

Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 18 December 2023 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

As we start the last week of this long term, I want to look both back and forward, and also give some notices for the present time – not quite the ghosts of Christmases past, present and yet to come, but you get the idea.

First, I will look ahead now to **arrangements for the end of term** and the beginning of next term. **This next week is a full school week.** Our **attendance incentives** (watching a film with other members of the year group) run this coming week, **Monday to Thursday.**

On **Friday**, the last day of term, we have a **non-uniform day**, and we encourage students to **wear a Christmas jumper** to help the festive atmosphere. After normal lessons for periods 1 and 2, students will have a programme of engaging and fun activities, with Christmas dinner available in the cafeteria. We finish at the usual time of **3:20pm on Friday 22 December.**

We are supporting **Gateshead Food Bank in Birtley** again this year, helping with the hugely valuable work they do to support families all year round. Please encourage your child to bring **£1 donation** for the Food Bank with them on the last day of term.

Our next term begins on **Monday 8 January 2024** at the usual time. Students need to be **on site by 8:45am in full school uniform.** Please note that there is **no staff training day in January** – we start back with a **full school day for all students on Monday 8 January** with the **normal timetable for Week 2.**

Looking back over the term: with your encouragement, and recognising the hard work of students and staff, we have significantly **improved students' punctuality to lessons** this term, resulting in a considerable gain in learning time. Almost all students are getting to lessons comfortably within the 4-minute target time we set ourselves at the start of the year. Lesson routines at the beginning and end of lessons are much smarter, which again maximises learning time.

We can do little to make our **corridors** wider or less busy, but we have worked to make them a more pleasant environment for everyone. Students know to walk on the left, and to avoid physical contact. This 'no unnecessary physical contact' instruction is a straightforward rule: it was introduced in September and reinforced recently; students understand it well by now.

We launched a programme of over 50 weekly **extra-curricular activities** at the start of the year. It has been wonderful to see so many students participating. Apart from a few snowy days, we have also continued to allow access to the tennis court and astro turf to students at lunchtimes. The Hub is well used by students with additional needs. Service in the school cafeteria has improved further, and students are complimentary about the quality of the food they eat there. Opportunities for student leadership have increased.

Among the departments that have made particularly significant contributions to extra-curricular activities, I would like to single out PE and Performing Arts. The range of excellence and inclusion in PE is unparalleled, in my experience, resulting in very many successes and trophies this term. Our Performing Arts Department has put on not one but *two* sell-out shows this year (*Shrek* and, last week, *A Christmas Shrektacular* pantomime), and some performers will also entertain other members of the school on the last day.

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We have continued our focus on staff development, so that we can offer the very best education to your children. We welcomed six new teachers to the staff, and they are progressing very well. Among staff successes, 14 members of staff have completed National Professional Qualifications at different levels, and almost half the teaching staff are involved in Ambition Institute's Transforming Teaching Programme. Miss Ford graduated as a Teacher Education Fellow with Ambition Institute. Both Deputy Principals, Mr Dicocco and Mr Cooper, should be congratulated on being awarded the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) – although we hope they will be happy to remain here as deputies for a little longer! And, on a personal note, I have completed my doctorate in education with Durham University: I shall have the degree of Doctor of Philosophy conferred on me in a ceremony at Durham Cathedral on 4 January 2024.

Sadly, we see four colleagues leave us at the end of this term. Mr Calvin Rodger has taught Geography at the school for 19 years, and he has made a valued contribution as Head of Geography and, more recently, Subject Leader for Humanities. Mr Glenn Thompson has been with us for 13 years, as Teacher of PE, Subject Leader and, most recently, Year Leader. Miss Sophie Brown leaves the PE Department after two years with us; she has also been Coordinator for the Gateshead School Sports Partnership. Miss Maddison Thompson has worked as our Social Emotional and Mental Health Mentor for three years, supporting some of our most vulnerable students. On your behalf, I want to thank all these colleagues for their excellent work among us, supporting your children, and we wish them all the very best for their future roles. We have made appropriate arrangements and appointments to replace their teaching, leadership and support roles, and I will introduce new colleagues to you in January.

There will be no parents' and carers' bulletin next Friday, as we are involved in our end of term arrangements, and I shall be co-presenting the Christmas Celebration for students. News for the start of next year is included in this bulletin. I shall therefore take this opportunity to thank you all for your support this term, and to wish you and your families **a joyful and peaceful Christmas, and a very Happy New Year.**

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

Mr A T Fowler
Principal

Scholastic Book Fair

As part of our seasonal celebrations, we are holding a Scholastic Book fair in the school library on Wednesday 20 December. Students are invited to attend the fair, which will take place during lunchtime on that day, giving them the opportunity to browse an exciting selection of current and popular books aimed at tweens and teens. These books make fantastic gifts, and there is no better way to encourage your child to read for pleasure than by encouraging them to a book that interests them.

If you would like to purchase a book, we are asking parents and carers to pay in advance of their child attending the book fair, as we will not be accepting cash on the day. Parents and carers can pay online using the following link:

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/pay#>

Alternatively, scan the QR code below:



After payment has been made, take a copy of the reference number as this will be needed at the fair for your child to collect any purchases you have made.

