



Principal's Update

Dear Parents, Carers and Members of the AGS Community,

This weekend I had the privilege of joining school and college leaders from across the country at the ASCL Annual Conference in Liverpool. It was an energising and timely opportunity to step back from the day-to-day rhythm of school life and reflect on the bigger picture: the future of education, the challenges we share, and the opportunities ahead for our young people.

Across keynote sessions and discussions, one theme came through with real clarity: the importance of stability, ambition, and belonging in our schools.

16th March 2026

Whether the focus was curriculum, wellbeing, leadership, or the national policy landscape, the message was the same – schools thrive when they are rooted in strong values and when every student feels known, supported, and stretched. It was reassuring to see how closely this aligns with the culture we continue to build here at Alcester Grammar School.

Please do read through this update, to join with me and celebrate all that makes our school so special.

Best wishes,

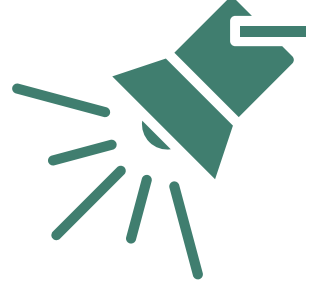


ags Assist
Give
Support

R Thorpe

Ms Rachel Thorpe
Principal, Alcester Grammar School





Language SPOTLIGHT



Urdu

فروری 2026

خواہ توجہ نصاب، فلاح و بہبود، قیادت، یا قومی پالیسی کا منظر نامہ تھا، پیغام ایک ہی تھا — اسکول اس وقت ترقی کرتے ہیں جب وہ مضبوط اقدار میں جڑے ہوتے ہیں اور جب ہر طالب علم کو جانا جاتا، حمایت یافتہ، اور پھیلا ہوا محسوس ہوتا ہے۔ یہ دیکھنا تسلی بخش تھا کہ یہ اس ثقافت کے ساتھ کتنی قریب سے ہم آہنگ ہے جو ہم یہاں الیسٹر گرامر اسکول میں بنا رہے ہیں۔

براہ کرم اس اپ ڈیٹ کو پڑھیں، میرے ساتھ شامل ہونے کے لیے اور ان تمام چیزوں کا جشن منائیں جو ہمارے اسکول کو بہت خاص بناتے ہیں۔

نیک خواہشات،

کمیونٹی AGS پیارے والدین، دیکھ بھال کرنے والے اور کے اراکین،

کی ASCL اس ہفتے کے آخر میں مجھے لیورپول میں سالانہ کانفرنس میں ملک بھر سے اسکول اور کالج کے رہنماؤں میں شامل ہونے کا شرف حاصل ہوا۔ یہ اسکول کی زندگی کی روزمرہ کی تال سے پیچھے ہٹنے اور بڑی تصویر پر غور کرنے کا ایک حوصلہ افزا اور بروقت موقع تھا: تعلیم کا مستقبل، ہم جن چیلنجوں کا اشتراک کرتے ہیں، اور ہمارے نوجوانوں کے لیے آنے والے مواقع۔

کلیدی اجلاسوں اور مباحثوں میں، ایک تھیم حقیقی وضاحت کے ساتھ سامنے آیا: ہمارے اسکولوں میں استحکام، خواہش اور تعلق کی اہمیت۔



ags Assist
Give
Support

R Thorne

مسز ریچل تھورپ، الیسٹر گرامر اسکول
کی ہیڈ مسٹریس





Understanding the difference between Poverty and Neglect

Many families are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living, and the added pressures of school holidays can understandably make things feel even harder. It's important that we talk about these challenges in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

What is Poverty?

Poverty does not simply mean "having no money."

It can mean a family does not have enough financial resources to provide the level of comfort, stability, or opportunities they would like for their children. This might include difficulty affording food, clothing, heating, or other essentials.

Across the UK, many families experience financial hardship, and around 30% of children are living in poverty after housing costs. This is a societal issue—not an individual failure.

What is Neglect?

Neglect is when a child's basic needs are not consistently met.

It is the most common form of child abuse, but it's important to recognise that neglect does not always happen because a parent doesn't care.

Sometimes, factors such as mental health difficulties, substance misuse, or overwhelming financial pressures make it harder for parents to provide what they want to for their children. What matters is that we work together to identify when additional help or support is needed.

