



GRACE ACADEMY



GRACE ACADEMY SOLIHULL PARENT GUIDE 2026

Your Child's Future...Our Commitment

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, may we take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Grace Academy Solihull for your child's education. We sincerely hope that this is the start of a long and successful relationship with you and your child. Making the decision to place your child's education and future with us is not something we take lightly. We firmly believe that education is the key to success and we can assure you we will do everything we can to support your child in being successful. We will, at all times, look to you as parents and carers to support us in this. Above all, we are a place of learning and progress and we work hard to ensure that nothing gets in the way of this happening. We do have high expectations of every student in the academy; we hope that was one of the reasons why you chose to send your child here, and with your support and partnership we can ensure that every child reaches and surpasses their potential.

As well as a successful academic record, the Academy has an enviable reputation for the arts and sports and there will be many opportunities for your child to contribute and participate in these during their time with us. We want your child to be happy and successful whilst they are with us and all we will ever ask is that they:

Try their best at all times, in whatever they do.

We welcome feedback and input from parents and carers, so if you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Head of Year or your Assistant Head of Year, at the academy at any time.

Yours sincerely



Darren Gelder
Executive Principal



Matthew Godwin
Principal

Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting and significant event in the life of your child. We understand that you may be anxious about your child moving to secondary school, however we are always here to help alleviate these nerves and concerns. The following are the main concerns that parents of new starters have said that they have:

“I am worried that my child will not make any friends”

Grace Academy has ensured that there is a strong pastoral network around students. This is why each year group has a Head of Year, an Assistant Head of Year, and a tutor for each tutor group. If any concerns emerge then there are a number of things that we can do to support the development of good relationships, such as involving your child in nurture groups and identifying a buddy for your child. We will ensure we share any concerns with you and also encourage you to contact us if you are concerned. Our partnership and working together is vital to help your child settle into secondary school. You will receive your child’s tutor name and email address in September to ensure that you have a direct line of communication in case you are ever concerned.

“I am worried that I won’t know what to do or who to contact if there is a problem”

The first person to contact is your child’s tutor. However, if it is an emergency please telephone the school and ask for your child’s Assistant Head of Year. You will be provided with their contact details in September and can meet them at the settling-in-evening. They will always be your points of contact.



Grace Values

At Grace Academy we are proud of our whole school ethos which is built on our five Core Values:



Grace – Grace is having a fresh start and giving others a second chance. It is about forgiveness.

Excellence – Excellence is being the best version of you that you can be and try your best in everything you do.

Integrity – Integrity is about being honest and doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Respect – Respect is about treating people how you would like to be treated.

Potential – Potential is using your gifts and abilities and giving things a go.

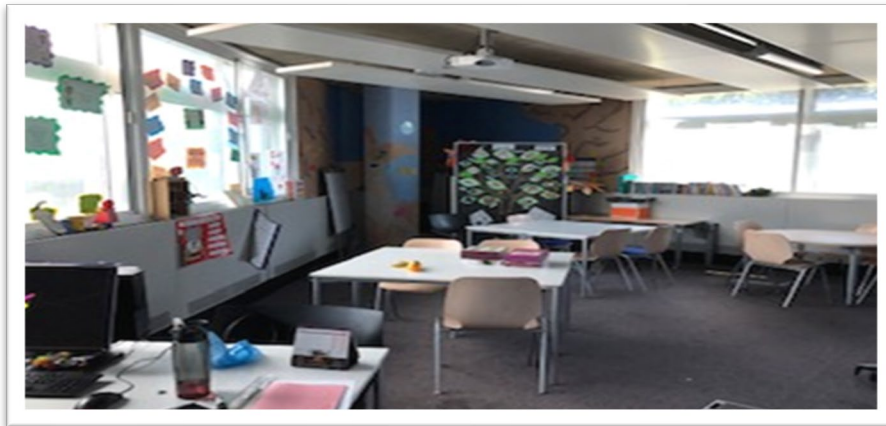
We believe that all of our students have the limitless **potential** to succeed; and with a positive attitude of mutual **respect**, genuine **integrity** and amazing **grace**, they can strive for intentional **excellence**. At Grace Academy Solihull our aim is for everyone to work together to demonstrate our Inclusive ethos through our shared values.

THE DA VINCI CENTRE

The Da Vinci Centre is on the ground floor of the Academy. It provides support for students with a variety of medical and learning needs. The type of support given will vary according to the needs of the student.



