



Blue Coat Church of England Academy

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Principal: Mr D Smith

5th March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on some important developments, share some good news and outline the arrangements for the end of term.

On Friday 27th March 2026, we will be operating different arrangements for years 10, 11 and 13: Years 11 and 13 will be in school as we are running a Road to Success Day to support their final preparations for the summer examination season, which requires additional staffing to make the day run as smoothly as possible. Students in other year groups should not attend on this day. Year 10 will be engaged in a day of work experience placements.

The Road to Success events are similar to the ones run in previous years. The day is entirely focused on Year 11 and 13. The day is split into sessions for each subject, often in smaller groups, and is designed to provide focused feedback to students in preparation for their final push towards the exam season. Combined with lunchtime and after-school interventions these are the final touches that in previous years have seen positive outcomes for our students taking exams. The day will run to normal school times. Year 11 are required to wear their full school uniform (not PE kit). They should also bring equipment including a pen as well as a school bag. There will be a variety of resources to take home and use for independent learning and revision. As a celebration of the work they have already done and are about to embark on, lunch will be provided free of charge. Breakfast will be available, as always, from 7.30a.m.

The Year 10 work experience placements are a new initiative which provides students first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

Thursday 26th March is a normal school day for all students with our normal start and finish times. All students will then return to school, as normal, on Monday 13th April 2026.

The school will be closed on Monday 4th May 2026 for the early May Bank Holiday.

Blue Coat Festival

The Blue Coat Festival is taking place this week culminating with the Blue Coat Sunday service at 10.45a.m. in St. Matthew's Church on Sunday 8th March. For further details visit:

<https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/blue-coat-alumni-old-blues/>

As we are celebrating the 370th anniversary of the Blue Coat Schools in Walsall, each student will be offered two commemorative gifts from the school, a water bottle and a pen. There is no compulsion for students to accept these gifts but these will be made available to them over the course of the next week.

We are also publishing a new book - *The History of the Blue Coat Schools - Centuries of Service in Walsall*. Copies are available from school for a donation to the Blue Coat Foundation.



Eid

Please remember that only one day of absence for the celebration of Eid will be authorised, which we expect to be Friday 20th March.

Global Neighbours & Rights Respecting School Awards

I am delighted to share some very positive news for the school. Over the last few months we have received assessment visits for two awards – Global Neighbours and Rights Respecting Schools. The outcomes can now be shared following two highly successful visits where we have been awarded the Silver Award for Global Neighbours and a Gold Award for Rights Respecting Schools. This is a major achievement and very few secondary schools across the country hold both of these awards at the standard we have achieved.

Pulse Surveys

We have identified a need to engage in the more systematic surveying of students and parents/carers. We have worked with Satchel:one to introduce a survey to regularly gain a better understanding of attitudes towards school, through the three key pillars of Achieve, Belong and Thrive. In order to gain a valid range of data, we need as many parents as possible to complete the survey by **Friday 13th March 2026**:

<https://app.satchelpulse.com/s/zeiuhRj16gyLeJBrg7QoveJY?country=uk>

Students will be completing their version of the survey over the next few weeks. Both parents/carers and students need to complete different versions of the survey. The link above is for parents/carers only. The survey is anonymous- we can therefore not monitor who has completed the survey so reminders will need to be sent to all parents/carers.

Community Safety Concerns

We have been asked to raise awareness with parents/carers of two issues which are causing some concern within the local area. While we have no evidence to suggest that our students are in any way involved, we do want to support the call to raise awareness to ensure that our students remain safe.

The first is a recent spate of social media postings often referred to as 'Red v. Blue'. This has sprung out of similar posts in other parts of the country where conflict between young people appears to be being promoted. While we would expect our students to be able to recognise the dangers of such posts, we would want to emphasise that any poor conduct in school or within the local community would be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Secondly, there is concern across the local authority area in relation to a growing number of collisions involving e-scooters, with some resulting in serious injury. West Midlands Police highlight that if a rider causes harm to others, incidents are investigated in the same way as collisions involving cars or motorcycles.

