



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM  
SCHOOL

# UOB SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Autumn Edition 2021 | Issue 05



# CONTENTS

Message from the Principal	1
Life at UoB School	2
Letters Against Isolation	4
Fundraising Goals	4
The Real MVPs	5
Connecting Stories	5
Developing Character through Sport	6
Christmas Magic	8
A Training School	9
Alumni Alert	10
UB Racing	10
Aristotle in Arizona	11
The Book Nook	12
In Other News...	13
Competition Winner!	14
Term Dates	15

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends of the School,

As our autumn term draws to a close we continue to contend with the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic – yet no less determined as individuals and a School community to foster a caring, safe, and ambitious environment for personal and academic growth. I recognise the need for a welcome break ahead for families, pupils, students, and without question my staff – to whom I pay particular tribute for their commitment and fortitude since the start of this 2021/22 academic year.

*Pictured: The Principal with Head & Deputy Head Prefects Jan, Zara, Warisha, and Lukas.*



As an education professional and leader I reflect about and remark how in awe I am of children and young people. Perhaps unsurprisingly this has been a long-standing and held position – yet is fiercely amplified at this current time. I see so very many of our pupils and students determined to succeed; they celebrate and embrace individuality and difference; they are passionate advocates for environmental protection as custodians of planet Earth; they care about a world they are part of, and want to shape.

I approach current narratives about ‘a catch-up generation’ with considerable caution. Of course this is an understandable phrase and sentiment noting the turbulence and instability presented to us all since March 2020. I am however clear in my own mind that our children today are most definitely the ‘optimistic generation’. They have hope. They bring hope. They inspire hope. And for that I applaud them – as exemplified through our newsletter here.

I am keenly aware that the holiday period ahead will bring a mix of joy and difficulty for many members of our community. My hope is that, however you will be spending the festive period, the scales tip for you in favour of joy – and relaxation. Wishing you Season’s Greetings, and a peaceful Christmas.

With kindest regards,

**Colin Townsend, Principal.**

“

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

*Desmond Tutu OMSG CH*

*South African Anglican cleric & theologian, known for his work as an anti-apartheid and human rights activist. He was the Bishop of Johannesburg then the Archbishop of Cape Town.*

”

# LIFE AT UOB SCHOOL

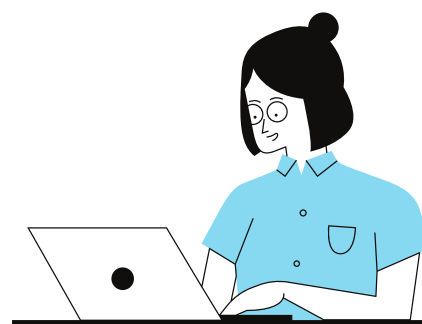
How have our Year 7 pupils settled in at University of Birmingham School since starting in September? A few of our pupils share their thoughts and experiences with us...

If you like sports, I would recommend joining the after school clubs. You can play with different years, all the way up to Year 13! I also have a mentor in School, a Year 10 pupil who is assigned to help you get through secondary school transition. My mentor's name is Raha and I meet with her every two weeks to discuss anything about School. She's a lovely person, just like everyone else here! **Haleema, 7A**



The characteristics I value are honesty, courage, and curiosity. I value honesty because in our School it's really important to be able to speak to your teachers and peers openly and to trust them. I value courage because in such a large community, it's important to be brave and stand up for what you believe. Curiosity is important because it's good to be curious in lessons so you can understand everything and continue to learn for life. **Hanny, 7S**

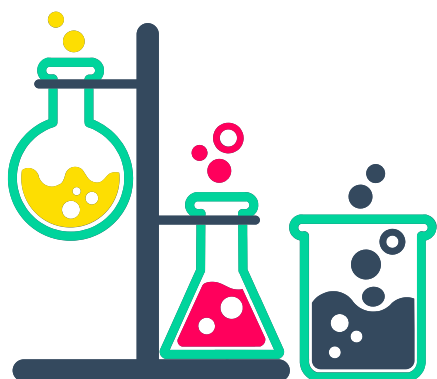
My favourite subjects so far are Computer Science, Mathematics, and Library Lessons. Mathematics and Computer Science can be challenging (that's what I like about them) - you must think outside of the box and experiment with different methods and options. In our Library Lessons, you are surrounded by an awesome selection of books, which can take you to a different world, and allow you to walk in someone else's shoes for a while. **Crina, 7S**



