



VERULAM
SCHOOL

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End of term letter – December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's the end of the calendar year and of just my second term at Verulam. So much has been packed into these last 13 weeks that it seems like half a lifetime! It has also been the first term of the new Ambition Education Trust where we are forging strong links with the other 9 local schools in the trust.

I firstly want to thank you for your support for your son/daughter and for the school.

Nowhere was this more evident in the October fireworks festival at Sandpit Lane that was masterfully led and marketed by the Verulam PTA. The event raised close to £10,000 and this will be used to support the school and learning in many ways.

You will have seen tangible evidence of this in the PTA support for our new electric minibus that is reducing our carbon footprint of transport to sports fixtures and between Beaumont, Sandringham and Verulam for the sixth form consortium. Being able to charge from our extensive solar panel installation shows our commitment to the environment, alongside the appointment of our new waste contractor, Cawleys, where 60-70% of school waste is recycled at their advanced [materials recycling facility](#).

Verulam success

The future success of the school is tied to sustaining and increasing the number of students we have entering and staying on at school – government funding is tied directly to this.

Of course, parents and students choose a school because of multiple factors, but one of the main drivers is outcomes and destinations. Draft national performance data for GCSE and Level 2 vocational qualifications was published in early December [on the government website](#) and I am pleased to report that Verulam students have continued to show strong academic performance. Verulam has exceeded national and local authority averages on all key measures. A key metric is the 'Progress 8' measure that shows how boys have performed at Verulam versus pupils nationally who left primary school at the same level. A score of +0.4 shows that we have added almost half a grade in all subjects versus the national data and also

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ranks us second in Hertfordshire amongst non-selective boys' schools and 25th in the county out of over 80 secondary schools.

Verulam futures

We had a successful Apprenticeship evening on the 8th December, supported by local FE colleges and employers and our 'Into the Sixth' evening is at **6pm on the 9th January** for those looking to join our sixth form. It is a special and vibrant place where you can be truly known, and also be based here but consort at Beaumont and Sandringham schools to access a full range of subjects and specialist teaching.

In site development, we are hoping that Hertfordshire County Council approach us to take additional students coming into year 7. If they do, as well as growing our school community, this will unlock funding where we have exciting plans to refurbish and develop the Science and D&T/Art blocks and increase dining space. We will know about this by the time school allocations are announced in March.

We are also installing another serving station in the canteen and I would like to congratulate our new catering company, Culinera, for the positive impact they have made in their first term. Food quality and quantities are greatly improved; boys have voted with their feet and the additional station is to cater for the increased demand.

On sports, we have exciting plans to install floodlit Padel tennis courts next to the Sports Hall and you have been approached separately to gather your support for this before we submit a planning application. This is dependent upon securing both funding and planning permission and will be a great asset for the school and community. We have also begun early talks about installing a 3G artificial grass pitch at Sandpit Lane and are hoping to continue our close partnership with St Albans City FC. This is at an early stage of development, but we will provide more information as the plans progress.

Parents/carers and students will be receiving reports this week and we are encouraging all parents to access the [My Child At School](#) (MCAS) app or website. Year 11 we are holding over until Friday 10th January when we will have a formal 'mock exam results day.' I wanted to congratulate all students in year 11 and 13 for their excellent conduct during the last three weeks of formal exams in the sports hall. Thanks also to our new team of invigilators (many of whom are parents!) and Ms Destickere for making it run smoothly. We will gradually be moving over all communications, payments, parents' evening bookings etc to the My Child At School platform to reduce the number of different digital tools we are using, with a target of 1st September 2025 to complete this move.

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Staffing update

We say goodbye to Ms S Khan at the end of term who was our lead teacher of sociology. We wish her well with the next steps in her career. We welcome the following new members of staff from January:

- Ms Edgar, 2nd in charge of English
- Ms Willetts, Teacher of English and Literacy Coordinator
- Ms Braban, Lead teacher of Sociology
- Ms Liu, Teacher of Art (part time)

We have a specialist music supply teacher starting in January and hope for a permanent solution as soon as possible. I am sorry for the impact that staff illness has had on the teaching of music this term. Unfortunately this has meant that we were unable to run a winter concert this year but hope to be able to run a concert in the summer term.

Further news

When I started at Verulam, a number of parents told me they wanted to know more about what is going on at the school. We hope that a shorter monthly newsletter that can be read on a phone alongside our social media updates are meeting this need. All Ambition Education Trust school websites are in the process of being redesigned and will launch at a later date this academic year.

Everyone at Verulam wishes you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. We look forward to welcoming your sons and daughters back on 6th January, rested and ready to go again!

Yours faithfully



Fergal Moane
Headteacher

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