

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Working together

It's Friday again – I hope you had a good five days. It only feels like yesterday that I wrote you last Friday but a week has passed. We are now in the middle of March and it has felt at times this week that spring might have arrived... It was great to greet parents and carers of year 10 pupils in the light for the first half of parents' evening last night which was a very well attended event. Also, this week, we led another trip to the West End for 45 pupils this time to those in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 who went to see the excellent *Back to the Future The Musical*. We also hosted a careers event yesterday morning for year 7 where adults from a variety of fields came to talk to pupils about what it is like to work, what skills they use and their personal career journeys to date. On Monday, a team of year 8 pupils attended the Faraday Challenge at SWCHS on Monday. The STEM competition gives teams an engineering design task to develop, build and present over the day. The team designed safety street lighting and were only narrowly beaten by an alarming traffic cone! They had a wonderful day and represented the Academy brilliantly. Lastly, on Wednesday evening it was once again a pleasure to be invited to the Saffron Walden Rotary Club Young Photographer of the Year Awards where JFAN pupils once again achieved big results, including winning and second place in both the intermediate and senior categories. More on this later. Another really successful week where the Academy community is pulling together to provide our pupils with the best possible experiences.

Further updates this week are as follows:

1. Closure of School Lane from 19th March – A **final** reminder that School Lane will close from 19th March. I have provided details of this in my letter last week. Please ensure that you have read this carefully if you drive to the Academy to drop-off and pick up your child/ren. It might be that after the first few days of responding to this change, that the Academy identifies some learning from the process where immediate improvements can be made. If this is the case, we will write to you to let you know what this means for you.
2. Standards cycle (uniform and trainers): Over the next two weeks, the Academy will be particular focusing on the wearing of trainers which is not part of our uniform policy unless of course there is a specific and valid medical reason or a pupil has a curriculum need to wear trainers that day. If your child has to wear trainers, please can you ensure you contact your child's form tutor so a note can be placed on their system. If your child has to wear trainers for a short period of time due to medical reason, please can you ensure they have a note from you to explain this. If there are no extenuating circumstances for the wearing of trainers, smart cards will be signed.
3. Commenting about the Academy on social media: We understand that social media is an important tool to share information. It is also always pleasing to hear of positive feedback about the Academy on social media platforms. We use social media to publicise events, important information and 'good news' stories. If you have a compliment or indeed a concern we ask that you use other channels such as email or through a telephone call. The Academy is unable to respond to any feedback or queries that have been raised via social media.
4. Pupil survey – A reminder that Anglian Learning academies have launched a new pupil survey which will stay open until 22nd March. We will be encouraging pupils in years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 to complete this survey in tutor time. A link has been sent to all pupils' school email address from "Edurio" with a link which takes you straight to the survey page. If your child is having trouble accessing this, please ask them to inform their form tutor.
5. Impact time on Fridays – You may remember that last Friday I wrote to you about an adaption to our Behaviour for Learning policy regarding impact time on Fridays after school and that if a pupil does not attend without a valid reason. They will be out of circulation the following Monday including all lessons, break time and lunch time that day. I am pleased to inform you that last Friday, we had full attendance to

impact time and therefore did not need to implement anything further the following Monday. Clearly this is still early in this new initiative but it is good to see that it has started positively and we hope this will continue.

6. Cake Sale – A reminder that pupils in year 10 will be raising funds for the vital work of the Stroke Association, through a cake sale, outside Main Reception on 26th March at lunch time. All funds raised will go to this important charity who are doing excellent work in an area which is still significantly underfunded and under-researched when compared with other health conditions.
7. Further student successes – There have been so many successes to note this week. The Academy had two pupils in year 10 representing JFAN, playing for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at the county hockey under 15 finals last weekend. Bethan W and Hermione B were both key players scoring two of their teams three goals. Secondly, this week we celebrated the success of our pupil's involvement in the Saffron Walden Young Photographer competition. The theme for the competition this year was 'Rebuilding' and although challenging and difficult to interpret, the range of photographs submitted from pupils in all year groups demonstrated, once again, the skill and creativity of our pupils. The competition was judged by professional photographers, Celia Bartlett and Roger King and three pupils were invited to a presentation evening at the Saffron Walden Golf Club. Congratulations to William C, Year 11, whose two photographs were awarded Highly Commended in the senior category. The judges commented on Will's effective use of composition, detail and visual story, especially in his photograph of demonstrators in London, describing the photograph as "an exploration of people attempting to 'Rebuild' Society through protest."
We also wish to congratulate Joseph W, Year 9, who's photography once again won him first place in the intermediate category for a second year in a row! His photograph was praised for being highly detailed, emotive, well composed and colourful. Joseph's entry will go forward to the District level of the competition.
Further congratulations go to Liam H, Year 7, whose colourful and texturally detailed photograph of an old brick wall being replaced and renovated was well composed and interesting.
Myself and Mrs Daveta joined pupils and parents at the Rotary presentation event and an enjoyable evening, celebrating our pupil's success, was enjoyed by all.

This completes the updates this week. Next Friday I am intending to release a survey specifically about my end of week communications. This initiative has been in place since 'The Covid Era' and I think now is a good time to review the strengths and possible changes to how it works. I realise that the letter is fairly extensive each week and I would not want to think that this is clogging up your email inbox every Friday afternoon! There has been some really useful parental voice over the past few months what with the survey in December and the response to uniform changes and more is planned with our assessment working and four-year strategic plan working parties. Therefore, it would be great to get your views again so please do keep an eye out for this next week.

On the week where we had the Oscars, a quote from Stephen Spielberg ends my letter this week, on the importance of collaboration and working together:

"When I was a kid, there was no collaboration; it's you with a camera bossing your friends around. But as an adult, filmmaking is all about appreciating the talents of the people you surround yourself with and knowing you could never have made any of these films by yourself."

Have a great weekend,

Duncan Roberts
Principal