

23rd October 2025

Dear Families,

They say time flies when you are having fun. I cannot believe the first 8 weeks of this academic year have gone, that over 20% of the school year is now complete. Can I start with thanking the Joseph Leckie community for making me feel incredibly welcome as the new Principal of the school, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know staff, students and parents.

In my first assembly I shared with students a little bit about myself, my background, my own values, my aspirations for the school and what I expect from them as young people. The person that they become is of equal importance to me as how they do academically. I want them to develop into responsible citizens who have integrity, show empathy and add real value to society, and the Joseph Leckie community.

I have been really impressed by the vast majority of students, their attitudes to learning, the respect for each other and to my colleagues. Many students have introduced themselves to me, and I apologise that I haven't remembered their names yet! One Year 13 student, who was presenting in the Year 9 assembly about democracy, encouraged the students to become better than the people who went before them. I think this is a great sentiment. If every day we can all be the best versions of ourselves, then we can achieve this.

I have had the pleasure of visiting most subjects around the school and have seen many wonderfully engaging lessons. We are blessed with talented staff who have a passion for their specialist subject areas. We also have colleagues who go above and beyond, whether this be putting on session 6 lessons for year 11, giving up their time for enrichment activities or putting on trips.

So far this year we have had trips to Chester Zoo, Dudley Zoo, Carding Mill Valley, Cambridge University, Barclays Bank, and Shrewsbury prison (everyone came back!). On top of this we have had many careers events, some highlights were this week's year 11 mock interviews which were brilliantly handled by them and selected Year 10 students starting the Envision programme. Students at Joseph Leckie really are well looked after in terms of the opportunities they get, on top of the normal lessons that they receive. Please encourage your child to get fully involved in everything the school has to offer.

I am hopeful you will have seen the efforts we are making to promote the importance of good attendance. The evidence is very clear, and it is no surprise, that those students who attend school more often, are more successful than those that do not. We are appealing to you as parents to make sure your child does not fall below the persistent absent level of 90%, and that you aim to keep their attendance above 95% wherever possible.

One way to improve students' attendance is to ensure they are in school on time. Students should enter the building before 8:28am, if your child is arriving after this, they are late and will receive a 30-minute detention. If they are late, arriving after 9:00am they must be recorded as absent for the morning, even if they are only a couple of minutes late. This is why we have introduced an hour detention for all students who arrive after 9.00am. You can also ensure good attendance by following the NHS guidance around sending your child to school, even with a slight cough or a cold - [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#).

Don't just take our word on the importance of attendance. New research from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) reveals a troubling shift in parental attitudes towards school attendance. Nearly half of parents now believe it is "reasonable" for a child to be persistently absent from school. This softening of views is contributing to what the CSJ calls an "entrenched" school absence crisis.

Despite some progress since the pandemic, persistent absence remains 40% higher than pre-covid levels, with over 1.2 million children in the UK missing more than 10% of school sessions. The impact of this absence is profound.

- **Academic Achievement:** Pupils with over 95% attendance are three times more likely, as those with 85-90% attendance, to achieve a Grade 5 in English and Maths.
- **Crime:** A persistently absent pupil is three times more likely than other pupils to become a young offender within two years of leaving school.
- **Worklessness:** A persistently absent pupil is over six times more likely to become persistently NEET (Not in employment, education or training).
- **Earnings:** Persistently absent pupils are £10,000 worse off by aged 28, and each day of absence loses an estimated £750 in lifetime earnings.

We all need to adopt the attitude that school is not optional, it is the foundation of opportunity, wellbeing and future success. Please share these details with your child and insist daily school attendance is the norm, and any absence should be very rare.

Whilst most of our students always abide by our uniform policy, as the weather turns colder, we have noticed a few taking the opportunity to add additional layers. Please remind your child that there should be no hoodies, tracksuit tops or trainers worn. We will be reinforcing this on our return, making calls home and issuing consequences where students do not have the correct uniform. If there are any exceptional circumstances, it is important that you liaise with your child's Head of Year to discuss these. For full clarification of our Uniform and Appearance Expectations, please refer to the policy on our website: [Joseph Leckie Academy - Uniform](#).

We hope you have a lovely half-term holiday, and that our students take time to relax and recharge. We wish our Year 12 and 13 GCSE Maths and English students the very best of luck on their return with their examinations. Please remember students all start back on Tuesday 4th November. Please see below for further details of important dates for the half-term ahead.

Yours faithfully



Mr A McNaughton
Principal

Key Dates for this half-term:

Date	Information
Monday 3 rd November	School closed to all students – Staff attending The Forge Brook Trust professional development day
Tuesday 4 th November	All students return to school
Tuesday 4 th November to Monday 10 th November	GCSE Maths and English papers for Year 12 and 13 students
Thursday 27 th November	Year 12 and 13 parents evening
Friday 28 th November	School Closed to all students – Staff training day
Thursday 11 th December	Year 11 Studies skills evening for parents
Wednesday 10 th to Thursday 18 th December	Year 11 and 13 Mock examinations week
Friday 19 th December	School closes for Christmas holiday at 12:20pm for all students



Learn together, lead together.



Joseph Leckie Academy

Walstead Road West, Walsall, WS5 4PG

Tel: 01922 721071

Email: postbox@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

Chief Executive Office: Mr James Ludlow

Associate Principal: Ms Rachel Cook