

2 April 2026

Dear Parents and Families,

As we reach the conclusion of an incredibly busy and successful term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on and celebrate our collective achievements.

The gloom of January feels like a distant memory when we welcomed Year 11 families for their Parents' Evening. Since then, our Year 11 students have been working tirelessly towards their final exams. With coursework now completed across all subjects and the second mock window behind them, students can now focus on the business of revision and exam preparation. Year 11 have truly embraced our new 'Power Hour' initiative, dedicating three additional hours each week to revision booster sessions. We have frequently spoken about how proud we are of their engagement over the last twelve weeks; the individual and collective progress we are seeing is exceptional and has helped to set students up for what we hope will be a successful exam period.

My primary message as we break up is to 'make Easter count'. It is often said that exam success is won or lost during the Easter break. This is the pivotal time for students to increase the pace of their independent study while still finding a necessary balance for rest and relaxation. I encourage you all to support them in finding this equilibrium, as the dedication shown over the next fortnight will undoubtedly make all the difference come summer.

As Year 11 shifts their focus towards the examination season, this period also marks our traditional 'changing of the guard' as we appoint Year 10 students to Student Leadership posts. I would like to thank every student who applied; putting yourself forward is a brave step, and the high standard of applications made our final decisions very difficult indeed. My congratulations go to Maggie and Jamie, who have been appointed as Head Students, working alongside Ethan and Beth as Deputy Head Students. A further well done goes to our new Student Leaders: Frankie, Lily, Matilda and Imogen.

Our creative and enrichment calendar has been equally vibrant. We celebrated our third school production in three years, and I must offer my congratulations once again to the entire cast and crew. A special mention goes to Aisha in Year 9, who received a Headteacher's Award this week for her outstanding dedication to costume preparation and backstage support. Aisha's contribution perfectly encapsulates the team spirit that makes these productions possible.

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Beyond the stage, our enrichment offer has continued to flourish. Highlights this term included the Year 11 trip to *Macbeth* in Bristol, the Cybercon trip, a Year 9 Mental Health Day at Millfield School, and the ongoing progress of our Bronze and Silver DofE cohorts. We have also enjoyed visits from authors, the Young Chef of the Year competition, the Year 10 Mock Interview Day, local band workshops, Eco Council initiatives, and a wealth of sports fixtures.

A particularly poignant moment this term was the school's participation in the International Holocaust Remembrance Day observance in the town centre. Our students recited original poetry with a level of maturity and poise that demonstrated a profound understanding of the gravitas of the occasion. Siena in Year 7 was especially notable, receiving a Headteacher's Award for reciting her poem with exceptional eloquence.

We also continue to champion the importance of high attendance. Over the past few weeks, it has been fantastic to celebrate the mini-milestones of students who have shown consistent or significantly improved attendance. As we move into the final twelve weeks of the academic year, I urge all students to maintain this positive trajectory to ensure their personal attendance figures surpass those of the previous year.

Finally, it is wonderful to see students recognised daily for being 'On Track' in their lessons. It has been a personal highlight of mine to sign so many Blue Cards recently, celebrating individual successes across all year groups. Our whole-school total now stands at an impressive 350,000 On Track points—nearly 70,000 points ahead of last year's grand total. Let's see if we can reach the 500,000 mark before the end of the year!

I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to our parents and families; your ongoing support is always appreciated and never taken for granted. My thanks must also go to our dedicated staff, whose tireless hard work and commitment to our students make all of the achievements this term possible.

I wish you all a very happy and restful Easter break, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back for the summer term in a few weeks' time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P Balkwill', written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr P Balkwill
Headteacher