FCAT

GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

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23rd October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well.

As we reach the end of our first half-term of the academic year, I am writing to thank you for your support and to reflect upon what has been an exceptionally calm, focused, and successful seven weeks at Garstang Community Academy (GCA). There is a genuine sense of optimism across the school, driven by the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our students, and our shared commitment to high standards.

A particular highlight of this half-term has been watching our new Year 7 cohort settle so seamlessly into secondary school life. Navigating new classrooms and routines can feel daunting, but our youngest students have adapted with confidence and enthusiasm. Furthermore, thanks to the collective efforts of students, staff, and families, our overall academy attendance is **1.4%** higher compared with the same period last year. Excellent attendance is fundamental to academic achievement and personal development, and we are grateful for your support in establishing these positive habits early in the term.

It has been a vibrant half-term filled with memorable events. We were overwhelmed by the tremendous turnout for our annual Open Evening and Open Morning. Seeing the queue stretch up the main car park was a wonderful testament to the high regard in which GCA is held. Prospective families were full of praise for the warmth of our school community and the outstanding confidence demonstrated by our student helpers. Parental engagement has been equally strong elsewhere; over 100 parents and carers joined us for our Year 10 Learn to Learn evening, exploring practical strategies to support effective revision habits and study routines at home.

Alongside classroom learning, students across all year groups have participated in a rich variety of enrichment activities and career pathway experiences. Earlier this term, a group of Year 11 students visited the University of Cambridge, providing an inspiring insight into higher education and reinforcing high academic ambitions. Year 7 students took part in the Lancashire County Council Streetwise safety presentation, while Year 9 students attended a workplace visit to Preston North End. We also hosted an engaging STEM workshop with EDF Energy, and a group of Year 10 and Year 11 students attended a specialised NHS Careers event to explore healthcare professions. In addition, local post-16 providers including Preston College, Myerscough College, and Kendal College have delivered assemblies and drop-in sessions to guide our senior students. Most recently, our Year 11 Sports Studies students completed a crucial element of their course this week by taking part in practical Outward-Bound activities in a wet Lake District. This will form a key component of their upcoming coursework assessment. Members of the public took the time to praise our students, which I am sure you will agree, is delightful to hear.

We were also delighted to welcome Peta Edwards from the Canary Girls Association, who delivered a series of moving assemblies on the forgotten heroines of the First and Second World Wars. Her presentations shone a light on the vital, often hazardous roles played by local women in Lancaster, Preston, and the wider Lancashire area during both conflicts. The talks sparked a remarkable amount of engagement, intrigue, and respect among our students. Inspired by their story, our History Department is now planning a dedicated project of remembrance and memorial to honour these unsung local heroes, ensuring their incredible contribution to our history is properly recognised and remembered across our school community.

In addition to student opportunities, our teaching staff have engaged in regular professional development throughout this half term to ensure high-quality instruction in every classroom. Guided

by our Fortnightly Focus training sessions, staff have been embedding key evidence-based routines that maximise learning time and keep students actively engaged. This includes starting lessons with prompt “go tasks”, using mini-whiteboards for quick whole-class checks, and ensuring structured end-of-lesson retrieval. Staff have also focused on diagnostic hinge questions to identify and address misconceptions live in the lesson, alongside adaptive teaching strategies that provide targeted scaffolding so every pupil can access ambitious curriculum content.

The second half of the autumn term promises to be equally busy and purposeful. Key events and dates to note include:

- **Year 11 Mock Examinations:** Our Year 11 students will undertake their first full series of formal mock examinations shortly after the break, providing crucial feedback ahead of their summer GCSEs. The majority of the examinations take place from **Monday 23rd November** and should be concluded on **Friday 11th December**. Year 11 students have received a personalised copy in today’s assembly, and I have included an overview of all the examinations below.
- **Remembrance Day Commemorations:** As an academy community, we will mark Remembrance Day with reflective assemblies and our traditional minute silence to pay respect to those who served.
- **Annual Awards Evening:** We look forward to celebrating the extraordinary achievements, progress, and character of students from last year's Year 11, The Class of 2026 at our Annual Awards Evening on Thursday 19th November.
- **School Careers Fair: On Thursday 26th November:** We are looking forward to welcoming a wide range of local businesses and education providers for our annual Careers Fair. Every student across the school will attend a session during the day, giving them a hands-on chance to ask questions, explore exciting job roles, and get inspired about their next steps after school. Representatives from more than 30 organisations will be in attendance with guests as diverse as; The Police, NHS, BAE systems and Forbes Solicitors to name but a few.
- **Term dates for the academic year 2027-2028:** These dates can be found below the Year 11 mock examination timetable.

