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Academy Update October 2026

The first half term has flown by, and as we reach the break, it is a fitting opportunity to reflect on what has been an incredibly positive and successful start to the academic year. One of the real highlights of the past seven weeks has been the opportunity to welcome so many parents and carers into the academy. Whether attending our Information Evenings, Mentor Settling-In Evening, SEND Coffee Mornings, or other events, your engagement and support have been hugely appreciated.

The strength of the partnership between home and school plays a vital role in ensuring every young person feels supported, challenged and encouraged to achieve their very best. It has been wonderful to meet so many families, celebrate students' successes and share in the excitement of the journey ahead. The positive conversations, feedback and collaboration we have experienced this half term reinforce the importance of working together to provide the very best opportunities for our students.

As we look back on the first half term, there is much to celebrate. Students have settled well into routines, embraced new opportunities and shown great commitment to their learning and personal development. Thank you for the continued trust and support you show our academy. We look forward to building on this strong start as we move into the next half term together.

Year 7 Welcome

Our Year 7 students have made an outstanding start to life at secondary school, embracing new routines, expectations and opportunities with maturity and enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure to see how quickly they have settled into academy life and developed confidence in navigating this important new chapter of their education.



One of the most memorable moments of the term was our Year 7 Candle Assembly. The candle serves as a powerful symbol of the journey that lies ahead for each of our students. Its light represents hope, opportunity and aspiration, as well as the knowledge, experiences and values they will acquire during their time with us. As each candle was lit, it reflected our commitment to nurturing every young person, helping them to grow in confidence, discover their talents and fulfil their potential.

We hope that, over the coming years, our Year 7 students will continue to develop into proud, successful and compassionate young adults, leaving us equipped not only with excellent qualifications, but with the character and confidence to shine their light brightly in the wider world.

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In the classroom

This half term, we have on a consistent approach to strengthening students' long-term memory and ensuring that learning is retained over time. Every lesson now begins with a short retrieval quiz, giving students the opportunity to revisit and recall key knowledge from previous lessons. These low-stakes quizzes help students to build stronger connections in their learning, improving their ability to remember and apply important knowledge in the future. They have also played an important role in establishing calm, purposeful starts to lessons, ensuring that students are focused and ready to learn from the moment they enter the classroom. Early signs have been extremely positive, and we look forward to seeing the impact of this approach continue to grow throughout the year.

The questions come from:

- what pupils have learned in class
- the key facts in their homework

For pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, the questions also help them get ready for their Knowledge Organiser tests. A Knowledge Organiser is a booklet of the key facts pupils need to know for each subject. Homework on Seneca (our online homework website) helps pupils practise these facts. If pupils do not do this homework, they may forget what they have learned. Thank you for helping your child with their homework at home.

If you have any questions, please email Mr Dunn: ryan.dunn@tbowa.org

Punctuality and disruption-free learning

We have placed a real emphasis on punctuality to lessons this half term. To support disruption-free learning and maximise every minute of learning time, we are encouraging all students to ensure that they arrive at their lessons promptly and ready to learn.

Our students have risen to this challenge incredibly well, and we are already seeing the positive impact. Calm, purposeful and punctual starts allow teachers to begin learning immediately and help every student in the classroom to benefit from a focused start. We are proud of the way students have responded and would like to thank parents and carers for reinforcing these expectations at home.

Expressive Arts Showcase – 15th October

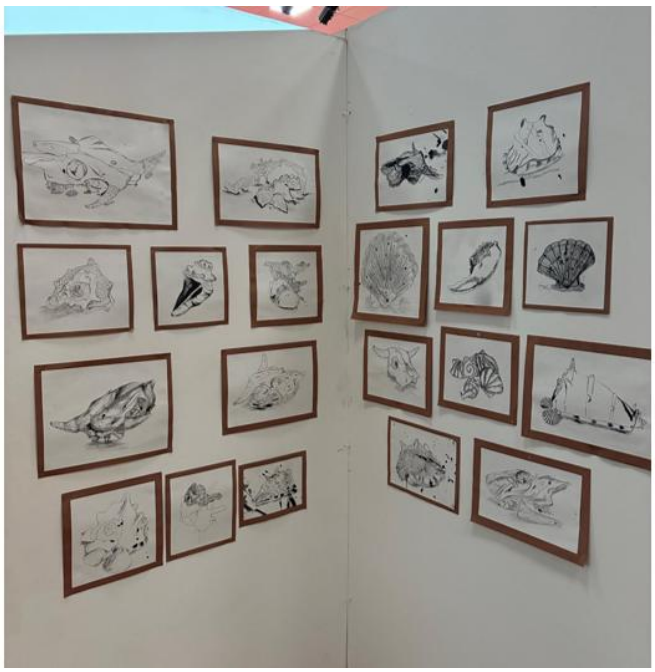
On Thursday 15th October, we were delighted to welcome so many family members and friends to our first Expressive Arts Showcase. The evening celebrated the incredible creativity and talent of our students, with a gallery-style exhibition displaying an impressive range of Art and Design work from across all year groups.



