



# VERULAM SCHOOL

**Headteacher: Julie Richardson**

Brampton Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL1 4PR  
Tel: 01727 766100

[www.verulamschool.co.uk](http://www.verulamschool.co.uk)  
Email: [head@verulam.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@verulam.herts.sch.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

It has been a fantastic start to the academic year. This term saw the start of our new curriculum structure - with one-hour lessons, a two-week timetable, and split breaks and lunches for the Lower and Upper school. In addition, students returned from the summer break to enjoy the MUGA, fully refurbished toilets and new canteen furniture. Students and staff are acclimatising to the new structure and facilities well. It's been fantastic seeing students and staff enjoy the new facilities.

As you are aware, the main rationale for the changes is to make teaching and learning more effective. Moving to one-hour lessons provides more quality lesson time, particularly beneficial for practical subjects like science, art, music, technology and PE/Games. Staff have adapted their schemes of work accordingly to utilise this extra classroom time with retrieval activities (proven to enhance pupil memory), teacher modelling, literacy exploration and extended writing activities. The new structure has also allowed PSHE/RSE/Citizenship to be delivered to all year groups each week, and for GCSE options to be broader, with greater curriculum time being added to subjects like Religious Education.

However, another key benefit of the new structure is the impact it has had on recreational time. Queues in the canteen are significantly shorter and movement in the corridors is now safe; with less students moving in the narrow corridors at one time. The Senior Leadership Team carries out weekly Student Voice panels and the feedback has been incredibly positive. Boys feel safer when moving in the narrow corridors and are enjoying the larger play spaces and equipment that is available for them to use.

### Senior Leadership Team

I am pleased to share with you the new, extended Senior Leadership Team for 2022-2023. This year, each Year Head and Year Group is supported by a member of the team, providing additional support to students and parents.

The Senior Links are as follows:

Year 7 - Ms Perry  
Year 8 - Mr Zaman  
Year 9 - Mrs Avery  
Year 10 - Mr Mackenzie  
Year 11 - Mr Freakley  
Years 12 & 13 - Mr Base

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## The Senior Leadership Team



### Mental Health Day

Developing students to have positive mental health is incredibly important to all of the staff at Verulam. This half term, Mr Giles, our Mental Health and Well-Being lead, marked World Mental Health Day by launching the #AskTwice campaign with students. Research released by Time to Change reveals that, when asked, over three quarters (78%) of us would tell friends and family we are "fine" even if struggling with a mental health problem. #AskTwice encourages people to ask twice with interest. We encourage all parents/carers to listen and take what your loved one has to say seriously. It can really show that you care and can play a huge part in preventing someone from reaching a crisis point.

### Black History Month 2022

Over the course of Black History Month, a number of events have taken place to understand and reflect on Black History, whilst celebrating those that are making Black History today. This year, staff have led a number of events/activities to celebrate Black History Month with students. Some have included:

- Looking at a range of black composers and listening/studying some of their pieces in music
- Reading a poem written by a famous black mathematician in Maths
- A competition around identity in KS3 art lessons
- Sky Sports newsreel in PE celebrating black sporting icons
- A celebration of black entrepreneurs, economists and lawyers in Business Studies
- The study of black technologists in Technology

We have also been honoured to welcome two inspirational examples of people that are making black history today: drummer from the Composers, Stephen Asamoah-Duah <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=818pKI45A10> and soprano and BBTA winner of the best opera production

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or performance award, April Koyejo-Audiger <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTpXF6nduj0&t=609s>. Both guests, delivered inspiring assemblies to different year groups, sharing what Black History Month means to them, as well as their journey into their chosen career.

Artist, Kay Rufai, has started the Smile-ing Boys Project with a year 9 cohort, exploring identity, culture and masculinity. The project runs for 8 weeks and culminates in a fantastic exhibition, enhancing pupils' confidence and self-worth. You can find [more information on the project online](#).

### Rewards

This term we launched a new reward - **The Blue Stag**. In order to achieve this prestigious award, students must exhibit the Verulam Values of Excellence, Character and Respect, by acquiring a Letter of Recognition for each of the following areas. Once all of the letters are achieved students will be awarded the Blue Stag. In addition, reward trips have been planned in the spring and summer terms to reward pupils for attendance, good behaviour and House Points.

To date, 291 Letters of Recognition have been issued across all the areas!



Earn a Blue Stag by achieving a Letter of Recognition (LOR) for each of the following areas:

V	VOICE & VISION
E	ENTERPRISE & ASPIRATION
R	RESILIENCE
U	UNDERSTANDING & RESPECT
L	LOVE OF LEARNING
A	ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY
M	MAKES A DIFFERENCE & LEAVES A LEGACY

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### Equipment

As you enter the half term break, it is the ideal time to take stock of what equipment your child may need in order to access the curriculum fully. Half term provides an opportunity to get any items that your child may have exhausted or lost.

All students are expected to have the following equipment in their bags each day:

- Black and Green Pens, pencils, ruler, rubber
- Protractor and compass (or full maths set)
- Scientific calculator with fractions button – we recommend Casio fx-83GTX
- Highlighters
- A charged device
- Headphones with a 3.5mm jack (for computing, where applicable)
- Exercise books for the day's subjects
- PE/Games kit (if applicable)
- Copies of any set texts being studied (i.e. GCSE English texts)

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In order for your child to fully access the curriculum and engage in learning activities so that they reach their full potential, it is essential that they are fully equipped each day. As a result, from half term staff will be issuing a sanction if a student is missing an item/s of equipment that prevents them from engaging in the tasks set. If your child is in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant and you need any financial assistance in obtaining any equipment, please contact Mrs Avery.

### **Bring Your Own Device**

This term we have rolled out devices for Years 7 and 10. As of half term, all students are expected to bring a fully charged device to school each day. All staff will be fully utilising Google Classroom and planning to incorporate devices into their lessons from this point and will be sanctioning pupils that forget their device accordingly. If you are still awaiting a device or have any questions/queries, please contact Mr Zaman.

### **Homework**

Homework is an essential part of school life and a vital opportunity for students to consolidate their learning. Please see the [updated guidance on what homework you should expect for your child here](#).

### **Uniform**

Students' uniform this term has been incredibly impressive. Thank you for ensuring that uniform and appearance standards are maintained. However, as we approach colder months, please be reminded that hoodies and trainers are not permitted.

Following on from the parent consultation on uniform last term, we are undergoing a revised uniform for 2023-2024 that will feature significantly less branded items. This is to support families in light of the ongoing cost of living crisis. Later this term I will be announcing further details regarding the uniform for next year.

In the interim, please note that the following **are** permitted with immediate effect:

- A plain dark grey V-neck jumper (please note that black is **not** permitted)
- Plain long or short sleeved shirts can be worn all year round with a tie (short sleeved shirts do not have to be summer shirts - these are being phased out)

If you would like to read more about what our students have been doing this term, please read our [student newsletter, Verulam Vox](#). I wish you and your family a safe and restful half term, and thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Miss J Richardson  
Headteacher

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