Research suggests that around 1 in 10 children in the UK have experienced neglect at some point.

Poverty and Neglect: Understanding the difference

Experiencing poverty does not mean a child is unsafe, unloved, or that a parent is not trying their very best.

Because a family might be experiencing poverty, it does not mean they will experience neglect. However, financial pressures can understandably make day-to-day life more challenging. Research shows that when families face increased stress or reduced resources, there may be a higher risk that children's needs are unintentionally not met.

Our role is to offer understanding, support, and early help—not judgement.

How we can help

Our school website has details about [financial support](#) we can offer, please do feel free to contact us. We are here to help and certainly not to judge.

[This article](#) from Warwickshire County Council also provides comprehensive information and advice on accessing support to feed your family.

Please also read the [Assist, Give and Support](#) document in particular pages 5 and 6 for further information.

Responding to concerns about Neglect

Please let us know if you have any concerns or questions about any AGS student on dsl@alcestergs.com

If you do not feel able to talk to us then Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) - Worried about a Child:

This is the primary contact for anyone (including young people if they feel able) to report concerns about a child's safety or welfare in Warwickshire.

- Family Connect / MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub): 01926 414144 (Monday-Thursday 8.30am-5.30pm, Friday 8.30am-5.00pm)
- Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 01926 886922
- Website: <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/safeguarding-children/i-work-with-children-and-young-people/worried-about-a-child>
- **Crucial for immediate danger: Always call 999.**

We are here to help

If you ever feel unsure about how to respond to concerns around poverty or neglect, our safeguarding team is here to offer confidential support and guidance. No family should face challenges alone, and reaching out for help is always a positive, protective step.

We can be contacted at dsl@alcestergs.com with any concerns.

Mr Jones
DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The logo for the 'Assist Give Support' initiative, featuring the lowercase letters 'ags' in a stylized, rounded font, followed by the text 'Assist Give Support' in a smaller, sans-serif font.



Behaviour and Mobile Phones Update

On the first day back this term, all students attended an assembly designed to reset our expectations for behaviour across the school. The focus was on maintaining high standards both in lessons and around the school site, including during social times. During these assemblies we also explained the updates to our mobile phone policy, ensuring that students understood the expectations, the reasons behind the changes, and what this would mean for them day-to-day.

I am pleased to report that students have responded extremely well to the updated mobile phone policy. The vast majority of students have adapted quickly and are following the new expectations without issue. Only a very small number of students have failed to meet the requirements, and this has allowed staff to focus on learning and positive interactions rather than device management.

Where students do not follow the mobile phone rules, the sanctions are clear and consistent. Devices that are seen or used when they should not be are confiscated by staff and securely stored. In line with the policy, repeated breaches result in longer confiscation periods and may require a parent or carer to collect the device from school. These steps ensure that expectations remain clear and fair for all students.

Parents and carers can play an important role in reinforcing these messages at home. One helpful way to do this is by discussing Satchel One points with your child, celebrating positive recognition while also talking constructively about areas for improvement. It would also be valuable to ask your child about their views on the updated mobile phone policy and the wider decision by the government to introduce a national ban on mobile phones in schools. Regardless of personal opinions on the policy itself, these conversations can help reinforce the importance of respecting school rules and understanding why schools sometimes need to introduce changes that support learning, safety and wellbeing for all students.

Mrs Shipway
Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Behaviour)



Decent Human Being

Kind	Respectful
Polite	Responsible
Inclusive	Honest
Empathetic	Community-minded



Making a positive impact...





Delivery of Personal Development and Behaviour Curriculums via the Tutor Time Programme

Firstly, I would like to thank parents and carers for their continued support in ensuring students arrive promptly for the start of the school day. This helps us protect the important tutor-time period that takes place each morning. Alongside behaviour expectations, our tutor-time programme continues to deliver a structured personal development curriculum. Students do not always share at home the wide range of topics and activities that take place during this time, but it plays a vital role in school life. At AGS, we use tutor time to deliver our wider Personal Development programme and Behaviour Curriculum, which focuses on explicitly teaching the behaviours, habits and attitudes required for successful school life and to ensure students are Ready for Life.

