



We have come to the end of our first 'full' Week A this week, meaning that all students have experienced their full fortnightly timetabled. Routines are becoming well-embedded, and we have been particularly impressed with students who have been through key transition points in their schooling; our new Year 7s know their way around the building now, new Year 10s have adapted really well to their Key Stage 4 learning and our new Year 12s are very settled in the recently created Sixth Form area and in their post-16 courses. Mrs Quirk has spoken to all year groups this week in assemblies about 'struggle time' and getting used to finding learning hard, developing resilience to challenges in the classroom and the key role that 'deliberate practice' plays in securing academic success; all year groups are responding well to these expectations and changes to their classroom experiences from previously.

Planners and lanyards were issued to all students last Friday; please do ensure that, when you are checking your daughter or son's uniform at home before they leave, they are wearing their lanyard and have their planner with them. Homework will be being recorded in planners – further information on this follows next week – and they are a vital part of their school organisation. There are a very small number of students who are attending school without a bag; all students should have a bag to keep their pencil cases, planners and any work that they are taking to and from home, along with their PE kit as necessary. Please check that your daughter or son is leaving home with their bag; if you need support with this, please use [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#) to let us know. With regards to our communications from parents and carers, a reminder, please, to use [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#) so that we can monitor the system centrally. We know that communication has been an area of concern for parents and carers in the past and we have worked to improve this, and continue to invite your feedback to this process through [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#).

It is our Year 6 Open Evening this Thursday; many of our current students will be supporting with tours and demonstrations in different subjects. We hope that we will see many familiar faces with existing parents and carers bringing younger children to visit our school. We understand what a big decision it is when choosing a secondary school and realise that you may have other commitments on Thursday evening; we are also holding an 'Open Morning' on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September and details can be found on the 'pop-ups' on our website; as always [Gospel Oak School - Contact Us](#) can be used as needed.

We hope you have a lovely weekend, and we look forward to seeing your daughter or son in school for 8.25am ready for their line-up.

### Upcoming Dates

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September – Year 7 Educational  
Enrichment Workshop –  
Historical Lives

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September – Year 7 Educational  
Enrichment Workshop –  
Historical Lives

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September – Prefect Presentation

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Year 6 Open Evening,  
6pm – 8pm

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September – Year 6 Open Morning,  
9:30am-11:00am

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September – Macmillan Coffee Morning

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October - Year 10 Loudmouth

### Assembly Themes

Assembly focus this week was Internet Safety

w/c 23/09 – Diwali

w/c 30/09 – British Values

Please take the time to talk to your child about what they have learnt in Assembly.

# Attendance Roadmap

In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024) we offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. We will offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all. We will assess data to identify absence trends & use preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand & support to remove barriers. Where needed, we will formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts & as a last resort we will consider intensifying support &/or enforce legal sanctions.



Did you know, arriving after the register has closed (30 mins from school starting) = an absence?



Did you know, 90% attendance = approx. 95 missed lessons/hours of learning?

Powered by Sharon Tomlinson

Did you know, 90% attendance = 4 weeks of absence over a year?



Did you know, good attendance increases academic success?



## STEP 5 - Legal Action - No Improvement

Legal action (Penalty Notice or Prosecution) MAY be requested from the Local Authority (LA) if Unauthorised Term Time Absence is taken, or if overall absence continues to occur & reaches or exceeds the National Threshold for absence, despite STEPS 1-4 being attempted. Statutory Guidance States a Referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'Severe Absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'Intense Support'.

## STEP 4 - Warnings - Concerns Remain

Where STEP 2 or STEP 3 support has been unsuccessful &/or declined, a 'Formal Warning' if AC has failed, or a 'Notice to Improve' Letter if no AC appropriate, will be issued to reinforce the need for immediate improvement. A Family Court Order such as an Education Supervision Order will also be considered as an alternative to prosecution.

## STEP 3 - Formalised Support

Where absence continues & initial support needs to be increased an Attendance Contract (AC) will be offered to formalise support. This is a 3-6 month nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation. Achievable & individual targets will be set & reviewed regularly. Medical &/or other information will be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with you & other agencies. An AC can run alongside other meetings e.g., TAF meeting.

