

Headteacher: Mr D. Whales | Chair of Governors: Mr A. Brown

3rd February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Now we have reached the end of January - a long and challenging month for many of us. I wanted to write to you with a few important updates.

Over the past couple of months, a number of our staff have faced significant personal challenges. Sadly, we've seen serious illnesses, bereavements, and many of the difficult life events that any community experiences. I share this not to seek sympathy, but to acknowledge that the challenges you and your families face are often mirrored within our staff team too.

Despite this, our routines, structures, and expectations remain consistent – because that is what makes a school work. I hope you have continued to feel the stability of the “professional face” we show each day, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to colleagues who are going above and beyond to support one another during these times.

Attendance

There is an increasing national focus on improving school attendance. Emerging evidence shows a strong correlation between high attendance and strong academic outcomes. At its simplest, improving attendance means ensuring students are in lessons more often.

Of course, as mentioned above, life is rarely simple – and we recognise that challenges do arise. We ask for your continued support so that, together, we can make a positive difference wherever possible.

Kickstart and Personal Development

At the start of term, we held our Spring Kickstart programme, where we teach students the behaviours and attitudes we believe help shape them into responsible, respectful young people. Key messages this term have centred around:

- manners
- respect
- self-discipline
- making good choices

These are values we know you work hard to instil at home, and we thank you for that partnership.

Year 11

We are now heading towards the end of the Year 11 Finals. Their actual GCSE exams begin in May, only a few months away. As a year group, their approach has been excellent. I also want to recognise the large numbers attending Lesson 6 and, for some, an additional Lesson 7. Hard work at this stage is absolutely the right strategy – the more prepared students are now, the less daunting the final challenge becomes.

Parents Evening and Staff Wellbeing

A key consideration for me is ensuring we create a working environment that supports staff to manage the considerable demands of working in education.

One approach is keeping parents' evenings online and maintaining the five-minute appointment structure. As a parent myself, I understand how short these can feel. Across education, there continues to be debate about whether face-to-face meetings are more effective. When surveyed, over 70% of parents and staff were in favour of the online model, with many valuing the flexibility of online appointments.

To further support staff wellbeing, we are trialling a slightly earlier finish on days when Year 7-11 parents' evenings take place*. This allows staff to travel home before their online appointments or begin their sessions earlier.

As a result, for **Year 8 Parents' Evening on Wednesday 11th February**, the school day will finish at **2.45pm**. We have removed tutor time for all year groups, allowing all five lessons to run as normal.

If this creates childcare or safeguarding concerns, limited onsite provision will be available until 3.15pm on each occasion.

Please book via this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/6Vx6njdXNy>

***Please make a note of the following dates for remaining early closures, 2.45pm, this year:**

- **Wednesday 04 March – Year 9 Parents' Evening**
- **Wednesday 18 March – Year 11 Parents' Evening**
- **Wednesday 06 May – Year 10 Parents' Evening**
- **Wednesday 01 July – Year 7 Parents' Evening**

Open Morning

The final Open Morning of this round will take place on **Thursday 5th February**, from **8.30–10.00am**.

This is open to prospective parents as well as current parents wishing to see the school in action. I lead the tour personally, giving you the opportunity to see lessons, meet students, and experience the learning environment first-hand.

To book, please use the link: [Spring Term 2026 Open Mornings](#)



Mr D Whales
Headteacher

Headteacher: Damien Whales, Ken Stimpson Academy is a school within the Four Cs Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

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