Across all year groups, between 23rd February and the week beginning 9th March, students have engaged in a range of carefully planned tutor-time activities aligned with our Behaviour Curriculum strands, focusing on respectful conduct, responsibility within the school community, literacy and numeracy development, and positive engagement in school life.

Years 7 and 8

In Years 7 and 8, students began the half term with an expectations assembly reinforcing standards across the school. Tutor sessions included literacy and vocabulary development, reading for pleasure, and numeracy assemblies with follow-up activities. Both year groups engaged with student voice through the Student Senate, house assemblies, and the International Women's Day assembly, encouraging reflection on equality and their role within the school community.

Year 9

In Year 9, tutor time continued to focus on literacy and numeracy development alongside reading for pleasure. Students also participated in wellbeing-focused tutor activities, helping them reflect on strategies to support positive mental wellbeing and respectful relationships, alongside participation in the Student Senate, house assemblies and the International Women's Day assembly.

Year 10

For Year 10, the tutor programme combined core school priorities with preparation for the future. Alongside literacy, numeracy and reading activities, students took part in careers-focused tutor sessions exploring future pathways and aspirations, as well as engaging with student voice opportunities, house assemblies, and the International Women's Day assembly.

Years 11, 12 and 13

In Year 11, tutor sessions supported both academic habits as students continue preparing for their final examinations and wellbeing through literacy and numeracy development, reading for pleasure and logical thinking activities designed to strengthen problem-solving skills. Students also attended house assemblies and the International Women's Day assembly. Within the Sixth Form, the personal development programme focuses on preparing students for adulthood. Year 12 sessions included tutor discussions about personal progress, careers and societies, workplace legislation and relationships, alongside wider safety messaging such as safer driving. Year 13 students explored topics including risk-taking, extremism and radicalisation awareness, and global citizenship, as well as participating in current affairs discussions and student voice opportunities.

Across all year groups, these sessions provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on their behaviour, develop key life skills, celebrate diversity, and understand how their choices contribute to a safe, respectful and purposeful school environment.

Mrs Shipway

Assistant Principal (Pastoral and Behaviour)



Peru training walk

Students completed a walk of over 20km and reached two summits along the way. Spirits were high throughout, with plenty of team bonding during the walk, followed by time spent cooking together and enjoying cards and games in the evening.



A wonderful time at the World Book Day Book lovers' quiz



The bulbs our students planted in the Autumn are now in bloom, filling our grounds with the first colours of Spring. Thank you to all who gave their time to help.



Year 8 keeping up-to-date with the news in the AGS library!



House Hustings 2026



U13 Netball

Really proud of our U13 netball team who have played both their Warwickshire and South Warwickshire tournaments this week. They have played some excellent netball with an outstanding work rate and always a willingness to improve. 5th in Warwickshire and runners-up in South Warwickshire are fantastic placings. A special thank you to Emma, Hemma and Tabitha from Year 7 for playing up an age group at the county tournament.



Mrs Parsons



Year 7 and 8 Badminton club - all levels are welcome, and a lovely inclusive atmosphere!





Welcome to the National Year of Reading 2026!

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Alcester Grammar School is committed to providing students with unique learning opportunities, which is why we are pleased to introduce ePlatform, a digital library for students that provides free access to eBooks and Audiobooks. **This platform is available and free to use for all students in Y9- Y11.**

We know that students who read regularly for pleasure can increase their vocabulary, their ability to decode complex texts and even understand the world around them with greater ease. It has been proven to increase a student's academic performance by up to a year. It also provides an excellent way to wind down and relax after a hard day at school.

The benefits of ePlatform Digital Libraries:

With ePlatform, students have 24/7 access to eBooks and Audiobooks for free. This allows titles to be checked out at home, over the weekend or during school breaks without worrying about losing or accruing late fees because they automatically return at the end of the loan period. Students of all ages can benefit from ePlatform's reading and comprehension tools.

Benefits of ePlatform:

- 24/7 access to eBooks and audiobooks—perfect for summer reading on the go
- No overdue fees or library hours to worry about
- Thousands of age-appropriate titles to keep your child engaged
- Reading and comprehension tools that support all learners—perhaps you are decoding a tricky chunk of text or maybe you are a bilingual learner and want to read it in a different language
- Customisable reader settings (font, colour, size etc.) to make the experience even easier for all readers
- Professionally curated content with age and grade-level restrictions set by our school
- Improved vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension with the added benefit of Audiobooks

How does it work?