## STEP 2 - Early Absence Support

We move to this step if the National Threshold for absence is met (authorised or unauthorised) to prevent further absence occurring. Discussions & meetings will be offered to identify if early support or reasonable adjustments are needed. This will be done using discussions &/or meetings to create a supportive action plan. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) may be required for some support to be accessed along with a Team Around the Family (TAF) Meeting Process

## STEP 1 - Identify, Assess & Prevent

Our daily actions & processes aim to promote relationship building with children & families to prevent absence. This involves monitoring data trends & absence patterns to inform our conversations with you (& your child where age allows). The trigger for conversations is where absence is at risk of reaching the new National Threshold (**10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10 week rolling period**). Other daily actions involve promoting attendance positively, using praise & incentives, swift absence follow up, email &/or letter communication to raise your awareness of emerging concerns, processing requested or unrequested 'Term Time Exceptional Absence' & doing Home Visits to meet our safeguarding duties as required.

### PENALTY NOTICES & LEGAL ACTION

**1st Offence** (after 19th August 2024) of Term Time Leave &/or Irregular Attendance (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.  
**2nd Offence** within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction available.  
**3rd Offence** within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to **Magistrates' Court** under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

Please talk to us about how we can support you &/or your child at any time.



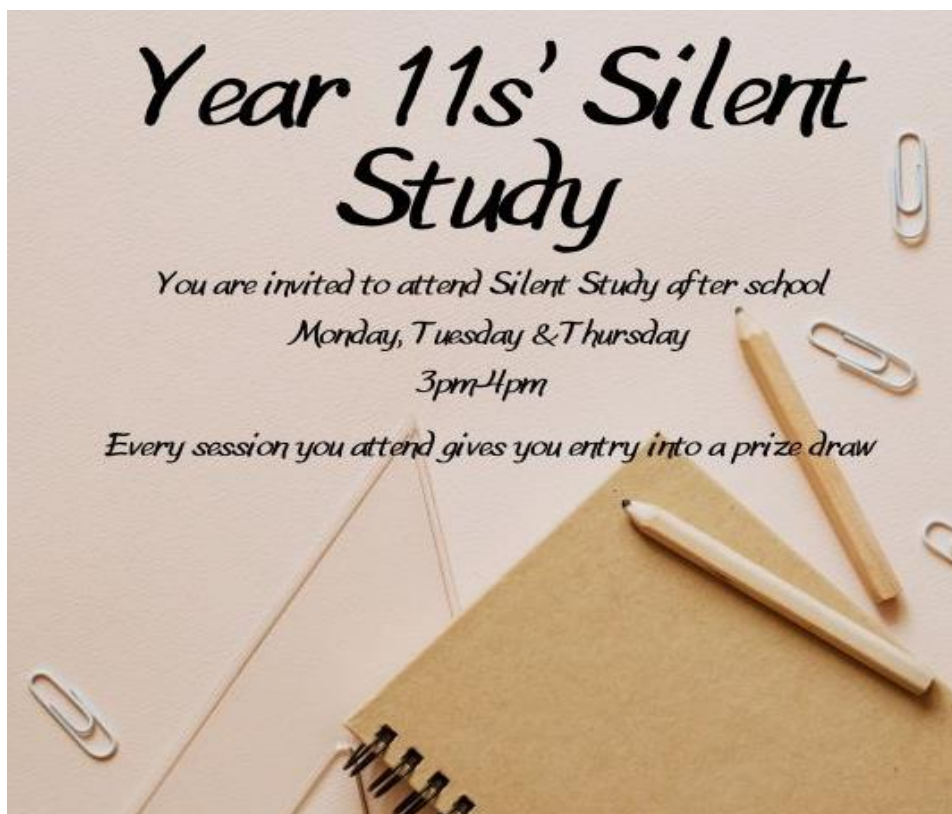
The poster features a red background with a white banner at the top containing the text 'GOS ATTENDANCE WEEKLY DRAWS'. Above the banner are illustrations of two yellow tickets, a school crest, and a colorful wheel of fortune. Below the banner, a white box contains the text 'WIN A HOST OF FAB PRIZES! WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY LIVE DURING TUTOR TIME!'. A red box below that contains the text 'All you have to do is be in school every day each week to be in with a chance of winning some incredible prizes for you and your family!' and a yellow hand icon. At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'PRIZES INCLUDE VOUCHERS FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING THAT RANGE FROM £30-£200, ELECTRICALS, HOME APPLIANCES AND MUCH MORE!!'.

**GOS ATTENDANCE**  
**WEEKLY DRAWS**

**WIN A HOST OF FAB PRIZES!**  
**WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY LIVE**  
**DURING TUTOR TIME!**

**All you have to do is be in school every day each week to be in with a chance of winning some incredible prizes for you and your family!**

**PRIZES INCLUDE VOUCHERS FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING THAT RANGE FROM £30-£200, ELECTRICALS, HOME APPLIANCES AND MUCH MORE!!**



The poster features a light beige background with a spiral notebook, pencils, and paper clips. The text is written in a black, cursive font.

