th –Friday 30th May 2025

Term ends: Tuesday 22nd July 2025

2025/26

Autumn Term starts: Thursday 4th September 2025

Half Term: Monday 27th-Friday 31st October 2025

Term ends: Friday 19th December 2025 (Occasional Day: Friday 28th November 2025)

All our term dates up to 2027/28 are on the website.

Please refer to these when booking holidays.

Why Attendance Matters

Academic Achievement: Students with high attendance rates generally achieve better grades and perform well in exams.

Social Development: Attending school regularly helps students build and maintain friendships, develop social skills, and participate in extracurricular activities.

Consistency and Routine: Establishing a routine of regular attendance helps students develop good habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. It teaches responsibility, punctuality, and the importance of commitment.

Support and Resources: Being in school ensures that students have access to the support and resources they need, including teachers, counselors, and learning materials. This support is crucial for their academic and emotional well-being.

Reporting Absences:

To report an absence due to illness or other unavoidable reasons, please notify us before 8.45 am on the day of the absence on the ParentMail app: Absence/Child's name/Add/Reason and duration of absence.

Missing school... missing out!

Don't let your child be the one to miss out!

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent number of missed:		
	Days	Weeks	Average lessons
95%	9	2	54
90%	19	4	114
85%	29	6	174
80%	38	8	228
75%	48	10	288
70%	57	11.5	342
65%	67	13.5	402

"We are only a few minutes late" - Does it matter?

Being late for school reduces learning time and does not prepare your child or young person for their future working lives.

- Arrival 5 minutes late every day = 3 days of learning missed each year
- Arrival 15 minutes late every day = 10 days or 2 weeks of learning each year.

Attendance Ladder

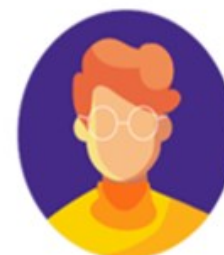


What can I do to help?



As a parent or carer
you can help by:

- ensuring your child understands the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality
- taking an interest in their education – asking about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems they may have at school and inform their Student Support Officer to pass on concerns quickly
- not allowing them take time off school for minor ailments – particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work
- arranging appointments after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school
- being open and willing to work with us to improve your child's attendance



As a student,
you can improve your attendance by:

- speaking to a trusted adult about the reasons why you might not want to come to school
- trying hard every morning to get up and get to school, unless you are really unwell
- getting an early night, feeling tired on a morning can make getting to school harder
- make sure you get to school on time every day