My favourite enrichment activity so far has been cooking, it's a nice break from the normal School day. A few careers I wish to pursue in the future are art-related and coding-related. **Daniel, 7G**



One of my proudest moments so far has been receiving the position of council rep. I enjoy taking part in after school clubs, especially the sports sanctuary. The career I am currently passionate about is dermatology, and I believe I will be able to accomplish this with the help of my teachers. For anyone looking to join UoB School next September, I would advise – do not be shy or afraid because everyone here is so welcoming and they appreciate you for being you! **Ayesha, 7N**



University of Birmingham School has opened up a lot of extra-curricular opportunities for me. When I first joined, I was very excited to learn about new subjects, especially Chemistry and Physics. The School's enrichment programme has provided me with knowledge that pupils wouldn't usually be exposed to anywhere else. 'Build a Business' and 'Thank You Café' have been my favourite so far. **Samuel, 7T**

It's important to have a positive attitude when you start secondary school. Actively taking part in activities and learning can help you discover any hidden talents or likes you may have! **Zion, 7A**



The most notable difference I noticed between primary and secondary school is the change in responsibility. Being older means you have to become more responsible, mature, and accountable for your actions – the School helps you with this. **Danyal, 7G**

I leave School with the feeling of satisfaction – satisfaction that I have learnt something new everyday, improving my knowledge and skills, which makes me feel like I have achieved something. The School has a great curriculum with a friendly environment. **Kaya, 7S**



# LETTERS AGAINST ISOLATION...

Taking inspiration from the volunteers of 'letters against isolation' pupils spent time handwriting personalised letters for residents at a local care home.

Many senior citizens experience loneliness and this can have an effect not only on their mental health, but their physical health also. The impact of the pandemic only increased the problem of isolation within our community.

Pupils wanted to spread some kindness and warmth through handwritten letters and cards for a local care home in Selly Oak. Pupils wrote about their experiences of lockdown and post-pandemic life, sharing ideas of activities and hobbies they took part in to keep them motivated. Others shared poetry, song lyrics, and stories about school and family life.



We were lucky enough to have been able to hand deliver the letters and meet some of the residents outdoors, socially distanced. The residents were delighted with their mail, it was well received! Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed the visit and we hope to maintain the relationship for the foreseeable future.

## FUNDRAISING GOALS

Year 9 pupils have been raising money for their chosen charities UNICEF and Islamic Relief. They self-organised weekly fundraising events to include several activities, such as a penalty shoot-outs, a gameathon, and basketball games. Staff and pupils donated money to take part and the winners received prizes in the form of sweet treats and chocolate.

Well done to all involved. We raised over £100!



# THE REAL MVPs



The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a programme designed to help young people speak out against bullying, violence, and abuse. It enables pupils to identify and challenge negative behaviour inside and outside of School.

Our Year 10 pupils volunteered to become UoB School MVPs, and after receiving extensive training, have been working closely with younger pupils delivering pre-planned sessions. Topics covered include mental health and wellbeing, awareness of violence and its effects, bullying in person and online, to name a few.

The programme has been co-produced and developed by sector leads including WM Violence Reduction Unit, the University of Birmingham, The James Brindley Foundation, and Positive Youth Foundation. It is unique, because it's the pupils who take lead. The pupils now play an important role in tackling negative behaviour within the School and community.