Ensure your reader has the ePlatform app, which can be downloaded for free from the Apple Store, Google Play Store or visit eplatform.co to begin (called 'ePlatform Digital Libraries'). Students can login to the platform directly with their alcestergs.com Google account. Please get in touch with us directly should your reader have any trouble logging in.

Kind regards,

Helena Tingle (Assistant Principal)

Clara Thomas (Reading Lead)



Food and Nutrition Update



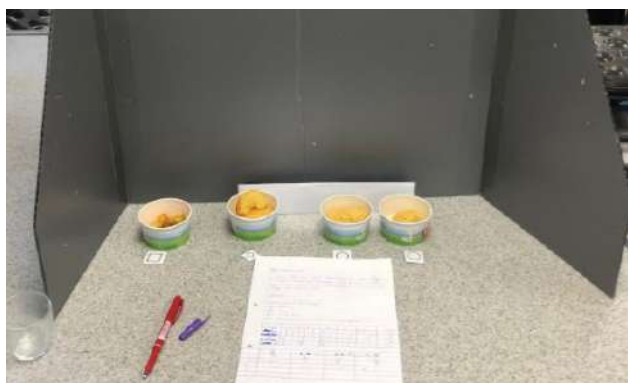
From enzymic browning to gluten theory, international cuisine and NEA2 GCSE practical's, my first term has had it all. Having started at AGS in the new year, I have seen some fantastic cooking from the students and have been amazed by their competence in the kitchen. Students have shown a real willingness to embrace new skills and take onboard challenging Food Science.

Year 10 GCSE students have settled in well to the Food Preparation and Nutrition course. Recently they have completed mock NEA 1 assessments, looking at the functional properties of chemical raising agents in baked dishes. Students conducted experiments that they designed and completed a number of sensory tests within the classes. They have also completed presentations on food related diseases and learnt new cookery skills such as chicken kiev's and artistic focaccia.

I have been most overwhelmed by the quality of this week's Year 11 GCSE NEA 2 practicals, a 20 hour assessment culminating in a final 3 hour master chef style cook, where they have researched, experimented and investigated dishes before completing the final 3 hour cook. The quality of the dishes have been incredible. Sadly, I can't show the pictures of the final products as they are under lock and key until the final GCSE results are released but the presentation, skill level and flavours were incredible.

The final GCSE exams take great skill and dedication from all the students but I must give a special mention to the rest of the department, without them working diligently behind the scenes the final practicals wouldn't run as smoothly as they have.

Onwards and upwards for the next half term, from a very full Mr Hibbard.
(Head of Food Prep and Nutrition)



Window Wonderland

AGS took part once again in Alcester's Window Wonderland event, where local businesses and individuals decorated and then illuminated their windows.

The theme that year was 'Hope', and AGS students created a display based on the poem 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers' by Emily Dickinson. The display could be seen in the window of Morris Mica Hardware Store on Swan Street (near the Waitrose roundabout) until 7th March. Visitors were encouraged to download a Trail Map of all participating windows and go for a wander.

Well done to all of the AGS students who helped to create such a beautiful display!

Mrs Connah





House News



Alder



Birch



Hawthorn



Oak



Willow

It has been an exciting and busy week for our House system; the annual House Hustings have been taking place. A band of enthusiastic Alder, Birch, Hawthorn, Oak, and Willow Year 12 students have stood for the roles of Senior Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador. They spoke with real passion and purpose, outlining how they hope to continue strengthening and expanding the House system in the next House year (Easter 2026–Easter 2027) and it already promises to be a very strong SALT (Senior Ambassador Leadership Team) next House year! Their commitment to community, leadership, and student voice shone through with every speech.

All students have now received Google Forms to enable them to cast their votes as to who they wish to represent their House in the new House year, and we look forward to sharing the outcomes in the final Principal's Update of the term.

Alongside this, preparations are underway for the announcement of the House winners of our four House trophies, which will take place during Celebration Assembly on the final day of term. With only a few weeks left, every House point counts, and the competition remains wonderfully spirited.



