



Blue Coat Church of England Academy

Birmingham Street,
Walsall,
West Midlands,
WS1 2ND
Tel: 01922 720558
Email: postbox@bluecoatacademy.org
Website: www.bluecoatacademy.org
Principal: Mr D Smith

8th February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of a short but busy half term, I want to provide some updates and make you aware of some important developments.

We will be breaking up for half term at the normal time on Friday 9th February 2024. We return to school after half term on Monday 19th February 2024. Next half term is also a short half term, which presents us with some challenges as plans and preparations for the summer examinations will need to be modified to accommodate the earlier Easter holiday and Eid celebrations.

We will break up for Easter on Friday 22nd March 2024. I will confirm the details closer to the time to avoid any confusion with breaking up for half term.

On Monday 8th April and Tuesday 9th April 2024, only Years 11 and 13 will be in school as we are running Road to Success days to support their final preparations for the summer examination season, which requires additional staffing to make the days run as smoothly as possible.

Wednesday 10th April 2024 is a training day to coincide with when we anticipate Eid celebrations will be taking place. No students will attend on this day.

All students will then return to school, as normal, on Thursday 11th April 2024.

Physical Activity during Ramadan

With Ramadan fast approaching, there has been some ground-breaking guidance developed by Dr Irfan Khawaja at Birmingham City University (BCU) which will help us, as a school, to create a more inclusive school environment for Muslim students and staff engaging in physical education (P.E.) during Ramadan. The guidance is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, to support the delivery of the P.E. curriculum and extra-curricular P.E., the guidance has given us practical advice for supporting fasting Muslim students and staff during Islam's Holy Month so that they can continue to participate in physical activity.

Students are encouraged to engage in P.E., physical activity, and school sport throughout Ramadan. However, the new timings of meals before dawn and after sunset and adjustment to new sleeping and eating patterns may increase fatigue levels. Within school, students will be reassured that activities have been tailored to accommodate all, and that staff have considered fasting students in P.E., physical activity and school sport and that activities will be adapted to ensure inclusively. Staff will engage in conversations with students, showcasing knowledge and understanding of what Ramadan entails, and to provide a platform through which students can suggest and access support mechanisms they find useful.

Shari'ah (Islamic law) indicates there is no directive saying that Muslims cannot be physically active during Ramadan. There is no evidence to suggest that fasting is harmful to the health of those who are healthy with no pre-existing conditions, providing there are adequate levels of hydration during non-fasting hours (Muslim Council of Britain, 2023).



Additionally, scientific studies (Rahman, 2022) have shown that fasting provides several health benefits, and forms of intermittent fasting have been incorporated into several diet regimes (Muslim Council of Britain, 2023).

Lent Fundraising

During Lent we will be raising money for the charity *Save the Children*. This year we would also like to encourage students to focus on using their time and talents to make a difference. We will be encouraging them to organise events to make a difference rather than solely focussing on fundraising. Students will be given more details in assembly after half term and we will share information about their work in the next newsletter.

Uniform

I would appreciate your support to make sure that the very high standards of uniform we expect from students are maintained. If buying new shoes for your child over half term, please ensure they are plain black with no logos and definitely no training shoes. The school uniform policy is available on the school website: <https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1653306725.pdf>

I would particularly like to draw attention to the expectations around hair, make-up and jewellery.

The school P.E. uniform can only be purchased from school, orders can be placed via School Gateway which you can register for and log into via the school website:

www.bluecoatacademy.org/parents-carers/online-payments

Orders can be collected from the school reception between 2.00 – 3.00p.m. each day during term time.

Dates for Next Half Term

Thursday 22nd February 2024 – Year 10 Parents/Carers' Evening

Thursday 7th March 2024 – Year 7 Parents/Carers' Evening

Term Dates 2024/25

Some parents/carers have requested confirmation of the term dates for next academic year. The provisional dates are listed below, there will be some minor adjustments once training dates are confirmed.

Autumn term 2024

Term starts: Monday 2 September 2024 (Monday 2nd & Tuesday 3rd will be staff training days)

Half term holiday: Monday 28 October 2024 to Friday 1 November 2024

Term ends: Friday 20 December 2024

Spring term 2025

Term starts: Tuesday 6 January 2025

Half term holiday: Monday 17 February 2025 to Friday 21 February 2025

Term ends: Friday 11 April 2025

Summer term 2025

Term starts: Monday 28 April 2025

Half term holiday: Monday 26 May 2025 to Friday 30 May 2025

Term ends: Friday 18 July 2025

Yours faithfully

D. Smith
Principal