Visitors had the opportunity to explore artwork created using a variety of techniques and materials, including drawing, painting, oil pastel, ceramics, textiles, photography and mixed media. We were overwhelmed by the fantastic turnout and loved seeing so many families proudly admiring the wonderful work produced by our students.

The exhibition was accompanied by a fantastic programme of live music, featuring a talented Year 11 student band alongside a variety of solo and group performances from Year 7 to Year 13. From vocals and guitar to piano, our musicians helped create a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere throughout the evening. Visitors even had the chance to hear from our "Danny Zuko" singing a solo from the anticipated Grease production coming in March 2027. The evening was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the talent, dedication and imagination of our Expressive Arts students. We are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved and would like to thank all the family and friends who joined us to make the evening such a memorable success! We are already looking forward to the next event.









Learning Showcases

There will be plenty of opportunities for parents and carers to visit the academy this half term and celebrate their child's success. One exciting new addition to our calendar is the Learning Showcase, an event designed to recognise students who are demonstrating exceptional effort, commitment and achievement in their lessons.



Teachers will nominate students whose hard work and positive attitude to learning have stood out, and their families will be invited into the academy to:

- Explore their child's exercise books and see the high-quality work they have been producing.
- Meet with Heads of Department to discuss their progress, achievements and next steps in learning.

Our Year 9 Learning Showcase will take place on 26 November between 4.00pm and 6.00pm. Invitations will be sent to selected families over the coming weeks. We are looking forward to sharing and celebrating the excellent work of our students and strengthening the important partnership between home and school.

Year 10 Trip to Kew Gardens

Our Year 10 Art students recently enjoyed a fantastic creative trip to Kew Gardens in London on 30th September.



Working in small groups, students explored the beautiful gardens and collections, using the inspiring surroundings to develop their observational drawing and photography skills. Throughout the day, they filled their sketchbooks with drawings, photographs and creative ideas that they can use to support their ongoing project.

It was wonderful to see students making the most of the opportunity to explore such a unique environment, while working independently and creatively with their peers.

Our Year 10 students represented the Academy exceptionally well throughout the day and were a credit to TBOWA. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and returned with lots of exciting inspiration for their artwork.









Our Curriculum Area Leaders are busy planning an exciting programme of enrichment opportunities for the year ahead, including local visits, national experiences, residential trips and international travel. These opportunities are designed to broaden horizons, bring learning to life and create lasting memories for our students. We are looking forward to sharing more details with you soon and unveiling what promises to be an exceptional programme of experiences beyond the classroom.

Rewards at TBOWA

We are currently reviewing our approach to rewards at TBOWA, with a particular focus on celebrating our six LAPPs. We want our rewards system to recognise the behaviours, attitudes and personal qualities that help our young people flourish both within school and beyond it.

Importantly, we want students themselves to help shape the next stage of our rewards system. This week we will begin talking to students about what they would like rewards at TBOWA to look like and, most importantly, what they would genuinely value. Their views will help us ensure that recognition remains meaningful, motivating and something students are proud to receive.

We would also like to celebrate the students who have achieved the highest number of House Points linked to our LAPPs so far.

A huge congratulations to these students, and to every student who has received recognition for demonstrating our LAPPs. Please do check for your child's House Points on Arbor. We look forward to celebrating many more achievements throughout the year.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
1st	Elise E	Zachery S	Amelia F	Kyran F	Nikolaos R
2nd	Charlotte W	Rohnish J	Sophie K	Emily R	Nicola J
3rd	Lena C	Ethan F	Tymur K	Lucas H	Edith B

Attendance matters

We been delighted this half term to see so many students achieving 100% attendance. This is a fantastic achievement and reflects the commitment of our students and the invaluable support of their families. We were delighted to reward three students drawn at random on the last day of term to their attendance commitment. The three students were publicly recognised on our Tanoy and handed a voucher as they left on the Friday.

