



GRACE ACADEMY NEWS

JANUARY 2024



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Wellbeing

As we enter the New Year, let's focus on our success and on our overall wellbeing. Education goes beyond grades, encompassing self-discovery and personal growth. Embrace each challenge as a chance to learn and celebrate your achievements, big or small. Take breaks and seek support. Here at Grace, we prioritise mental and emotional health.

This year, commit to a balanced approach, where self-care and a positive mindset contribute to both academic achievements and personal fulfilment. May the New Year bring a renewed dedication to education, grounded in a holistic perspective on wellbeing.



UK Polar Network

We are absolutely delighted to share the news that one of our entries to the UK Polar Network's Antarctica Day flag competition made it to Antarctica!

At Grace Academy, our year 7s have been learning about Antarctica. As a homework competition, all our year 7s designed a flag for Antarctica to celebrate of Antarctica Day, which marks the signing of the Antarctic Treaty on December 1st 1959. Isabella Darby's flag was chosen as the best in the year and was sent to the UK Polar Network.

This is a photo of Isabella's flag being held by a scientific researcher in McMurdo, Antarctica! The other photo shows a proud Isabella with her unique certificate. Congratulations Isabella- we are so excited that Grace Academy was represented in Antarctica.



Christmas Community Event

Grace Academy Darlaston staff and students came together on Tuesday 12th December to bring Christmas to the community.

Grace Academy Darlaston welcomed members of the local community through its doors for the annual Christmas Community Event. We invited members of Darlaston Town Hall as well as residents of The Bush Care Home, The Willows Nursing Home and Rubery Court Assisted Living Residence to get involved in the festive celebrations.



The event included a range of activities including bingo, raffles, a festive lunch as well as music and dance performances from our students.

Our students successfully demonstrated the Grace values of Potential, Respect, Integrity, Grace and Excellence throughout the day volunteering their time to make the day special for our guests.

Phil Miles, our Acting Associate Vice Principal and Ethos Lead stated "As an academy we want to help develop the character and values of our students. Events like this help our students develop their leadership and social skills and put our ethos into practice as well as taking part in a fun Christmas activity involving our local community".

It is incredibly important for our school to actively support the local community as much as possible through our events and outreach programs. We firmly believe in the profound impact that community engagement can have on the lives of our students and the local residents. The Christmas Community Event not only provided a day of joyous festivities but also fostered a sense of unity and connection among attendees.

Sharon Felton from 'Darlaston All Active' said "Today has been amazing for the younger and older generation to party together. You have targeted isolation within our community, that is very much needed. The young, talented people were amazing and we thank the staff and volunteers for supporting our community. Well done."

Looking ahead, Grace Academy Darlaston remains dedicated to nurturing these relationships and vows to continue organising events that enrich the lives of both our students and the local community.

Julie Anstey our Principal said "I would like to thank all of the students who participated in the performances, and to all of the many students that volunteered to support with the event, they did a fantastic job and we are very proud of them all. I would also like to thank the guests for attending. I hope they had a wonderful time, and we hope to see you again very soon. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!"

Our Community

Grace Academy Darlaston is dedicated to supporting its community through various initiatives such as our community litter picks, local heritage project looking at celebrating the culture of Darlaston, supporting at local town hall events, visiting the local library and volunteering at our local primary schools with the 'Big Project' schemes.

Through the 'Big Project', Grace Academy Darlaston actively engages in community outreach programs designed to uplift and empower residents. We work closely with Reflections Walsall to support the community's wellbeing & mental health.

We host exciting events such as J10 Christmas Market and are due to host the second instalment of the GAD Summer Fair in July where we are open to the public, promoting inclusivity and community bonding. We are looking forward to our Christmas lunch with our local care homes, welcoming them into our Academy for a range of activities to get into the festive spirit.

As an Academy we have been continuing to foster strong connections with our local businesses. Here at Grace Academy Darlaston, we extend our reach beyond the classroom, not only shaping the minds of our students but also actively contributing to the holistic development and well-being of the entire community it serves.



Inclusion Festival

On Friday 24th November, a group of ten SEN students headed over to Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy to take part in an Inclusion festival sports event. A number of Walsall schools were in attendance and throughout the day, our students were able to take part in a range of engaging and inclusive sporting events. These events ranged from archery through to Boccia (Google it – it's great!) and a game of 'Goal Ball' – essentially, football sitting down blindfolded.

Lots of fun was had by all students and even the teachers got to show their competitive sides on several occasions as the students begged them to make up the numbers. Thankfully, the only activity that took place outside was 'Wheelchair Sports' as it's fair to say, temperatures were a little on the 'wintry' side. It was non-stop smiles and laughter throughout the day with some sleepy students on the coach home and a general consensus that competing again next year is on the wish list. Well done to all!



Street Violence

40 students from different year groups participated in Street Violence First Aid training with St Johns Ambulance on 6th December during the school day. This was a great opportunity for our students.

Part of the session was a Street Violence taster which was delivered by a St John's Ambulance. The focus was aimed at street crime, focusing on embedded objects (catastrophic bleeding), to provide young people with first aid skills and knowledge on how to respond appropriately to incidents. This part of the session was a very practical session. Students also learnt CPR and the primary survey was used to assess casualties.

The 2nd session was presented by street teams, giving the students an insight into county lines.



Literacy session

Last month we had some of the Primary schools come and visit our library to take part in a literacy session with Mrs Patel our Librarian. The students took part in an exciting fun, Harry Potter themed Scavenger's Hunt, where they had to look for clues hidden all around the library to solve a mystery.

Here at Grace Academy Darlaston we value the importance of reading, so the session ended with the children completing a reading booklet named 'All About Me as a Reader' to find out what kind of a reader they are, and to show just how valuable reading is.

We were very impressed with their team working skills and their ability to work out and find the clues so well, they were a real credit to their school, well done to all the students and a big thank you to the staff for bringing them along.





Drive!

Post 16 students recently attended an engaging road safety event at Bescot Stadium, featuring insightful sessions by various organisations.

The day included a practical driving lesson, insights from West Midlands Police on maintaining road safety, awareness about substance misuse and its impact on driving by Beacon Young Persons, a demonstration by West Midlands Fire Service on emergency response using VR headsets, and information from Highways England on road maintenance for enhanced safety.

Additionally, the DVSA provided valuable details on the Theory and Practical driving tests, aiding students in becoming test-ready.



Trip to a Local Gurdwara

In an enriching cultural experience, our Year 9 students recently embarked on a memorable trip to the local Gurdwara as part of their religious studies curriculum.

The visit provided a unique opportunity for our young learners to immerse themselves in Sikh traditions and practices.

Students were warmly welcomed by the Gurdwara community, who generously shared insights into the Sikh faith, its history, and the significance of the Gurdwara in fostering community spirit. The trip not only deepened students' understanding of religious diversity but also encouraged them to appreciate the values of equality, compassion, and selfless service inherent in Sikhism.

It was a day of learning, respect, and cultural exchange, leaving a lasting impact on our students as they continue to explore and embrace the diverse tapestry of our global community.

IMPORTANT DATES 2024

Spring Term 2024

Term Starts	08.01.24
Half Term	12.02.24 - 16.02.24
Term Ends	22.03.24

Summer Term 2024

Term Starts	08.04.24
Half Term	27.05.24 - 31.05.24
Term Ends	19.07.24

Please check the Academy website for further details regarding Bank Holidays and INSET days.