A limited number of copies of each title is available in the academy, so please be aware that sold out items will arrive after the new year. You can view the selection of books available using the following links:

Books for Age 8+

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/bookcases/ro>

Teen Titles: Books for Age 11+

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/bookcases/tt>

There will be other events led by our student Reading Ambassadors running throughout the last week of term and in the new year, including a book swap with years 7 and 8, a year 7 spelling bee, and a winter murder mystery.

We look forward to seeing your child at one or more of these events.

Miss B Dixon
Librarian



Congratulations and Thanks

Christmas congratulations, to all of our incredible performers who presented, 'A Shrektacular Christmas', on Tuesday evening.

This original Lord Lawson pantomime was inspired by our 2023 Academy production, Shrek, The Musical Junior.

The pantomime was full of Christmas spirit, festive fun, and audience participation. It was a fantastic evening and we are so proud of everyone involved.

Thank you to our wonderful audience for supporting the performance and for bringing much needed Christmas cheer to our pantomime.

Performers, you really were 'Shrektacular' for one last time!

A reminder for parents, carers and students, that Performers will now break for the end of term and recommence on Wednesday 10 January, 3.20pm to 5pm.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a very happy new year.

Miss S Brown

Mrs R Hall

Miss J Race

Mrs A Gray

The Performing Arts Department



Year 8: Homework Support

Completion of homework is important for all students, as it is a way to embed classroom learning and, to show teachers any gaps they may have about the content they have covered in the class.

To support our year 8 students, we are running a homework support club in the year base on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, during morning break.

We encourage any year 8 student to attend to ensure all homework is completed, but any year 8 student who regularly misses homework deadlines is instructed to attend and receive support. Any who regularly attend these sessions will be rewarded with a P2 and have the opportunity to win Amazon vouchers.

Please encourage your child to attend these homework support sessions, most especially if they are struggling, to ensure all homework is completed. Students who continue to miss homework deadlines will soon be placed on homework report and parents/carers will be invited to attend a supportive meeting in school.

If you require Class Chart login details, please contact me at lcumiskey@lordlawson.academy and I will be happy to help.

The poster below is displayed in the year 8 base and in year 8 tutor rooms to promote these sessions to our students.

As always, thank you for helping us to support your children.

Mr Cumiskey
Year 8 Leader

Miss Harrison
Year 8 Deputy Leader

YEAR 8

HOMEWORK SUPPORT

Every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday during break time!

ClassCharts

Would you like support with your homework?

Have you received homework consequences in year 8?

Are you finding it difficult to login to systems such as ClassCharts?

Would you like a warm and comfortable place to complete homework during school hours?

Mr Cumiskey and Miss Harrison are here to help!

P2

amazon voucher

All attendees will enter a draw to win an Amazon voucher!

ALL YEAR 8 STUDENTS ARE INVITED

Go straight to the year 8 base after period 1

Everyone is supported. Nobody should miss a homework deadline

Year 11: Prospective Sixth Form Applicants

The next steps in your educational journey are both exciting and important. It is a time when you are able to choose subjects that you enjoy from a selection of academic and vocational courses. The qualifications that you gain in these subjects will allow you to progress to university, an apprenticeship or into the world of work.

For further information on our sixth form and application process, please use the following link to our website, or speak to your subject teachers or members of the sixth form team with any questions you may have.

[Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy: Sixth Form](#)

Mrs K Kendall
Assistant Principal



Lord Lawson Community Christmas Project: Give the Gift of Food this Christmas

This week saw the launch of our Community Christmas Project, which is being driven by our Student Council, in partnership with The Birtley Hub.

From Monday 27 November, we will accept food donations on behalf of The Birtley Hub (linked to the Birtley Foodbank) and will continue to do so for the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

Further information relating to the project i.e., suggested items for donation, appropriate packaging etc., can be found on our website by using the following link:

[Community Christmas Project 2023](#)

If you would like information on how to access foodbanks, or how you can volunteer at a foodbank across the Christmas period, then please use the following link: [Trussell Trust Foodbanks](#).

Thank you as always for your support.

Mr D Cave
Assistant Principal

Upcoming School Events for the Spring Term

Friday 22 December is the last day of school for staff and students. All students are expected to attend school on that day as normal. Christmas holidays begin Saturday 23 December. School reopens for staff AND all students on Monday 8 January 2024.

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.

So you have advance notice, the events for the Spring Term are listed below:

Date	Event
Thursday 18 January:	Year 11 Parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.45pm – Appointments will be online.
Wednesday 31 January:	Intermediate Maths Challenge Year 11 Blood Brothers Trip
Thursday 1 February:	Year 9 Parents' and Options Evening, 3.45 – 6.45pm. Appointments will be online.
Monday 12 to Friday 16 February:	National Apprenticeship Week – all year groups.
Friday 16 to Friday 23 February:	Ski Trip.
Friday 16 February:	Last day of school for staff and students – Half term holidays begin Saturday 17 February. School reopens for all students on Monday 26 February.
Wednesday 28 February To Saturday 2 March:	Berlin Trip.
Monday 4 to Friday 8 March:	National Careers Week – all year groups.
Thursday 7 March:	Year 8 Parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.45pm. Appointments will be online. World Book Day.
Thursday 21 March:	Year 5 Open Evening – for students' who will be joining secondary school in September 2025, 4.30 – 6.30pm.
Thursday 28 March:	Last day of school for staff and students – Easter holidays begin Friday 29 March (Good Friday). School reopens for all students on Monday 15 April.
Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 April:	Lloret de Mar Sports Trip.