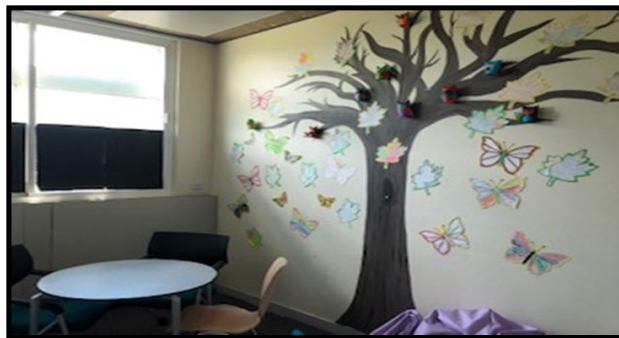
Targeted students will be offered additional programs of intervention in order to develop their skills. This support can be in the form of in-class reasonable adjustments or group-work, which takes place during tutor time or when timetabled lessons take place.



There may be times when students require external support. The Da Vinci Centre liaises with a variety of external agencies for advice and guidance, once sufficient evidence has been gathered over time from teachers, parents and the student. Some of the external agencies we work with include:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Specialist Inclusion Services, Solihull (SISS)
- SOLAR or Forward Thinking
- Specialist Assessment Service (SAS)
- Occupational Therapy
- NHS Community Paediatrics
- School Nurse
- Physiotherapy

The Da Vinci Centre also plays an important role supporting students with attendance, physical, social, emotional, communication and sensory difficulties. Staff based in the area offer additional support to students through discussion and social stories. There are opportunities for students to share their thoughts, feelings and improve their resilience, to help them cope with change and transition into secondary school.



For further information about The Da Vinci Centre please contact:

Miss Katie Sezell

SENCO

0121 329 4600

katiesezell@graceacademy.org.uk



LEARNING AT GRACE ACADEMY SOLIHULL

Core subjects your child will be studying in Year 7:

English

In English lessons your child will have the opportunity to read novels, short stories, poems and many pieces of non-fiction. They will learn how to write to a high standard in both fiction and non-fiction styles. During lessons there will also be the opportunity to have discussions and debate; studies are varied and exciting.

Reading widely is the best way to improve in English, so we encourage all children to spend some of the summer reading so that they can share with their peers in September what they have enjoyed.

Mathematics

Mathematics builds on the skills learnt at Primary school. Previously learned content will be the starting point for what comes next and students will get the chance to learn more about Numbers, Algebra, Geometry, Statistics and Probability. Many of these skills will equip students for their Maths GCSE and for everyday life.

Science

In science lessons Year 7 students will study three main scientific areas: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In Year 7 they will study the following topics:

- Cells and reproduction, tissues and organs
- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Food chains and webs
- Movement of substances
- Working in a laboratory
- Space
- Forces and motion

Other subjects available at Grace Academy:

Humanities: Geography & History

History is a fascinating subject, filled with stories of great people and events. Your child will learn about subjects such as medieval England, Roman Britain and the Great Wars. Your child will discover how our history made us the country that we are today.

Geography lessons will focus on the planet we live on, and how it is changing because of natural forces, as well as human influence. Your child will also learn about the turbulent changes that the natural world is constantly subjected to with exciting topics like volcanoes and earthquakes. These topics are explored using a variety of learning methods.

Computing

The computing curriculum will ensure pupils are equipped to use information technology fluently, using computers to create programs, systems and other content. Computing will ensure all students are digitally literate and understand the dangers the online world has.

The curriculum will equip students with the ability to use a variety of programs, and express themselves and develop their ideas through information and communication technology at a level suitable for the future workplace, as well as active participants in a digital world.

Modern Foreign Languages: French

French lessons will provide your child with the opportunity to learn another language - helping equip them for life in a global society. Students will learn to read, write, speak and listen about a variety of topics in a variety of tenses. Games and songs in French will help your child to learn and communicate in a fun and memorable way.

PE

Athletics, football, rugby, table tennis, dance, basketball and rounders are just some of the many sports that your child will have the chance to play during PE lessons. Just make sure that they don't forget their PE kit!

Performing Arts: Drama and Music

The Performing Arts curriculum will equip students with the ability to perform and compose music, listen to and evaluate different genres, styles of music and theatre. Students explore the works of great practitioners, composers and musicians. Our students learn to use their voices to understand how music and drama both individually and together can create productions.

The Performing Arts department hold a crucial aspect in our students' personal development; it provides all of our students with so many rich and varied opportunities to experience the arts, which then develops and creates confident and capable students.