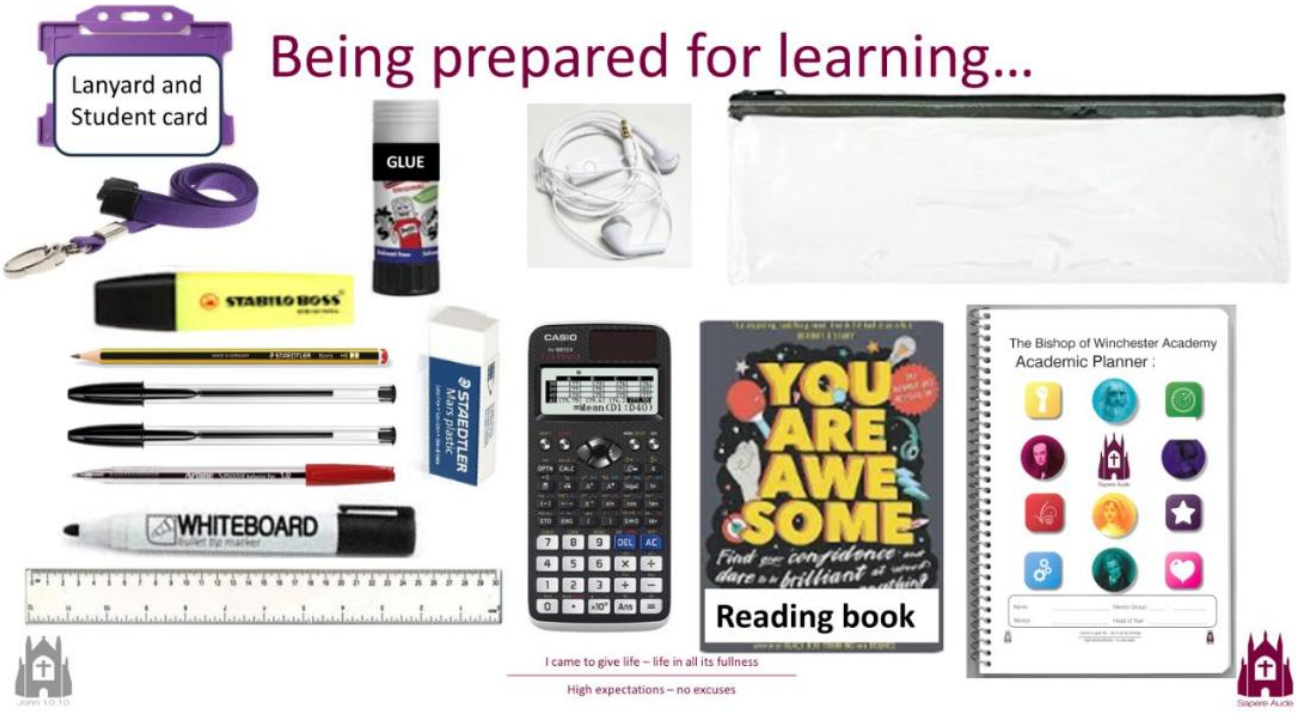
Nationally, there continues to be concern around the impact of occasional, single-day absences which, over time, can quickly add up to significant amounts of missed learning. We completely understand that there will be occasions when a child is genuinely too unwell to attend school. Where your child is experiencing a minor illness, however, we would ask families to consider whether they are well enough to come into school. Every day in school provides opportunities not only for learning, but also for connection with friends, teachers and the wider school community.



Learning Ready

On our INSET Day on Monday 2 November, staff will be working together to further develop the classroom routines and expectations that help create the best possible learning environment for every student. By establishing consistent routines that maximise pace, participation and engagement, we can ensure that students make even stronger progress in their lessons and make the most of every learning opportunity.

A key part of being learning ready is arriving at school fully equipped for the day ahead. Having the correct equipment enables students to engage immediately in their learning, participate confidently in lessons and avoid unnecessary disruption to their progress. We would therefore ask all parents and carers to ensure that their child has all of the equipment required for learning, in line with the communication shared before the half term break. The equipment needed can be found on the next page, Working together, we can ensure that every student is prepared to learn and succeed from the moment they enter the classroom.



Thank you, as always, to all our parents and carers for your continued support. The partnership between home and school is central to ensuring that every young person feels that they belong, is supported to succeed and is encouraged to become the very best version of themselves.

Yours sincerely

Hayley Richley

Deputy Headteacher

for Behaviour & inclusion

Pete Oxborrow

Deputy Headteacher

for Curriculum & Learning