RIVER ACADEMY

Issue 6

Headteacher's Update

23rd October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have reached the end of the first half term of the academic year. The first seven weeks are always incredibly busy as staff and students settle into the rhythm of school life with new timetables, teachers, lessons, routines and responsibilities.

Thank you for your patience on Thursday as we dealt with the temporary outage affecting Class Charts. Thankfully, service was restored by the morning, but it certainly presented challenges for us all.

Electives and Enrichment

One of the great strengths of River is the breadth of opportunities available to our students. Through our electives programme, it has been wonderful to see students embrace activities as diverse as Arabic, yoga, boxing, fine art, chess and theatre.

Beyond electives, 65% of students have attended at least one extracurricular club or activity this term. This is a fantastic figure and reflects the enthusiasm with which so many students have embraced school life.

If your child is among the 35% who have not yet participated, I encourage you to explore the weekly bulletin together. Our clubs provide opportunities to develop new skills, build friendships and become

fully involved in the wider life of the school.

Attendance

Our current attendance figure of **96.5%** is outstanding and reflects the commitment of our entire school community. High attendance gives students the best opportunity to succeed academically, build relationships and benefit from everything school has to offer. Thank you for your continued support.

We have also launched our **'Fun Friday'** initiative. As attendance is typically lower on Fridays nationally, we are offering a range of incentives to encourage students to attend school every Friday throughout the half term.

Home Learning at Half Term

As many River families will know, we do not set homework specifically for completion during half term. We believe the break should provide an opportunity for students to rest, recharge and spend time with family and friends.

Some assignments on Class Charts may remain live, but deadlines have been set to take account of the holiday period, so no student will be disadvantaged.

For those who wish to extend their learning, the Sparx platforms offer plenty of opportunities for additional practice and challenge. As with so much in education, it is often the accumulation of small habits over time that brings the greatest rewards.

Working in Partnership

Thank you to everyone who attended the **Year 7 Meet the Tutor Evening**. I was delighted that nearly 80% of families were able to attend either in person or by telephone.

Strong partnerships between home and school are among the most important factors in a child's success. It was particularly pleasing to hear so many positive reflections on how well our Year 7 students have settled into life at River Academy.

On November 12th we will be holding an open morning for Year 7 parents between 11am and 12.30pm to see the school in action and observe how the classrooms work and understand the school procedures a little more. A full invitation will come out after the break but please do try and

make a date in your calendars if possible.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

We were also delighted by the attendance at the **Duke of Edinburgh's Award** launch evening, with around 50 families represented. Since applications opened, well over half of the year group has expressed an interest in taking part.

With only 32 places currently available, we face some difficult decisions. Students wishing to apply are being asked to submit no more than 250 words explaining why they would be suitable candidates for the programme.

It is incredibly encouraging to see so many students eager to participate in an opportunity that develops resilience, independence, commitment and service. We will communicate further details about the application process after half term.

Have a fantastic and restful break.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Hartley
Headteacher
River Academy