Dobell Cup

For Charity
fundraising



Newport Cup

For
Community
Outreach



Spencer Cup

For overall
House events
and
competitions



Wells Cup

For overall
House Points



House News - What's on?

We also have several events still to enjoy, including:

KS 3

INTERNATIONAL PI DAY COMPETITION

Get Ready to Celebrate Pi Day with a Bang!
Join us for the annual International Pi Day competition and showcase your Mathematical and problem-solving skills

FRIDAY 13TH MARCH 2026

AT BREAK AND LUNCH

YOUR MISSION:

- THERE WILL BE 27 π SYMBOLS HIDDEN AROUND THE SCHOOL SITE.
- YOU CAN FIND THEM IN CORRIDORS, ON WALLS, AND ON DOORS.
- NO NEED TO ENTER CLASSROOMS!
- ONLY SEARCH DURING BREAK AND LUNCHTIME.
- EACH π SYMBOL HAS A NUMBER AND A LETTER.
- WRITE THE LETTER UNDER THE CORRESPONDING NUMBER IN THE GRID BELOW.
- BE ON TIME FOR ALL YOUR LESSONS! LATE STUDENTS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED!

SEE YOUR FORM TUTOR FOR AN ENTRY SHEET

HOUSE BAKE-OFF

KS4+5

Calling all cake makers!
An irresistible House competition.

Fri 20.3.26 FT2
Judging 12.45pm

Criteria: Sponge Cake
Theme: Life at AGS!

Drop cakes off in FT2 in the morning

These events offer fantastic opportunities for students to get involved, earn points, and celebrate the creativity and community that make our House system so special.

ags

House Points
WEEKLY UPDATE
12.3.26

	Alder 27931
	Willow 27511
	Hawthorn 25922
	Birch 25518
	Oak 25495



House News - Oak House Outreach

This March, Oak House is supporting Acorns by encouraging as many pupils as possible to walk 100 miles in March to support Acorns Children's Hospice.

Acorns supports over 800 children and more than 1,100 families every year across three hospices and outreach services.

Over 20 pupils have signed up to do the challenge, if you would like to support please scan or click the QR code below.

Just £14 could fund a half hour physiotherapy session., and £54 could fund an hour of care for a child in an Acorns hospice.

We are aiming to raise £1,000 - please donate if you can and help make every mile count.

Thank you so much for your support!

Miss Lawson - Head of Oak House



During the last week of term **OAK** house reps will be hiding around school in bunny ears and orange T-Shirt.

Find them and buy an egg to support Acorns.

acorns
children's hospice



AGS Friends



Year 7 Film Night

A brilliant new addition to the school calendar, AGSF hosted its first ever Year 7 Film Night -complete with pizza, sweets, icelollies, a screening of Wonka, and a fantastic free prize draw for a hamper generously sponsored by Tesco Redditch. Thank you to everyone who helped deliver such a fun and sociable evening for our Year 7 students.

Pre-loved Uniform

Our volunteers have been busy sorting the uniform you've kindly donated, ready for the launch of our online preloved uniform shop on our SumUp site. We'll also be keeping a small stock in school for loan purposes and for families who may need a little extra support – please do speak to school if this would be helpful. Donations can be dropped off at any time, but please wash items and remove name labels first. We'll share full details as soon as the online store goes live.

Lottery

A big thank you everyone who has joined this year's AGSF Lottery. Your support is making a huge contribution towards our fundraising goal for the year. The lottery was drawn at our committee meeting on 4 th March - congratulations to our lucky winners below!

- 1st Prize – £80 - Julie Richardson (No. 72) Kindly donated back to AGSF – thank you so much!
- 2nd Prize – £60 - Joanna Lane (No. 10)
- 3rd Prize – £60 - Garstang Family (No. 143) Kindly donated back to AGSF – thank you so much!
- 4th Prize – £40 - Widdop Family (No. 187)
- 5th Prize – £40 - Hagan Family (No. 225)
- 6th Prize – £40 - Stephen Horrocks (No. 173)
- 7th Prize – £32 - Donaldson Family (No. 220)
- 8th Prize – £32 - Tammy Williams (No. 129)

Our lottery is a quick and easy way to help support AGS Friends and is only £2 a month per number or a one-off payment of £12 for the remaining 3 draws of the 2025/26 lottery. If you'd like to sign up, please register using the [sign-up form](#) or [click here](#) to buy a 'rest of year' ticket.

