

Wednesday, 15th July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 8 End of Year Letter

I have been so proud of the way our year group has grown and developed over the past year. The students have all shown increasing maturity, resilience and kindness, and it has been wonderful to see so many of them living out the Grace Way every day. Watching their confidence grow, seeing the support they show one another and celebrating their achievements has been a real highlight of the year.

There have been so many memorable moments to reflect on. One of my favourites was seeing so many of the students proudly taking part in our Academy's Cultural Dress Day. It was fantastic to celebrate the rich diversity within our school community, and they represented themselves, their families and their cultures with such pride, respect and enthusiasm. The atmosphere throughout the day was incredible, and the students should all be proud of the way they embraced the occasion.

I have also been continually impressed by their conduct and commitment when representing the Academy at sporting fixtures throughout the year. Whether competing in athletics meets, netball matches or boys' and girls' football fixtures, they have always displayed outstanding teamwork, determination and sportsmanship. A special congratulations goes to our girls' football team for reaching the semi-final of their competition—an excellent achievement that reflects the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.

Throughout the year, the students have engaged thoughtfully with a range of workshops and personal development opportunities, including the *It's Not Okay* sessions and our anti-bullying workshops. It has been encouraging to see the maturity with which they approached these important topics, contributing respectfully and demonstrating a genuine understanding of how we can all help create a safe, supportive and inclusive school community.

Another highlight of the year was our fantastic trip to the Black Country Museum. It was wonderful to see so many students fully immerse themselves in the experience, exploring the rich history of our local area with enthusiasm and curiosity. Their behaviour throughout the visit was exemplary, and many members of the public and museum staff commented on their politeness, respect and engagement. It was fantastic to see them bringing their classroom learning to life, asking thoughtful questions and making the most of such a valuable educational opportunity.

I would also like to recognise our wonderful student leaders, who have been outstanding ambassadors for the year group. Their willingness to volunteer their time, support whole-school events and lead by example



Principal:
Mrs E Wheller

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has been invaluable. They have shown responsibility, initiative and kindness, and I know they have made a positive difference to our Academy community.

It has also been wonderful to see so many students and their families supporting the wider life of the Academy by attending both our Christmas and Summer Fayres. The students' enthusiasm and community spirit helped make these events such a success, and it was lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves outside of the classroom.

I am especially delighted that so many of the students took part in *The Lion King*. Their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment were fantastic, and they should all be incredibly proud of what they achieved. The dedication they showed throughout rehearsals and performances has been inspiring, and I know the production will be a memory many of them will treasure for years to come.

As we reflect on everything the students have accomplished this year, I hope they recognise just how much they have grown—not only academically, but also as individuals. They have overcome challenges, celebrated successes, supported one another and continued to demonstrate the values that make this year group so special. It has truly been a privilege to watch them flourish.

I would also like to let you know that I have made the decision to leave Grace Academy at the end of this academic year. This was not an easy decision, but it is the right step for me and my career as I embrace the role of Assistant Principal at another school. It has been a privilege to work with such an amazing year group, and I will always look back on my time with them very fondly. Thank you for the laughter, the conversations, the achievements we have celebrated together, and for making every day worthwhile. They have each played a part in making my time as their Head of Year so rewarding.

I am pleased to let you know that Miss Dickinson will be taking over as your Head of Year. She knows the year group well, having been their Head of Department link and I know she will support and encourage the students as they continue their journey through school, and I am confident the students will make her just as proud as they have made me and will flourish under her guidance. Please encourage your children to continue to work hard, look after one another and take every opportunity that comes their way.

As we come to the end of the school year, I would like to take this opportunity to share a few important reminders with you.

Uniform and Equipment

When purchasing uniform for September, please re-familiarise yourselves with the Uniform Policy:

Do wear 	No thank you 
Black Grace Academy Blazer, with appropriate coloured year group flash (provided in September).	Polo-shirts or fashion blouses
Plain white cotton shirt with a top button which should be fastened at all times.	Jumpers/hoodies of any style or colour
Purple Grace Academy tie with GA logo on display below the knot.	

