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Headteacher: James Woollin

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Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of Term 1, I would like to thank you for your continued support and reflect on the many positive developments across the school. In this letter, I will share an update on the progress we are making, highlight the importance of attendance, celebrate some of the opportunities students have enjoyed and provide a few important reminders for families. The year has begun with a strong sense of purpose, and the new systems introduced in September are helping the school feel calmer, more organised and increasingly positive. We have also seen a welcome improvement in punctuality to lessons, with fewer students arriving late and more learning time being protected.

Continuing to improve

Our work to strengthen the school continues at pace. This term, we have continued to work with a range of external partners who provide constructive support and challenge. Their input is helping us to build on the progress already made and sharpen our next steps, particularly around attendance.

Regular attendance is vital to helping every student make progress, feel part of the school community and benefit fully from the opportunities available to them. Last year's Year 11 results showed a clear correlation between attendance and attainment: the average grade achieved by students with attendance of 97% or above was a whole grade higher than that of students whose attendance was 90%. Please continue to encourage your child to attend school as much as possible and to arrive on time each day. We greatly appreciate your support with this important priority.

I have also met with every Head of Department and Head of Year or Key Stage to agree clear priorities for the year ahead. This has created a stronger link between our whole-school priorities, departmental plans and the professional development of individual staff, helping us to maintain a consistent focus on improving students' experiences and outcomes.

Working together with families

Strong partnerships with parents and carers remain central to our work. It was a pleasure to welcome Year 7 and Year 12 families to our Meet the Tutor Evenings, while Year 11 Parents' Evening provided an important opportunity to discuss students' progress and next steps during this crucial year. Our Year 10 Focus Evening, delivered with Elevate, also provided practical guidance on supporting students as they begin the important GCSE phase of their education.

The Friends of Archway School also held a well-attended AGM last week, with many new parents there, enabling the group to continue its valuable charitable support for the school. Special thanks go to Sally Abbot, who is stepping down as chairperson after six years, and to Debbie Attucksang, who is stepping down as a committee member. We are extremely grateful to them both for the time, commitment and support they have given to the school. Fundraising for air conditioning will be a focus this year, and we are very grateful to everyone who contributes their time and support.

Mobile phones

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 has made the Department for Education's guidance on mobile phones statutory, requiring schools to be phone-free environments throughout the school day. Phone-free schools support better concentration, calmer social spaces, reduced online bullying and a safer environment for everyone. At Archway, phones may be brought onto the school site, but they must remain switched off and out of sight throughout the school day. We would be grateful if families could encourage children to leave phones at home unless they are needed for medical or transport reasons. Please also avoid contacting your child on their mobile during the school day; if an urgent message needs to be passed on, the school office will always be happy to help. Your support enables us to protect learning time and maintain a calm, focused environment for everyone.

School car park

I know that morning drop-off can be busy, particularly with the road closure on Parkend, and I really appreciate your patience and support. To help everyone arrive safely and keep traffic flowing, please use the designated drop-off points, leaving the marked parking bays available for staff arriving for work. If your child arrives early, they are very welcome to head into school where they can spend time in the canteen, so there is no need to wait with them in your car. We would also be grateful for your help in keeping access to our neighbours' homes on Wheeler's Walk clear and avoiding parking on double yellow lines. Thank you for helping to make mornings a little easier for our students, families, staff and neighbours.

Celebrating school life

The wider life of the school has continued to flourish. Our successful Sports Awards Evening celebrated students' achievement and commitment. Year 10 students attended a performance of Much Ado About Nothing at the world-famous Globe Theatre, while Year 13 students took part in a study skills masterclass at the University of Gloucestershire. Year 7 students also enjoyed a highly successful team-building day, which supported their transition and helped them to build positive relationships with their peers.

Sport has also enjoyed an excellent start to the year, with competitive fixtures fully underway. A particular highlight has been the progress of our U16 Girls' Football Team, who have reached the third round of the National Cup. Our 3G facility is being very well used, and structured lunchtime access, supervised by PE staff, is contributing to a calmer and more purposeful atmosphere during social times.

Thank you once again for your support throughout the term. I hope students and families enjoy a restful half-term break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back for Term 2.

Yours sincerely

James Woollin
Headteacher