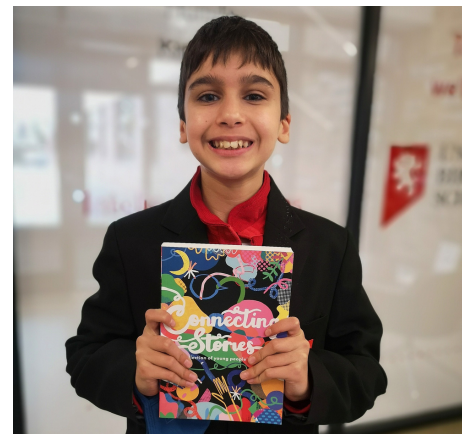
*"The pupils have taken to their roles as mentors instantly and have adapted extremely well. They have had excellent feedback from the pupils they mentor and staff."* Mr D Roberts, Pupils Pastoral Manager.

Our MVPs are able to develop their skills in leadership and communication, and by using the values that are core to our School (kindness, resilience, empathy, confidence) are having a positive influence in the School environment already.

# CONNECTING STORIES

Congratulations to pupils Maryam J and Rowan K in Year 9, who have had their stories published in the National Literacy Trust anthology 'Connecting Stories'. A celebration of the creativity and achievements of young people across England.

The book reflects 'The Stories of Our City' from shopping in the Bullring with your family, memories with a loved one at a local park, or enjoying a special treat with a friend at a local cafe.



# DEVELOPING CHARACTER THROUGH SPORT

Physical Education lessons, like our School community, are a true melting pot of interests, beliefs, aptitudes and opinions. We celebrate this in our lessons through a broad and varied curriculum, with a purposeful slant towards Character Education. We strongly advocate that Physical Education is much more than simply 'playing sport' and that it is a supportive vehicle to societal flourishing.



From a sporting sense, it is well documented that elite athletes who measure success through intrinsic factors (such as effort, displaying character virtues, experiencing personal growth, rising to the challenge) rather than extrinsic factors (medals, prize money), feel less depleted and have more positive fulfillment and pride. In turn, this motivation energises an athlete to commit to being the best version of themselves, more often; exactly what we aspire our pupils and students to be.

In the same way athletes train to enhance muscular strength, through conscious planned attention and practice, exercised regularly and consistently, muscles become stronger and we are able to rely on our capabilities when the pressure is on. The Physical Education curriculum aims to harness character strength, where practise becomes permanent and we flourish as model citizens.

We purposefully invite pupils and students to practise character virtues by putting every young person outside of their comfort zone practically and socially. By recognising the individual who runs the slowest but does not give up, the individual who stops to help advise a peer where they went wrong, or the individual who puts their hand out first to shake their opponents hand at the end of a game, our pupils and students recognise that PE is far from just 'being good' at sport, and encourages modelling good sportpersonship and teamwork.

Sport provides the opportunity to teach young people what good character looks and feels like, and how it can impact success and teamwork. Through our commitment to demonstrate this in our lessons, pupils and students are then able to apply these qualities to other areas of their lives, inspiring the next generation of citizens who will flourish in society.

## **What we do**

We provide explicit opportunities for leadership to encourage young people to make decisions and empower pupils and students to understand when a decision is right or wrong and to get them to reflect on the impact this has on others. In years 10 and 11 this term, pupils have embarked on a Leadership Pathway and achieved the Level 1 Sports Leaders UK Award in conjunction with the charity Sport4Life.





We also work with organisations such as they YST (Youth Sports Trust) and their Girls Active Programme, and University Sports Clubs to seek further leadership opportunities in our community. Consequently, not only are our pupils and students practicing their civic virtues – we are ensuring that as an organisation, they are being virtuous by sharing our wisdom, kindness and generosity in the local area.

### **Sport at UoB School**

The School is back to full swing with its sporting endeavours, having competed in fourteen different sporting fixtures across the city since October half term. Individuals and teams have collectively participated in rowing, athletics, table tennis, rugby, football and handball, representing the School and our district of South Birmingham against local and regional rivals. Looking ahead to the festive break, there are many more fixtures in store for all year groups, including our Sixth Form, to compete in indoor cricket, volleyball, basketball, badminton and hockey.