Art

In art lessons students will have the opportunity to enjoy working with a range of different materials and techniques. In Year 7 they will have the chance to develop some key skills such as pencil shading, using line, tone, shape and form, as well as researching famous artists.

Design and Food Technology

This is your child's chance to put their catering, product design and creativity to the test. Students are offered the chance to research, analyse, generate design ideas, plan, make and evaluate a range of different products.

Homework

Homework at Grace Academy Solihull is set through **Satchel One**, a learning platform that is accessible via a website and app. This supports students to track and complete their homework.

Students will be set retrieval homework every day of the week which will automatically appear on the **Satchel One** app. These quizzes test important knowledge that students have been taught in the past to help them know and remember more. The results from this quiz are then reviewed by teachers to inform lessons.

Sparx Learning is a tool that personalises mathematics, science and reading homework to students based upon their individual strengths and areas where further practice is needed.

Accessing homework: Students will be shown how to log on to **Satchel One**, **Sparx Maths**, **Sparx Science** and **Sparx Reader** during their computing, mathematics and English lessons and will be able to access their homework on a computer or any other device.

More information is available on the school website.

Progress Reports

Parents receive a progress report 3 times a year which outlines the progress made in each subject area studied, as well as a judgement on your child's attitude to learning. Targets are set for each subject at the start of the year and students work towards that target. This allows parents and students to easily identify where improvements are needed on a regular basis in addition to subject areas that a pupil is excelling in.

Teachers and tutors are available throughout the year for conversations on the progress of individuals, as at Grace Academy we believe that it is only through an effective partnership between parent, teacher and student that real success can be achieved.

Supporting your child

We know that our success as a school has only been possible due to the close working relationships we have with all parents and carers. We know how hard you work to support your children and the amazing impact that has on their development as rounded young people achieving academic success. The following are effective ways to support your child:

- Talk to your child about what they are learning.
- Review their reports to identify specific areas for development, and discuss these with your child.
- Ensure that they are completing their homework and preparing for assessments.
- Encourage your child to speak to their teacher if they have not understood anything in lessons.

ATTENDANCE

Grace Academy places high expectations for all pupils,

which means having at least 98% attendance, and having good punctuality.

We believe that it promotes effective learning and has a significant impact on personal development, progress and attainment. Attending regularly, and on time, prepares students for a successful working life beyond school. Regular attendance is crucial if students are to reach their full potential at Grace Academy. Attending regularly means that students are healthy, safe, making a positive contribution and preparing themselves for a successful future after Year 11 and 13.

Grace Academy will strive to provide a welcoming environment for all students to enhance their sense of belonging, and staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends regularly and is punctual to both school and lessons.

From September, your child will be registered at Grace Academy, it is your legal duty as a parent to ensure they attend regularly and receive their education. This means your child is expected to attend every day that the school is open except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence from the school in advance.

Interesting Facts:

- An attendance record of 90% might seem good but is equal to one day missed per fortnight. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of six month's education will be lost and 100 lessons missed over a year.
- An attendance record of 80% might seem acceptable but is equal to one day missed per week. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of one year's education will be lost.

**Students are required to attend school for 190 days each year.
Grace Academy's attendance target for each student is at least 98%.**

Academic Year Attendance	Equivalent Number of Days Absent Per Year	Approximate Number of Weeks Absent Per Year	Number of Lessons Missed Per Year
98%	4	1	20
95%	9	2	50
90%	19	4	100
85%	29	6	150
80%	38	8	200
75%	48	10	250
70%	57	11.5	290
65%	67	13.5	340

Attendance Related FAQs:

What if my child misses school time?

If any child has low attendance, we have a statutory responsibility to report absences to the Local Authority, other relevant partners and external agencies. If after support has been put in place, absence is still low or persistent, a notice to improve and a penalty notice will be issued.

What is 'Good Punctuality' and why is it important?

Good punctuality means being on time for the start of the school day and to lessons once onsite. This is extremely important, because if, for instance, your child arrives 15 minutes late to school each day, they lose almost 2 weeks of education over the whole year.

Having good punctuality also helps your child to get into good habits for when they enter the world of work.

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child is expected to be at the academy for the start of the school day at 8.20 am.

What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrives after 8.20 am they are recorded as late and they will receive a detention.
- If your child arrives after 8.50 am, new government regulations mean students will be given a 'U' code, which will count as an absence.
- If they are late twice in one week, they will be expected to complete a longer detention.
- Should the problem continue, you will be asked to attend a meeting at school with either the attendance or pastoral teams.