We firmly believe that working in close partnership with our parents and carers yields the best outcomes for our children. Thank you once again for your dedication to Garstang Community Academy.

I would like to conclude this communication by recognising a special member of the team at GCA, Liz Macpherson who is my PA, HR and Office Manager. Following 19 years of loyal service to GCA and 34 years of working in education, Liz retires from education sector today. Liz has been a fabulous servant to our special community and we thank her for many years of service. We wish her the best of luck for her future endeavours and look forward to seeing her as a guest of school community in the near future.

I hope you and your family have a peaceful half-term break, and we look forward to welcoming our students back on Monday 2nd November 2026 refreshed for the weeks ahead.

Best wishes,

Satinder Singh
Headteacher

Year 11 Mock Exam Timetable

Date	Start Time	Length	Exam
23/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	English Language
24/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (H) - Maths P1 (H)
24/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (F) - Maths P1(F)
24/11/2026	11:25	1 hour 10 mins	French (F) - French Writing (F)
24/11/2026	11:25	1 hour 15 mins	French (H) - French Writing (H)
25/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Business Studies
25/11/2026	11:25	1 hour 30 mins	Geography
26/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Computer Science
27/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (F) - Combined Biology (F)
27/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (H) - Combined Biology (H)
27/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Biology (F)
27/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Biology H
30/11/2026	08:40	1 hour 40 mins	English Literature
01/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (F) - Combined Chemistry (F)
01/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (H) - Combined Chemistry (H)
01/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Chemistry (H)
01/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Chemistry (F)
02/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (H) - Maths P2 (H)
02/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (F) - Maths P2(F)
02/12/2026	11:25	1 hour 15 mins	Child Development - Child Development
02/12/2026	11:25	1 hour 20 mins	Hospitality & Catering
03/12/2026	08:40	2 hour 00 mins	History
04/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (F) - Combined Physics (F)
04/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 15 mins	Combined Science (H) - Combined Physics (H)
04/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Physics (H)
04/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	Physics (F)
07/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	RE - RE Paper 1
07/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	DT
07/12/2026	11:25	1 hour 30 mins	PE - PE Paper 1
08/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (H) - Maths P3(H)

08/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 30 mins	Maths (F) - Maths P3(F)
08/12/2026	11:25	1 hour 30 mins	Creative iMedia
09/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 45 mins	RE - RE Paper 2
09/12/2026	11:25	1 hour 15 mins	PE - PE Paper 2
10/12/2026	08:40	45 mins	French (F) - French Reading (F)
10/12/2026	08:40	1 hour 00 mins	French (H) - French Reading (H)
10/12/2026	09:30	35 mins	French (F) - French Listening (F)
10/12/2026	10:00	45 mins	French (H) - French Listening (H)

Term Dates 2027-2028

Term	September 2027 to July 2028
Autumn Term 2027	Starts: Thursday 2nd September 2027 **Half term: Monday 25th October 2027 to Friday 29th October 2027** Ends: Friday 17th December 2027
Spring Term 2028	Starts: Thursday 2nd January 2028 **Half term: Monday 14th February 2028 to Friday 18th February 2028** Ends: Friday 31st March 2028
Summer Term 2028	Starts: Thursday 20th April 2028 **Half term: Monday 29th May 2028 to Friday 2nd June 2028** Ends: Friday 21st July 2028
INSET Days (school closed to students)	Wednesday 1st September 2027 Friday 24th September 2027 Tuesday 4th and Wednesday 5th January 2028 Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th April 2028 Friday 30th June 2028