There are nine different sports clubs which take place before and after School weekly, attracting hundreds of pupils to participate recreationally, socially and competitively. Our Year 7 and 8 pupils in particular have really benefited from the social benefits of sport, getting to know each other and making friends from different class groups. Our examination pupils and students are also reaping the benefits of their hard work and commitment, using enrichment sessions to bolster their practical sporting portfolios. Sport at University of Birmingham School is bright, and we are really excited to see where the future takes us!



# CHRISTMAS MAGIC

A Christmas poem for us all, sending a message of love, care, and reflection this holiday season.

It's the magic of Christmas  
Puts a smile on your face  
Visiting family  
Their warm embrace.

It's the magic of Christmas  
When everyone's thoughts  
Are sharing with others  
What each other's bought.

It's the magic of Christmas  
When we may remember  
The people out there  
Who dread December.

It's the magic of Christmas  
So open up your hearts  
And think of others  
Who may live apart.

It's the magic of Christmas  
That makes you choose  
To offer your help  
Others lives to improve.

Let the magic of Christmas  
Fill your hearts this year  
Help someone this Christmas  
So they have nothing to fear.

*By Mrs M. Dimmock*



# A TRAINING SCHOOL

Close to ninety trainee teachers from the University of Birmingham have had their first week 'serial placements' at University of Birmingham School.

Trainee teachers from Biology, History, Mathematics and Physical Education joined us for one week as their first introduction to secondary teaching – for many, it's the first time they have been in school since they were pupils themselves! Subject leaders from UoB School worked closely with their UoB subject tutor counterparts to put together a cohesive series of lesson observations and small group teaching, so that they can begin to understand what it means to join our noble profession as moral educators. The trainee teachers also have the opportunity to learn about how we teach Character Education, and many joined in enthusiastically with our enrichment programme. Eight students in various departments will also be completing their first teaching placements with us.

We were particularly delighted to be able to offer a short placement to a student from our first ever Sixth Form cohort. Riel joined our Sixth Form in 2015, and after completing a fine Art degree in London, has returned to Birmingham to train to be a teacher. Her work still graces our walls here and continues to inspire our Sixth Form artists – a couple of whom remember her from when they were in Year 7!

*"I'm excited to be embarking on my teaching career, to be able to motivate the younger generation is something I am passionate about."*

*Returning to my Sixth Form to learn from a few of my former teachers was a great experience. I was truly inspired by their work, especially within character education."*

**Riel, UoBS Sixth Form Alumni**



We continue to share our passion for inspiring roots into teaching by working with students from the University in their final year, offering lectures, tours, and placement opportunities. 45 students who are taking a module in 'Introduction to Teaching' spent time with us this term, and students from Biology, Physics and Computer Studies are currently undertaking a placement here, observing lessons and mentoring A level students.

As a University Training School we are also becoming more involved in research with the University. We are currently collaborating with other schools and the University of Birmingham on a large cross city project mapping the challenges and barriers to race equality in the context of pandemic disruption, through cross-city conversations with parent, pupil and teacher groups, which will then inform future professional development for schools in the City and beyond. The Psychology and Physics departments are undertaking smaller research projects with various universities, and we continue to be involved closely with research with the Jubilee Centre for Character Virtues.



# ALUMNI ALERT!

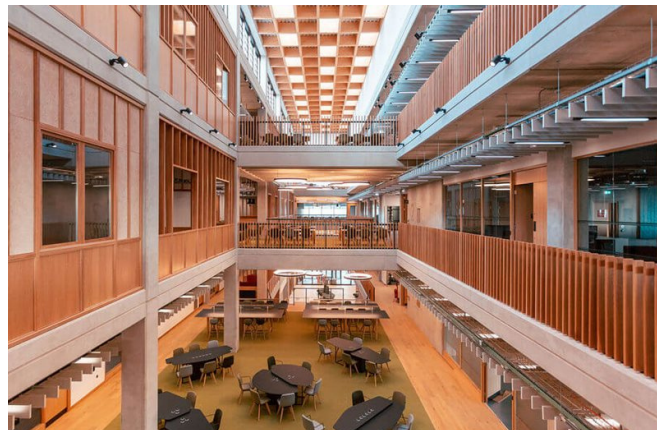
Former UoBS Sixth Form student Baúan has recently graduated from the University of Birmingham and has set up his own sustainable, eco-friendly delivery service - Kaientai, in partnership with his brother. He visited UoB School this term to talk to our younger pupils about his journey so far, in hopes to inspire the next generation of learners and entrepreneurs.



