



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Parents/Carers,

Great Students, Great Expectations

This week, it has been my privilege to lead Expectations Assemblies for all students in Bragg, Logan, Hammond, and Moseley College groups. I felt this would be a good opportunity to share my key messages with parents.

I must begin by extending my sincere thanks to all parents for the exceptional standards of uniform and punctuality which were evident this week in all assemblies. We feel very fortunate to work alongside a community that share our high expectations for the children that we serve, and this allows us to support them so that they get the best educational experiences. We recognise the high standards of our Sixth Form students who continue to represent the school as role models through their smart dress and contribution to leadership opportunities. It has been fantastic to see this visible sign of the pride that our students have in their school, and I have been privileged to be able to start each assembly with a huge note of congratulations to the students.

Purpose

The purpose of Expectations Assemblies is to ensure that students have high aspirations so that they work hard and take every opportunity. These assemblies are also an important opportunity to reassert our ethos and values and our commitment to respect for all, inclusion, social responsibility, and student safety.

Key Themes

This week, I focused my main message around an excerpt taken from *'Man's Search for Meaning'* a book written by Viktor Frankl who was a survivor of the holocaust. Frankl challenges us to recognise the importance of **doing our best in a challenging world**; a message that resonates strongly today when we look at the world outside.

Students have also been presented with a brief **history of the school**; from 1598 and the journey of a local man named Robert Smyth to the City of London, to the creation of the Market Harborough Grammar School in 1607, through to the recreation of the school on Burnmill Road in 1909 and then into the present day. In this timeline I have asked students to consider how their generation will be remembered in the context of the record GCSE and A-Level results (2022). I have challenged them to be aspirational as they all approach November assessments.

I have spoken to students about the following key areas as they approach key assessments and the term ahead:

- **High expectations and self-respect** – holding high standards for yourself and having self-belief by doing what is right when no one else is looking
- **Improving the time** – taking the most from every opportunity presented at school, starting with every lesson and participation in extra-curricular opportunities
- **Extended writing** – communicating in a way that fully represents your ideas. Challenging yourself to grow by going further, so that you can see improvement in the quality of your writing

Behaviour and Standards

I have reminded students that **everyone has the right to learn and to thrive** in our school. I have reiterated our expectations of behaviour and the *'red lines'* that we do not accept, as taken from our Behaviour Policy. I have also restated the school's policy on mobile phones and sanctions. At the heart of these messages there is a clear focus on the importance of respect for all and the unacceptable nature of discriminatory abuse of any form. On another note, a reminder to parents that we do not allow students to bring chewing gum into school.



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Safety and Support

We have an excellent culture of openness in the school, and this means that students share their concerns when they are worried or need support. I have concluded each assembly by commending students for the responsible way that they communicate their concerns to key members of staff, and I have reminded them of the names of our **Safeguarding Team** with pictures of each member of staff so that they know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns.

I have reminded students of the ways in which they can get help and support in school by using the key information from this image (**below**). This is also a screensaver on all PC devices in computer rooms around school, in the Sixth Form Centre, and on our display screen in Bragg Hall.

Don't bottle it up

When it comes to taking care of our mental health, one of the best things we can do is talk.

Whether that's talking to a friend, family member, or Form Tutor, opening up about how we're feeling not only helps to lift some of the weight off of our shoulders, but also makes it easier to seek help.

If there is anything that you are worried about then we can help.

Here are 4 ways that you can get help in school:

1. Talk to your Form Tutor
2. Talk to any member Duty Staff at break or lunchtime
3. Talk to any member of our Safeguarding Team
4. Respond to the Virtual Wellbeing Box on Satchel One

Next steps

I hope that this gives you an insight into Expectations Assemblies this week. I always really enjoy leading these assemblies, and they happen once each half-term so that we sustain the ethos, values, and family environment that we have cultivated as a school. Ultimately, this is only possible because of your support. You are the key adults in the lives of your child, and we thank you for upholding our shared values so that students stay safe, have brilliant experiences, develop lifelong friendships, gain great qualifications, and enjoy their time in school.

Key dates - reminders

- **Next week:** Remembrance Assemblies – poppies available in school
- **Monday 31st October:** Exam Preparation Assembly for Year 11 and 13
- **w/b Monday 7th November:** Year 11 Trial Exam week
- **Wednesday 9th November:** Sixth Form Open Evening (6-8pm)
- **w/b Monday 21st November:** Year 7-10 in-class assessments
- **w/b Monday 28th November:** Year 12 in-class assessment week

I hope that you have a good weekend.

Yours sincerely,

D Cleary
Principal



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