**Year 11s' Silent Study**

*You are invited to attend Silent Study after school  
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday  
3pm-4pm*

*Every session you attend gives you entry into a prize draw*

# Understanding Terrorism

## Community Workshop

**FREE**  
samosas and refreshments



**Would you like to know more about tackling terrorism?**

This workshop will support members of the community in Sandwell (including parents/carers) and community groups/leaders to understand issues relating to al-Qa'ida/ISIS 'inspired' terrorism and Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. It will also cover other emerging concerns and how vulnerable people in Sandwell may be affected.

**PLUS**

- Speak with specialist training providers and network
- Receive free resources
- Look at local case studies
- Understand the Sandwell referral process

**DETAILS**

**Tuesday 24 September**  
**10am - 12 noon**

Ileys Community Association, Corbett Street, Smethwick, B66 3PU

To reserve your space, email: [prevent\\_inbox@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:prevent_inbox@sandwell.gov.uk)








# SPDC

## Parent Carer Newsletter

September 2024

### September at a glance!

**Thursday 12th September**  
Coffee Shop Stop

**Friday 16th September**  
Yoga with Bryony

**Thursday 19th September**  
Coffee & Craft

**Monday 23rd September**  
Lunch date with SPDC!

**Wednesday 25th September**  
CAMHS to AMHS information session

**Tuesdays throughout September**  
Cost of living Team



### Welcome!

SPDC welcomes you back after the summer break and if you are new to our service, hello and hope your holiday has been restful and without stress.

I cannot believe how fast this year is running away with us and we are now entering into Autumn season but I have to say it is one of my favourites!

I look forward to catching up with you over the coming months and welcoming new families.  
I am contactable on:  
0121 565 2410, 07969 519701 or email [admin@sp-dc.org](mailto:admin@sp-dc.org)

Take Care  
*Claire x*




### How to book activities!

Please email  
[spdcparentcarerbooking@sp-dc.org](mailto:spdcparentcarerbooking@sp-dc.org)

## September Activities for parent carers



### Coffee Shop Stop



Thursday 12th September 10am-11.30am

The Brittainia, 124 Halesowen Street, Rowley Regis, B65 0ES

The SPDC Coffee Shop Tour continues, so join us at our next stop for a chat, some laughs and a coffee on us.

We will also be joined by Paul Higgitt from Health Watch Sandwell who is interested to hear your views on all things SEND.



### Yoga with Bryony



Monday 16th September 10.00am-11.00am

Friar Park Millennium Centre, Friar Park Road, Wednesbury WS10 0JS

Due to popular demand Bryony Morris will be leading a relaxing yoga session, giving parent carers the opportunity to let go of stresses and anxieties.

Whilst lying down is recommended, if that would not work for you, you can still join in, sitting down.

Bryony will be providing yoga mats so all you need is to be wearing comfy clothes.

This is a bookable event and will need to be booked by Thursday 12th September.

### Coffee & Craft

Thursday 19th September 10.00am-11.30am

Galton Valley Children's Centre, Great Arthur St, Smethwick B66 1DH

Our popular monthly craft session returns with a session exploring the art of Mandala painting.

We are also delighted that Sandwell Young Carers will be joining the session to introduce the service and what is on offer for your family whilst you craft.

Refreshments & toast provided



This is a bookable event and will need to be booked by Thursday 12th September.

## September Activities for parent carers



### Lunch date with SPDC



Monday 23rd September

Dorothy Parks Centre, Church Road, Smethwick B67 6EH

We are delighted to be able to offer two group cooking sessions from Dorothy Parkes Centre's brand new kitchen facilities!

In preparation for the cooler weather we will be making pumpkin soup with an accompaniment of cheese scones.

Fiona from Fallan Nutrition will be guiding us to prepare the meal as a group, followed by a group lunch, enjoying the finished results!

Due to the sizing of the kitchen we are offering this session in two timed slots of 10.00-11.30am or 12.00pm-1.30pm

(please specify upon booking which session you would prefer)



This is a bookable event and will need to be booked by Thursday 12th September.



### Adult Transition Information Session

Wednesday 25th September 10.00am-11.30am

Galton Valley Children's Centre, Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, B66 1DH

We are delighted to welcome Laura Hamilton, Transition officer for Black Country Mental Health Services who arranges for families to transition from Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to Adult Mental health Services (AMHS) will be available to discuss the service and what is available to your family.