## UB RACING

A group of A level Physics students visited the School of Engineering at the University of Birmingham in November. The students were particularly interested in studying mechanical engineering or a similar discipline after A levels.

Engineering students from the University provided a guided tour of the new, impressive engineering building and surrounding areas on campus.



Alongside studying for their degree, UoB students also benefit from being able to take part in enrichment clubs and societies. Not only are these a great way to socialise and meet other students, they enrich the experience, knowledge, and skill set of those involved. 'UB Racing' consists of a group of students, who in their own time, plan, build, and race a kit car. Our Sixth Form students were lucky enough to be able to view the racing workshop and had great discussions with current UoB students about the types of courses and potential careers they could pursue in the near future.





# ARISTOTLE IN ARIZONA



It is our mission at University of Birmingham School that the people in our communities flourish and inspire other citizens to build better communities and a better world.

The 'Aristotle in Arizona' project will take eight of our pupils and students from Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, with three accompanying staff members, to visit three schools in Arizona that have a similar mission, to see the extent to which Global British Values are in fact Global Values, and explore the similarities and differences between our schools.

The pupils, students, and staff will immerse themselves in a classical education at three Great Heart Schools within a curriculum built upon a classical liberal arts tradition, and seek to compare and contrast our own Aristotelean neo ethics with their intention to cultivate the hearts and minds of students in the pursuit of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Participants will be expected to take part in a live stream across the Atlantic between schools and the project will continue in the UK with pupils, students, and staff creating a short series of presentations based on what they have learnt in their immersion in classical education, as well as what they have learnt about how far virtues transcend continents.

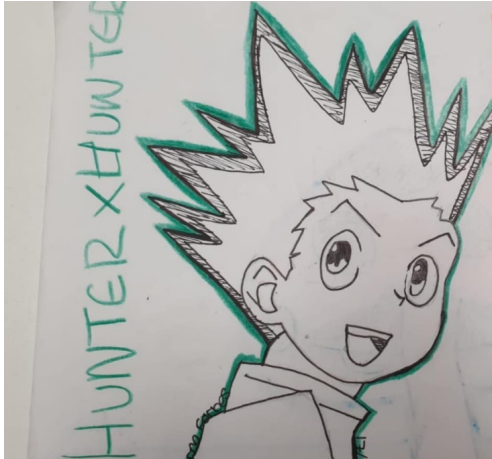
Virtue is practical, so there is little point in knowing what is theoretically virtuous if it is not practised. This opportunity will provide pupils and students with the chance to develop courage, empathy, kindness and curiosity; to practically engage in global citizenship and social action and to develop judgement, reasoning and resourcefulness, life- long skills that will help them live a purposeful life.

We've had an overwhelming amount of applications from our pupils and students. Successful applicants will be informed of their selection by the end of the year.

The project is being funded by the Turing Foundation.

# THE BOOK NOOK

Updates from our School Library...



## MANGA CLUB

This term we introduced a new library club for manga and animé enthusiasts. Fans of the Japanese graphic novels are able to read collectively, discover new series, and discuss their favourites with other pupils.

Alongside reading, pupils also take part in origami and create manga inspired artwork.

Manga club takes place before School for Key Stage 3 pupils.

## OUR NEW LIBRARY ASSISTANTS

Last summer we opened applications for the position of library assistant. We were inundated with interest to join the library team, with over fifty applications. Ms Middleton and a group of prefects interviewed the candidates – the standard was extremely high, making the final selection really difficult!

Successful candidates received training and now help in the library during break and lunch. It has been great to see pupils and students from different year groups working together to keep the library tidy, help peers find books, and run events including World Book Day and Harry Potter Book Night for 2022! It's lovely to see that happy 'buzz' in the library again!