Attend to Achieve - A Guide for Parents

1. What are the procedures for absence?

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Contact the school each day the child is absent (if applicable)
- Send a note in with your child on the first day they return explaining the absence(s)

If your child is absent we will:

- Send a text message and/or telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact you daily if absences persist
- Include your child on the Attendance Monitoring Programme if attendance is a cause for concern
- Undertake home visits
- Invite you to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, Head of Year & Assistant Head of Year
- We have a statutory responsibility to report low absences to the Local Authority and External Agencies

2. Do the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school as early as possible on the first day of absence (0121 329 4600) or to notify the school through ParentMail or via

GAS-attendance@graceacademy.org.uk

3. What can I do to help my child achieve good attendance?

- Do not book holidays in term time; changes in legislation mean that schools can no longer grant permission for holidays taken during term time, therefore any absences due to holidays in term time will be unauthorised.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

Talk to your child about:

- Their attendance - ask them what it is.
- School and how they feel about it. They are more likely to attend if they feel they are supported and listened to. Report any concerns, so that we can challenge them and support your child; please do this rather than keeping your child off school.
- Only grant days at home for serious illness. Other days off count as unauthorised absences which could lead to prosecution.
- Know routines of the school day in order to avoid issues, i.e., make sure your child has their PE kit or has done their homework.
- Praise and reward good attendance and punctuality.
- If you or your child have any concerns, speak to their tutor in the first instance.

4. Why is it important to provide the school with your up-to-date contact information (email address, phone number and postal address)?

There are times when we have to contact parents/carers about things, including absence, so it is very important that we have your up-to- contact information at all times.

5. My child is avoiding coming to school. What should I do?

There are occasions when children choose to avoid school. Reasons such as difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems or family difficulties can cause young people to worry and they may think that not attending school will solve the problem. All of the staff at Grace Academy pride themselves on

being able to build positive relationships with students and parents/carers. We want your child to have the best possible experience at Grace Academy so that they can reach their full potential. It is important that we identify the reason for their reluctance to attend school as soon as possible and work together to solve the problem. To resolve any issues tutors should be the first point of contact, followed by Assistant Heads of Year.

6. To request a leave of absence during term time, a Student Absence Request Form **MUST** be completed. All schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. Please note requests for absence will normally be turned down, in line with government advice.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other actions like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

The more your child is in school, the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential!

BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

At Grace Academy we want to create a positive environment for learning, which inspires all students to discover, develop and fulfil their potential and aspirations. We expect a high standard of behaviour in lessons and around the Academy. If students do not meet our expectations they will receive consequences and sanctions.

C1

Is a verbal warning from the teacher to reinforce standards and expectations. Now is the student's opportunity to change their behaviour before they receive a punishment. If the student's behaviour improves there will be no further sanction

C2

Once they have been given a chance but still fail to change their behaviour, the sanction will be a 15 minute detention with their teacher either at break, lunch or after school

C3

If the student still fails to change their behaviour they will be sent to work in another room. The sanction is now a 20 minute detention at the end of the day

C4

If a student still fails to change their behaviour they will be placed in Internal Exclusion for the rest of the day and complete a half hour detention after school

Please note that parental consent is not required for detentions, however we will give you advance notice if the detention is going to be longer than 30 minutes.

Also, failure to attend detention will lead to an escalation of sanctions.

In rare extreme cases we may use temporary or permanent exclusion.

**Grace Academy places young people at the heart of all we do.
We are determined that all students should have access to unhindered
learning.**

Grace Academy is a Restorative Justice school...

What is Restorative justice?

Unfortunately, students sometimes make mistakes, and as a school we issue sanctions as a consequence of any poor behaviour. Restorative practice will be used after the sanction has been issued. Restorative justice allows a student to reflect on the mistake, it is not a sanction, it is a way of repairing any relationship that may have been damaged by the misdemeanour. Restorative Justice enables everyone affected by a particular incident the opportunity to have their say, repair their relationship and to find a positive way forward. This is about providing students with the opportunity to reflect, apologise and move forward from any harm that their actions may have caused.

How does Restorative Justice work?

After an incident where we believe that a restorative meeting needs to take place we will be asking students the following questions:

- **What happened?**
- **What were you thinking then/now?**
- **How were/are you feeling?**
- **Who do you think has been affected /how?**
- **What needs to happen to put this right?**

Why have we introduced Restorative Justice to Grace Academy?

