



# Bourne End Academy

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Dear Parents/Carers

At this time of the year, it is relevant to bring a couple of issues to your attention. There is concern that some students, as always a small minority, have not returned to school, after the half term break, wearing the full school uniform that is expected of them. As always, we will be following this up with the students themselves in the first instance to ascertain why they are not wearing the required uniform or aspects of the uniform. I know that our families usually respond very positively and supportively when contacted regarding their children, but ensuring that your child is in the full, appropriate uniform quite simply prevents the need for you to be contacted, sometimes persistently! I have always believed that the best schools have very strong working relationships with their parents, sharing the same values on which their school is based and working together to make the school a success. It really is a small minority of students who have difficulty in meeting our clear and high expectations, and we will continue to work with those families. However, if in doubt about any aspect of school uniform, or indeed behavioural expectations, or if your personal circumstances are making life difficult for you or your child, please inform us. It is far better to work together to find solutions.

The importance of working together, in a partnership of school, home and student could not have been better demonstrated than on Thursday night at the Year 10 Parents' Consultation Evening. This was the first Parents' Evening I have attended as Headteacher at Bourne End Academy and, as I am sure both you, students and staff expect, I now have plans to improve certain aspects (potentially even looking at ensuring coffee, tea and refreshments are available for staff and parents!) however, the evening was a real success. The feedback I received from parents, students and staff was overwhelmingly positive with the comments and next steps for our Year 10 students to improve even further welcomed with actions being undertaken by all involved.

Attendance at school is another area that we are working hard to improve. Whilst a much improved area there remains some concern as our overall attendance figures still leave room for improvement. The link between attendance and achievement is well documented and very obvious: if the child is not in school, he or she clearly cannot learn and is missing valuable teaching. Publicised statements such as 'a child who misses one day per week from school equates to missing two years of their education' emphasise the stark reality of the impact of poor attendance, as does the research indicating that 90% of children whose attendance drops below 85% fail to achieve five good GCSE passes. Whilst I fully appreciate that there are occasions in most families when absence from school is unavoidable, I am seeking your support to work with us in promoting attendance at school as non-negotiable. I am disappointed to note, for example, that attendance for Year 11 has dropped below what we would expect. Importantly for our students, please support us in ensuring that all work is copied up when lessons are missed; again, that is the clear expectation.

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Finally, I would like to thank the students for the way in which they conducted themselves during our Remembrance Day commemoration at 11 o'clock. A PowerPoint was shared with staff to share with students, with images from the First World War and a recording of a bugle playing The Last Post signalling the start of our time remembering and reflecting, with the silence ringing out around the school as 11 o'clock approached. The importance of such events, remembering the sacrifices that were made for the freedom that we all have the opportunity to enjoy cannot ever be underestimated. Indeed, with our houses named Ludgate, Collins, Gilmore, Rose and Marriot, all family names of soldiers from Bourne End and surrounding areas who lost their lives in the First World War, our time spent today has an even greater poignancy. As parents, certainly as I do as Headteacher, you should feel incredibly proud of the students for their manner, attitude and the maturity with which we marked Remembrance Day as a whole school community.

Have a good weekend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Williams', written in a cursive style.

**Ryan Williams**  
**Headteacher**