## Top borrowers this term:

1. Shanti Richards Year 9
2. Nedesh Prakashkumar Year 8
3. Ameera Ali Year 9
4. Tehami Imran Year 7
5. Aryan Mansar Year 7
6. Tarah McKay Year 9
7. Hafsa Rehman Year 9
8. Nadia Gancarz Year 7
9. George Moyes Year 9
10. Kaleb Thomas Year 7



## TOP CLASS: 7T

borrowing the most books this term



## 6,300 BOOKS

were borrowed from the library this term



# IN OTHER NEWS...



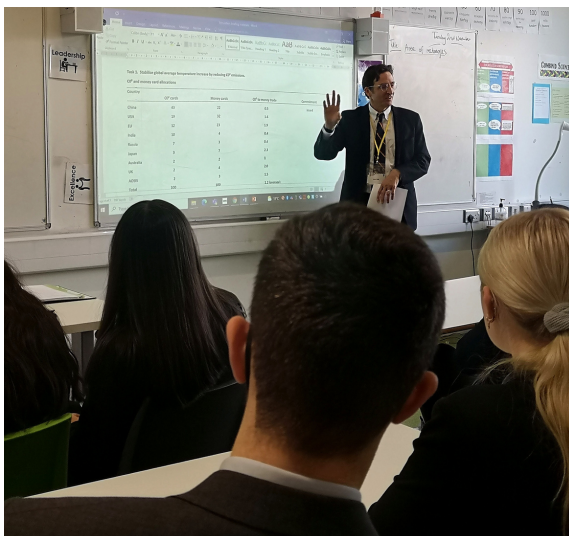
## Period Poverty

A team of Year 11 pupils launched a project at the beginning of term to ensure pupils have access to period products when needed, whether at School or at home. In time for the first half term of the year, the group created mini 'takeaway' kits for pupils to take home, ensuring they had enough supplies over the holiday.

An incredibly kind and thoughtful gesture, entirely led by the pupils themselves. We are very proud of them. The pupils hope to add to their supplies by expanding to other toiletries in the near future. Watch this space!

## Winter Concert

We recently hosted our Winter Concert, sharing a selection of musical performances in front of a live audience. A delightful evening for all. We are proud of our performers, from the newly formed School Orchestra, soloists, senior musicians, to the Steel Pans Group. The evening ended with a special performance from our pupil rock band 'Purple Sundae' featuring guest performer Mr Fox! [Click here to listen to a selection of performances from the evening.](#)



## COP26

A level Geography and Politics students took part in a COP26 simulation activity in partnership with the University of Birmingham. The events included a briefing from Professor Mark Webber from the University, to prepare students for the seminar where discussions about potential solutions to the current climate problems and changes were had.

# COMPETITION WINNER!

Several of our Year 7 pupils took part in a Christmas Card Design Competition hosted by local MP for Birmingham, Gary Sambrook.

We are pleased to announce that UoB School pupil Roxanna in 7A won runner-up prize, from amongst a number of schools within the local area. Roxanna's design (pictured) will be on public display in the constituency for the community and local MPs to appreciate as part of the Christmas celebrations, and will be sent to the Prime Minister on a Christmas card.

Roxanna was presented with a certificate of achievement and a prize by MP Gary Sambrook, to congratulate her on the design. A fantastic way to end the year and celebrate. Well done Roxanna!



## Trampolining Champ!

Pupil Sean represented UoB School at the BSGA (British Schools Gymnastics Association) West Midlands schools trampolining contest recently and came first place in the disability novice category. Sean performed a ten bounce routine perfectly and will be moving on to the British National Competition soon.

Congratulations on your achievement Sean and we look forward to following your up and coming journey.