Do wear ✓	No thank you ✗
Tailored black, full-length trousers in a cotton and/or polyester material, with a zip or button fastening, which hang below the ankle. Or Plain, black pleated, knee-length skirt.	Trousers made of other materials such as a jersey material, nylon, or denim. Trousers with additional decoration such as piping. Trousers which are flared, wide fit, or skinny fit, or of a yoga pant/legging style.
Plain black socks, fully covering the foot and ankle to be worn with trousers. Plain black tights to be worn with skirts.	Ankle socks or socks with patterns. Socks worn with tights. Patterned or sheer tights.
Black leather or leather-look shoes.	Trainers, pumps, crocs, canvas shoes, boots, sports brands, stilettos
The Grace 5 1. School bag 2. Pencil case 3. Reading book 4. Water bottle 5. Planner (provided on the first day of term, or £7 to replace)	
<u>Additional Items</u>	
Acceptable ✓	No thank you ✗
● Plain hair band (white or black only) ● Hair colouring of a natural, single colour ● One small plain, gold or silver single stud allowed in each ear ● Clear pimple patches ● A mechanical or digital watch	● No hair accessories, including bows and clips ● No hair colours other than natural, single colours, extreme hair styles, spikes, patterns or shaved areas. ● No shaved eyebrows ● No rings, bracelets, necklaces. ● No additional piercings anywhere else on the face or body. ● No excessive make-up, nail varnish or acrylic nails ● No coloured pimple patches ● No chewing gum ● No fizzy drinks or energy drinks ● No mobile phones unless locked away at the start of the day ● No other personal devices, such as electronic games, earphones/headphones, musical devices, or recording equipment ● No smart watches

Attendance and key dates

Our school attendance target for all students is a minimum of 97% (i.e. no more than 6 days of absence during the school year). Please ensure that medical/dentist appointments are booked outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, we would anticipate that appointments would be made so that students are able to attain full attendance for the day (by gaining their AM and PM registration mark) by attending and returning to school before/after their appointment.

Term time holiday absences will not be authorised. Please make a note of the term dates for the next academic year:

Autumn Term 2026

First day of term: Wednesday 2nd September 2026 (Years 7 and 12)

First day of term: Thursday 3rd September 2026 (Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13)

Half term holiday: Monday 26th October- Friday 30th October

Last day of term: Friday 18th December

Christmas holiday: Monday 21st December - Friday 1st January 2027

Spring Term 2027

First day of term: Tuesday 5th January 2027

Half term holiday: Monday 15th February- Friday 19th February

Last day of term: Thursday 25th March

Easter holiday: Friday 26th March - Friday 9th April

Summer Term 2027

First day of term: Monday 12th April

Bank Holiday: Monday 3rd May

Half term holiday: Monday 31st May- Friday 4th June

Last day of term: Wednesday 21st July

Inset Days, Disaggregated Days and Bank Holidays (school closed to students)

Tuesday 1st September 2026

Friday 23rd October 2026

Friday 4th December 2026

Monday 4th January 2027

Monday 3rd May 2027

Monday 28th June 2027

Meet the Tutor Event

Following feedback from the Parent Survey, we would like to extend our Meet the Tutor event to enable the parents of students in all year groups to meet with form tutors at the start of the academic year, so that any questions or concerns can be addressed as quickly as possible. The event will run similarly to Parents' Evenings, but with some key differences:

- there is no need to book
- tutors will be based in form rooms
- tutors will be able to use your child's attendance, behaviour and progress data to discuss successes and targets for the new year.

Date: Thursday 3rd September

Time: 3:15pm-4:15pm, with refreshments available upon arrival

If you are **unable** to attend the event, please complete the [Google Form](#) and your child's form tutor will give you a call within the first half term.

New timings of the school day

Following our consultation, from September the timings of the school day have changed and also include more supervised "wrap-around care" to support parents. From 8am we will be running a free breakfast club for students in every year group every morning, where they are able to have a free breakfast, if they wish, sit and do homework or socialise with their peers, as well as the opportunity to attend homework club after school until 4pm. We also run a range of extra-curricular clubs after school and more details of these will follow in September.

Please see the timings below:

8:00-8:40	Family Breakfast and Homework support (optional)
8:40-8:45	Arrive for line ups
8:45-9:00	Line ups and AM form time
9:00-10:00	P1
10:00-11:00	P2
11:00-11:20	Break Time
11:20-12.20	P3
12:20-13.20	P4
13.20-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:55	P5
14:55-15:15	PM form time
15:15-16:00	Homework club (optional)

I wish you all a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break. I hope the students return in September refreshed, ready for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead, and determined to continue being the incredible young people I know they are capable of becoming.

Kind regards,



Alec Shrimpton
Head of Year 8