On occasion some students do not meet our Behaviour Expectations and rather than just punishing students, we want to provide them with an opportunity for them to learn from, and apologise for, their mistakes. Restorative Justice also allows students to understand the impact of their actions on others, and the wider school community.

How can you support Restorative Justice?

Many parents are adopting these questions within their own homes, so you may find it beneficial to do the same if you require them to reflect on their behaviour.

GRACE REWARDS

At Grace Academy we are very proud of our students and love to reward them for making the right choices, working hard, behaving well and having good attendance and punctuality.

How do you earn rewards?

- Earn points in lessons for good work, effort, behaviour and demonstrating the academy values.
- Having excellent behaviour; make sure that you don't receive any behaviour points through inappropriate behaviour.
- Attend everyday - we want every child to have 100% attendance

What rewards will you receive?

This year students have enjoyed rewards including:

- Using their points to purchase items from our Grace Points Plaza
- Trips to Drayton Manor, Alton Towers, Twycross Zoo
- Free Pizza, cake, chips and ice cream
- Free time or golden time (where students have the chance to choose activities that they would like to do during the school day - watch a film, play football, jewellery making etc)
- Queue jumping passes for the school restaurant
- Certificates – for excellent work, effort and attendance
- Praise postcards are sent home to parents and careers

ACADEMY UNIFORM EXPECTATIONS

Uniform for Years 7-11

Our Year 7 -11 uniform consists of the following mandatory items, unless otherwise indicated:

- Grace Academy Solihull blazer*
- Plain black school trousers which hang below the ankle (not tight fitting)
- Grace Academy Solihull branded plain black knee length panel pleat skirt* (optional item)
- Plain white cotton shirt/blouse with a button collar - the top button of which must be fastened and it must be tucked in at all times
- Plain black (no logo e.g. Nike tick) V-neck pullover or cardigan (optional item)
- Academy tie* (Purple for Key stage 3 - Years 7-9; Black and gold for Key stage 4 - Years 10 and 11)
- Plain black school shoes (no branded trainers such as Nike Air Force or Adidas)
- Plain black socks or plain black tights



The Academy PE kit for Years 7-11

Mandatory Items

- Academy branded Nike training tee*
- Black shorts/ black cycling shorts
- Black sports skirt (for team sports)
- Black sports socks/ white ankle socks
- Non-marking sports shoes

Optional Items

- Black Academy branded long sleeve Nike crew top*
- Black Nike sports leggings*
- Black Nike short
- Black Nike socks

***These items must be purchased from our recommended school supplier Mansuri Schoolwear.**

Additional Uniform Information

Trousers (examples of trousers are shown below)

- Must not look like leggings, must not be skin tight or made of stretchy lycra material
 - School trousers must be loose enough not to cling to the leg and should hang below the ankle
- Some fashion stores such as New Look and Select class skin tight trousers as school trousers but these are not acceptable – suitable school trousers can be found in stores such as Primark and Asda

Skirt (an example of the approved academy skirt is shown below)

- Must be knee length, **no shorter**, include the academy badge on it and must not be made of stretchy lycra type material that rides up when students are walking.
- The approved academy skirt can only be purchased from our recommended uniform supplier Mansuri Schoolwear*
- No other types of skirts will be permitted.



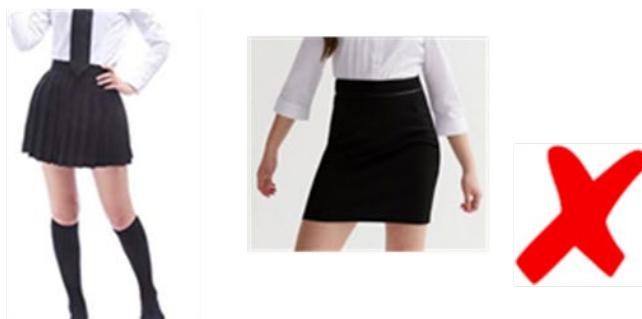
An example of acceptable girl's trousers.



Skin tight trousers are NOT acceptable.



Knee length branded skirt is acceptable.



Other types of skirts are NOT acceptable.