**Well done!**

### **Pupil with the most green stamps this term:**

Haris Sultan in Year 7 with 246 stamps

### **Form Group with the most green stamps this term:**

7A with 3340 stamps

### **Pupils with most green stamps in each year group:**

Year 7 Haris Sultan with 263 stamps

Year 8 Amber-Paige Jones with 175 stamps

Year 9 Evie Homer with 191 stamps

Year 10 Benj Ranford with 147 stamps

Year 11 Felix Christian-Ibeh & Merley Dsane-Laryea with 117 stamps



# Season's Greetings

From Team UoBS

## TERM DATES

### Spring Term 2022

\*Staff Professional Development Day: Tuesday 04 January 2022

**Term Starts: Wednesday 05 January 2022** (see page 16 for individual year group arrangements)

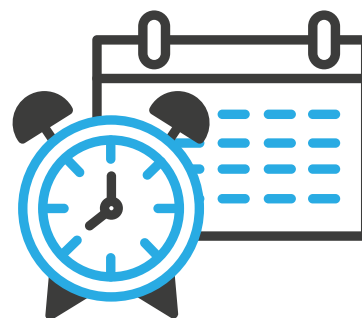
\*Staff Research Day: Friday 18 February 2022

**Half Term: Monday 21 February to Friday 25 February 2022**

\*Professional Development Day: Monday 21 March 2022

**Term ends: Friday 08 April 2022 from 12.15**

[View full term dates here](#)



## Winter Welfare - Useful Contacts

### PAUSE - Forward Thinking Birmingham 0207 841 4470

A mental health service provider for young people up to the age of 25 in Birmingham.

### Childline 0800 1111 [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free 24-hour helpline.

### NSPCC 0800 800 5000 [nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Support for children and anyone worried about a child.

### Anxiety UK 03444 775 774 (helpline) 07537 416 905 (text) [anxietyuk.org.uk](https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Advice and support for people living with anxiety.

## Parent & Carer Corner - Health & Wellbeing

[Click here to visit our new dedicated page for parents and carers to access resources and information around health and wellbeing.](#)

## Communication & Autism Team (CAT) - Parent Information

The Communication & Autism Team is part of Access to Education who are a group of services supporting children and young people with additional needs in schools in Birmingham.

[Click here to find out more about the CAT and how they support our School, pupils and students, and our families.](#)



# JANUARY 2022 RETURN

Guidance issued by the Department for Education requires secondary schools to put in place Covid-19 lateral flow testing at the start of the new term – onsite at the School. Unlike on previous occasions, there will only be one lateral flow test undertaken.

## Year 7 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Thursday 6 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal, incl. Covid-19 testing where permission has been provided.

## Year 8 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Thursday 6 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal, incl. Covid-19 testing where permission has been provided.

## Year 9 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Thursday 6 January** | Onsite in School as normal, incl. Covid-19 testing where permission has been provided.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

## Year 10 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Remote learning at home, following normal timetable.

**Thursday 6 January** | Onsite in School as normal, incl. Covid-19 testing where permission has been provided.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

## Year 11 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Onsite in School as normal, incl. Covid-19 testing where permission has been provided.

**Thursday 6 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

## Year 12 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | In Sixth Form for PPE exam sessions and Covid-19 testing\*, otherwise study leave and revision at home.

**Thursday 6 January** | In Sixth Form for PPE exam sessions and Covid-19 testing\*, otherwise study leave and revision at home.

**Friday 7 January** | In Sixth Form for PPE exam sessions, otherwise study leave and revision at home.

## Year 13 pupils

**Wednesday 5 January** | Onsite in School as normal, including Covid-19 testing.

**Thursday 6 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

**Friday 7 January** | Onsite in School as normal.

*\*Year 12 students and families will receive additional information from the Sixth Form team about when they are required to attend for testing along with their examination timetable.*

**All remote learning activities will be assigned on ClassCharts.** As we move into January we shall be keeping a close watch on any changes to national or local guidance in response to Covid-19 circumstances and will communicate any updates as needed. For your reference and information, the School's Covid-19 related risk assessment may be accessed [here](#).



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM  
SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School  
12 Weoley Park Road  
Selly Oak  
Birmingham  
B29 6QU

t: 0121 796 5000

e: [reception@uobschool.org.uk](mailto:reception@uobschool.org.uk)

w: [uobschool.org.uk](http://uobschool.org.uk)

Keep in touch



@uobschool