It is never too early to find out information for children moving into adult services so it can make a smooth transition.

Light refreshments available

This is a bookable event and will need to be booked by Thursday 12th September.



Black Country Partnership  
NHS Foundation Trust



**Struggling with the cost of living?**  
We can help...

**Our cost of living advisers offer free support with:**

Benefits    Budgeting    Debt  
Employment    Energy



**Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children**  
Galton Valley Childrens Centre  
Great Arthur St  
Smethwick, B66 1DH  
Sessions starting Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
9.30am to 1.00pm





## Cost of Living Team

**Tuesdays throughout September**  
Galton Valley Childrens Centre, Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, B66 1DH

The cost of living Team are continuing with services on Tuesdays at SPDC HQ for the time being! Don't worry if you have not received your migration letter for universal credit.....be ahead of the game and beat the queues!

Please call 0121 565 2410 to book your place.

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## Parent Carer Craft Fayre

SPDC are currently exploring options to fundraise by asking parent carers to host a craft fayre at SPDC in the coming months.

We know some of you are very creative and would like to know if you would like to rent a table to sell your creations whilst fundraising for our charity!

If you would like to be involved, please contact [admin@sp-dc.org](mailto:admin@sp-dc.org)

## Thank you!

SPDC would like to say a huge thank you to The Black Country National Literacy Trust Team for a donation of books that will contribute to the SPDC Book Swap that is available monthly at coffee & craft or by calling 0121 565 2410





Change your story

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## Contact us!

**Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children**  
Galton Valley Childrens Centre, Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, B66 1DH  
Tel 0121 565 2410  
Email [info@sp-dc.org](mailto:info@sp-dc.org)  
Charity Number 1125576












## 🚫 Food Voucher Scheme – Advance Notice 🚫

### Going forward into the new 2024/25 academic year and beyond

As you know, the authority continued to support all eligible parents in receipt of benefit related free school meals with a food voucher for the last 2 years during all half-term school holidays up until the main six-week summer holiday in the 2023/24 academic year. The funding came direct from Sandwell's Household Support Grant fund, which the authority decided to continue supporting those eligible and who attended a school in the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough, where over three hundred thousand vouchers have been issued over this period.

**Going forward, free school meal vouchers issued to families during school holidays will no longer continue into the new 2024/25 academic year and beyond.**

The authority will, however, continue to offer 'Holiday Activities and Food' during the school holidays, where eligible children can enjoy fun activities and a meal, free of charge. Schools are advised to inform parents that they can go to <https://holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk> for more information.

In addition, for families who need extra financial support during the school holidays, schools are advised to inform parents that help is also still available on the 'Supporting Sandwell information hub', which includes financial advice. Schools are advised to inform parents that they can go to <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell> for more information.



To: Parents/Carers

19<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Gospel Oak School**

Bilston Road  
Gospel Oak  
Tipton  
West Midlands  
DY4 0BZ

T 0121 556 1351

F 0121 506 7833

W [www.gospeloakschool.co.uk](http://www.gospeloakschool.co.uk)

**Our Ref:** RQ.KH.3114

**Your Ref:**

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Deliberate Practice**

As we continue to strive for excellence in our educational practices, we want to share some important updates about the teaching strategies we are implementing in our classrooms. One specific strategy that we are focusing on is deliberate practice which includes 'struggle time'. Our goal is to enhance student learning, confidence and resilience, and we believe these strategies will play a crucial role in achieving that objective.

Direct practice involves students actively engaging with new concepts and skills during lessons. This approach allows students to apply what they have learned in real-time, facilitating a deeper understanding of the material. Teachers have been asked to plan for 15 – 20 minutes of deliberate practice in each lesson.

'Struggle time' refers to deliberately allowing students to grapple with challenging problems or concepts before receiving guidance. This approach is grounded in the belief that encountering and working through difficulties is a critical component of learning and building resilience. During the first five minutes of deliberate practice, students will not be given support from the teacher and will be asked to attempt the task themselves.

While 'struggle time' might initially feel uncomfortable for some students, it is a valuable part of their learning journey. Teachers are there to support and guide students through these challenges, ensuring that they have the resources and encouragement they need to succeed.

We are confident that by integrating deliberate practice and struggle time into our lessons, we will help our students develop stronger skills and a more resilient approach to learning. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your son's/daughter's education.

**Mrs R Quirk**  
**Vice Principal**