Von and the AGS Friends Team




Around the World Quiz Night – Friday 20th March

Our third quiz night takes place on Friday 20th March from 6.30pm in school. This isn't your standard pub quiz – it's a trip around the world, with themed rounds, snacks, a bar, and a relaxed, familyfriendly atmosphere. Tickets are just £5 per player. [Click here to book your place](#) and join us for a great evening of entertainment.

AGSF are pleased to present:

Around the World Quiz Night

Kindly sponsored by:

 **Stansgate Planning**
Est. 1986

*Fri 20th March
6:30pm for
7pm start
Tickets £5
Bar, snacks, raffle*

NEWSLETTER

SPRING
2026

LAMDA

SPEAKING MATTERS

SPEAKINGMATTERS121@GMAIL.COM

LAMDA EXAM UPDATE

Several students are currently preparing for their LAMDA exams at Easter. It has been wonderful to see the progress being made in lessons, particularly with confidence, clarity of speech and strong communication skills.

Over the next few weeks we will be focusing on polishing performance pieces, refining structure and strengthening responses for the knowledge section of the exam, ensuring students feel well prepared.

THINKING ABOUT A JULY EXAM?

If you are considering entering a LAMDA exam in July, please let me know soon so we can plan preparation time properly.

LAMDA exams help students develop:

- confidence speaking in front of others
- clear and expressive communication
- strong listening and thinking skills
- the ability to organise and present ideas

WHY ORACY MATTERS

There is a growing national focus on oracy skills in schools. Oracy is the ability to express ideas clearly through speech and discussion.

Research shows that students who can explain their thinking out loud develop stronger confidence, reasoning skills and academic understanding.

In LAMDA lessons students practise how to:

- speak clearly and confidently
- structure their ideas
- communicate meaningfully with an audience
- listen and respond thoughtfully

These skills support learning across all subjects and help young people feel confident expressing themselves.



GREAT SPEAKERS

SIMON SINEK

TOASTMASTERS

KEN ROBINSON

MARTIN LUTHER KING - DREAM

WINSTON CHURCHILL

BARAK OBAMA

LOOK THEM UP ON
YOUTUBE

Exams Notice

School no longer has access to MyAGS so I have sent pupils a paper copy of their summer timetable. This does not show a room or seat no, this information will follow after the Easter break.

Everyone needs to read the rules and regulations which can be found [here](#).

Anyone with a clash, two or more exams at the same time, will be emailed with the arrangements.

Year 10 mocks are from Monday 27 April until Tuesday 5 May.

Year 12 summer exams are from Monday 11 May until Wednesday 20 May.

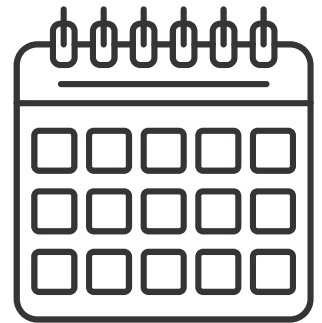
GCSE exams start Thursday 7 May and A levels start Monday 11 May.

Any questions please email exams@alcestergs.com

Thank you.

Mrs Silcox

Examinations Officer



**COMING
SOON**



JERK
TASTE THE CARIBBEAN

Thursday 26th March

Mains

Jerk chicken or pulled pork
Rice and peas
Jerk mac n cheese
Jamaican creamed corn
Jerk gravy
Pineapple salad

Grab and go

Beef patties
Jerk wings



2025/26 Term Dates

Autumn Term

Term begins: Wednesday 3rd September 2025 - Years 7 and 12 only
Thursday 4th September 2025 - All students return
Half Term: Monday 20th October to Friday 31st October 2025
Term ends: Friday 19th December 2025

Spring Term

Term begins: Tuesday 6th January 2026
Half Term: Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026
Term ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term

Term begins: Monday 13th April 2026
Half Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026
Term ends: Friday 17th July 2026

Inset Days (No school for students)

Monday 1st September 2025
Tuesday 2nd September 2025
Monday 5th January 2026
Friday 6th February 2026
Friday 22nd May 2026
Monday 20th July 2026