In addition, West Midlands Fire Service and national road safety bodies emphasise the following risks:

Lack of protective equipment (many children ride without helmets or pads)

Use on unsuitable surfaces and in busy pedestrian areas

Rising reports of children riding without insurance and in unsafe conditions, contributing to increased enforcement concerns nationally

We have been asked to remind parents/carers that privately owned e-scooters are illegal to use on public roads, pavements, parks, cycle lanes, and any other public spaces. They are legally classified as *motor vehicles* under the Road Traffic Act 1988, meaning they require a driving licence and insurance—neither of which is available for privately owned e-scooters. As a result, children riding private e-scooters in public are doing so unlawfully, and the vehicles can be seized under Section 165 of the Act.

Holidays in Term Time

There have been a number of instances over the last term where families have disputed the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to leave taken during term time. As a school we will not authorise holidays which are taken in term time and any unauthorised leave which is taken can result in sanctions being applied, which includes the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices by Walsall Council.

School Meals

We continue to work hard with our caterers, MiQuill, to provide the best possible service for students in what is a very challenging environment where costs continue to rise and regulations become more demanding. We recognise that there is a need to develop better promotion of meal deals and ensure that pricing is clearer for students.

We would encourage any family who qualifies to claim free school meals using the link below:

<https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/free-school-meals/>

We are working on changing the system to allow free school meal allowances to be carried over from day to day – these have previously been reset each day but will now be reset on a weekly basis. This means that any unused allowance will be available to students to spend by Friday of each week.

Uniform

Thank you for your support this term to ensure that your child looks smart each day. If you are getting new school shoes for your child over the Easter break, please ensure they are plain black with no logos and definitely no training shoes or plimsolls. Please refer to the information below regarding uniform expectations and I would draw particular attention to the expectations regarding hoodies, track suit tops, piercings and hair styles. More details are available on the school website:

<https://www.bluecoatacademy.org/school-uniform/>

Attendance

Thank you for your support so far this term, we are still working hard to secure further improvements. We now have a monthly prize draw for students who have 100% attendance in that month, the winner receives a £25 voucher. The March draw will take place in assembly on Friday.

Term Dates

The term dates for **2026/27** and **2027/28** have now been confirmed. As a school we will continue with a two-week half term break in October.

2026/27 academic year

Autumn term 2026

Term starts: Tuesday 1 September 2026

BCA Half term holiday: Monday 19 October 2026 to Friday 30 October 2026

Term ends: Friday 18 December 2026

Spring term 2027

Term starts: Monday 4 January 2027

Half term holiday: Monday 15 February 2027 to Friday 19 February 2027

Term ends: Thursday 25 March 2027

Summer term 2027

Term starts: Monday 12 April 2027

Half term holiday: Monday 31 May 2027 to Friday 4 June 2027

Term ends: Thursday 22 July 2027

2027/28 academic year

Autumn term 2027

Term starts: Wednesday 1 September 2027

BCA Half term holiday: Monday 18 October 2027 to Friday 29 October 2027

Term ends: Friday 17 December 2027

Spring term 2028

Term starts: Tuesday 4 January 2028

Half term holiday: Monday 14 February 2028 to Friday 18 February 2028

Term ends: Friday 7 April 2028

Summer term 2028

Term starts: Monday 24 April 2028

Half term holiday: Monday 29 May 2028 to Friday 2 June 2028

Term ends: Friday 21 July 2028

I would again like to express my gratitude to you, parents and carers, for the support you have given to your children over this term. We appreciate that many students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be preparing for examinations during the summer term and that Easter represents an important time in their preparations.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D J Smith

Principal

Easter Services – St. Matthew’s Church

<https://www.stmatthewswalsall.co.uk/>



All services take place in Church unless otherwise stated

Palm Sunday

Sunday 29th March

8:45am Parish Communion
10:45am Morning Praise
1.00p.m. Asian Congregation

Maundy Thursday

Thursday 2nd April

7pm Holy Communion

Good Friday

Friday 3rd April

10:00am Walk of Witness (Town Centre)
12pm – 3pm Church open for private prayer and reflection at the cross
7pm Good Friday Service

Easter Sunday

Sunday 5th April

8:45am Parish Communion
10:45am All Age Easter Celebration
1.00p.m. Asian Congregation