Footwear

- Leather and/or canvas footwear made by sports brands such as Nike, Converse, Adidas and Vans may be branded in shops as 'shoes' but at Grace Academy Solihull they are classed as trainers and as such are not allowed in school.
- In bad weather students may wear trainers or boots to walk to school but they must change into their school shoes as soon as they arrive at the academy.
- Sandals are not allowed in school, even in hot weather, because of the health and safety risks

Outerwear

- Students may wear coats, gloves and scarves to school in cold weather but must take these outer garments off as soon as they enter the academy building.
- Hooded tops are not permitted to be brought in to the academy (zipped hoodies included)

Buying Uniform Items

Official Grace Academy Solihull uniform items can be purchased from our recommended local school uniform supplier ***Mansuri Schoolwear**, where specified, however other items can be purchased more widely as detailed already, including from second-hand retailers. For a full list of prices please contact Mansuri via telephone or email, or visit their store or website.



Mansuri
Schoolwear

Address: 163 Yew Tree Lane, Birmingham B26 1AY

Tel: 0121 784 4230

Email: sales@mansuri.co.uk

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm



ACADEMY INFORMATION

TERM DATES 2026-2027

Autumn 1	Tue 01 Sep 2026 - Fri 23 Oct 2026
Autumn 2	*Wed 04 Nov 2026 - Fri 18 Dec 2026
Spring 1	Mon 04 Jan 2027 - Fri 12 Feb 2027
Spring 2	Mon 22 Feb 2027 - Thu 25 Mar 2027
Summer 1	Mon 12 Apr 2027 - Fri 28 May 2027
Summer 2	Mon 07 Jun 2027 - Fri 23 Jul 2027

*Please see INSET Days 3, 4 & 5 in the table below

ACADEMY CLOSED FOR STUDENTS

INSET Day 1	Tue 01 Sep 2026
INSET Day 2 (Trust Training Day)	Fri 23 Oct 2026
OCTOBER HALF TERM	Mon 26 Oct 2026 – Tue 03 Nov 2026
*INSET Days 3, 4 & 5	*Wed 04 Nov 2026 - Fri 06 Nov 2026
CHRISTMAS BREAK	Mon 21 Dec 2026 – Fri 01 Jan 2027
FEBRUARY HALF TERM	Mon 15 Feb 2027 – Fri 19 Feb 2027
EASTER BREAK	Fri 26 Mar 2027 – Fri 09 Apr 2027
May Bank Holiday	Mon 03 May 2027
MAY HALF TERM	Mon 31 May 2027 – Fri 04 Jun 2027

TIMINGS OF THE ACADEMY DAY

Tutor AM	08:20 - 08:45	The academy is open from 8.20 am		
P1	08:45 - 09:45	LUNCH TIMES		
P2	09:45 - 10:45	Lunch 1	13:00 - 13:30	Y7/9/11
Break	10:45 - 11:05	Lunch 2	13:30 - 14:00	Y8/10/12/13
P3	11:05 - 12:05			
P4	12:05 - 13:00	TUTOR TIMES PM		
Lunch/Tutor PM	13:00 - 14:00	TUTOR 1	13:00 - 13:30	Y8/10/12/13
P5	14:00 - 14:55	TUTOR 2	13:30 - 14:00	Y7/9/11

GRACE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Studies have proven that young people who engage in “extra-curricular” activities at school are more likely to have better attendance and also better academic results. With that in mind, Grace Academy’s enrichment programme is designed to give students an opportunity to participate in activities which will make them more well-rounded young people – and possibly create hobbies and interests that could last a lifetime!

Whether your child is interested in rugby or rock bands, science or Scalextric, football or films, crafts or choir, they will find a club at Grace Academy that’s just right for them! Here’s just a sample of some of the clubs we’ve run in the last year:

- **Basketball**
- **Homework Club**
- **Choir**
- **Badminton**
- **Football**
- **Netball**
- **Cricket**
- **Science Club**
- **Table Tennis**
- **Academy Musical and other shows**
- **Athletics**
- **Duke of Edinburgh**



SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES

At Grace Academy we recognise that all families need information and support from time to time for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it's as simple as just needing someone to talk to.



We offer help in the following areas:

- Parenting concerns
- Managing a family budget
- Signposting to agencies for legal and financial issues
- Adult learning
- Signposting for employment training
- Activities for the family

... and much more

Here is what one parent had to say about the support she received:

“Just being able to talk to someone has made such a difference and help received has been fantastic”

If you would like to find out more, please contact Maxine Bromley or Jessica Williams, our academy family support workers:

Tel: 0121 329 4600

Email: MaxineBromley@graceacademy.org.uk or jwilliams@graceacademy.org.uk

We're here to help!

