



## Message from the Principal Diana Townshend

As we reach the end of this busy and vibrant half term, I want to take a moment to celebrate the many opportunities, achievements and experiences that have shaped the past few weeks at our Academy. It has been wonderful to see our students embracing learning, supporting one another, and engaging so confidently with the wider world.

One of the highlights has been the chance for our young people to take part in the democratic process by voting in the National Youth Parliament elections. Their thoughtful engagement and willingness to have their voices heard have been truly inspiring.

We are also incredibly proud of our Year 11 students who have been securing places on their post-16 courses of choice. Their hard work, ambition and resilience are shining through, and it is fantastic to see so many successfully taking their next steps.

Both Year 10 and 11 have worked really hard to secure their next steps with their final mock examinations before the real examinations in May, congratulations to both years for their resilience and determination.

Our curriculum has been enriched further by a powerful visit from the drama group presenting *Step Up, Stand Up* to Years 8 and 9. The performance sparked important conversations and encouraged students to reflect on key issues that affect their lives and communities.

Sport has had a strong presence this half term too, with numerous fixtures and competitions showcasing teamwork, determination and school spirit. Whether representing the Academy or cheering from the sidelines, our students continue to make us proud.

We are also excited to be launching our new attendance initiative: **Attendance Heroes** – **H**ere **E**veryday **R**eady **O**n Time – more information will follow soon, but we are very much looking forward to working together to champion great attendance across the school.

**Thank you for your continued support, and I hope you all enjoy a restful and well-deserved half-term break.**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**13 FEBRUARY 2026**

SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR HALF TERM

**23 FEBRUARY 2026**

SCHOOL REOPENS

**11 MARCH 2026**

YEAR 11 EXAM PREP & PARENTS EVENING

**19 MARCH 2026**

YEAR 10 EXAM PREP & PARENTS EVENING

# WELCOME FROM THE NEW PRINCIPAL

## **I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Principal of The Featherstone Academy, starting after the Easter break**



**Julia McCluskey**

It is a privilege to join such a vibrant, hard-working and welcoming community. I am very much looking forward to getting to know our students and families in the weeks ahead and to working closely with you as we continue to build an exceptional academy together.

I grew up in the nearby town of Barnsley, a proud working-class community much like Featherstone. My grandfather, a coal-miner, was a significant influence on me as a child. He possessed an unwavering curiosity about the world and encouraged me to “go and find what it has to offer,” starting with working hard at school. With the support of my family and teachers, I became the first in my family to progress into further and higher education—an experience that shaped my belief in the transformative power of education. It is this belief that continues to guide my work today.

Throughout my 23-year career in education, I have been deeply committed to creating school environments where young people feel safe, ambitious, resilient, and proud of who they are. I have taught and held leadership positions in schools across Sheffield, Barnsley, and Wakefield. These experiences, in a range of diverse contexts, have shaped my core values as an educational leader. At the heart of my approach is a simple belief: when students feel valued, supported, and challenged, they can thrive both academically and personally.

My ambition is to build on the strong foundations and strengths already in place here at The Featherstone Academy. This means ensuring that every child is given the opportunity to fulfil their potential — both inside and outside the classroom—and to discover what the world has to offer them in return. I want our students to leave us with strong qualifications, confidence, curiosity, and a sense of pride in their own achievements.

I am also very much looking forward to meeting you, our parents and carers, at upcoming events and at the school gates. Your thoughts, experiences, and aspirations for your children and for the school are invaluable, and I intend to ensure that the school continues to build strong partnerships with students’ families.

I look forward to working together as we guide The Featherstone Academy through the next stages of its journey. By working together, I am confident that we can continue to build a school in which every young person feels inspired to aim high and to embrace all the opportunities ahead of them.





## NEWS ROUNDUP

### APPLIED RESILIENCE GARDENING



We took part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch - click the picture above for more info - and we submitted our results online. We were lucky enough to see a Red Kite!

We are now designing and decorating bird boxes to put up around the school site to promote more nesting birds, and to sell to raise money for Zarach.

**zzZarach**  
The Children's Bed Charity



info@featherstone.academy

# NEWS ROUNDUP



This half-term, our students had the opportunity to use their democratic voices and put our British values into action by voting for their favourite candidate to represent them in the **National Youth Parliament**.

Students engaged in lively discussions and debates in form before casting their votes in their local 'polling station' – the library!

**YOUR VOTE  
MATTERS**





# NEWS ROUNDUP

# OPTIONS *Evening*



The Year 9 Options Evening was a vibrant and engaging event, filled with energy from both students and their families. Throughout the evening, pupils eagerly explored the different subjects on offer, asking thoughtful questions and showing genuine excitement about shaping their future pathways. Staff were equally enthusiastic, offering insightful guidance and creating a welcoming atmosphere that encouraged open conversation. It was clear from the buzz around the room that everyone was invested in making informed, confident choices, making the event both productive and inspiring for all involved.



# NEWS ROUNDUP

## Intervention superstars!



Rio D  
Reading



Rosie M  
Maths



Finlay C  
Reading

**Other standout students who are making big leaps in progress**

### YEAR 8

COLBY E  
ALFIE W  
ELEXAS J  
ARCHIE C  
MYLEY H  
ALFIE R

### YEAR 7

ELLIOT C  
PRINCE C  
KEIRA H  
SETH K  
OWEN N





# NEWS ROUNDUP



Our students were **feeling the LOVE** this week as our catering team treated them to a delicious **Chinese New Year** banquet, complete with Valentine-themed sweet treats!





# COMING SOON



Our Student Council have decided to host a second-hand clothing, books and toys market for our first fundraiser for our nominated charity, Zarach

**This will take place on  
Thursday 30 April 2026**

We are happy to accept good quality clothing, books and toys – this February half term is the perfect time to have a clear out!

All items should be sent into school **no later than Friday 27 March 2026** so we have plenty of time to rummage, sort and price them up.

**A SMALL  
DONATION  
MAKES A  
DIFFERENCE**



Pop Choir held their first rehearsal earlier this week (in front of an enthusiastic staff audience!) as they begin preparations to showcase their talents later this year...more information to follow soon!

Pop Choir

**GOOD  
things  
ARE  
COMING**

**The Featherstone Academy**

**Easter rewards**

Prizes to be won...



**The Featherstone Academy**

- Chocolate eggs.
- Queue jump passes.
- Pizza delivery.
- Shopping vouchers.



info@featherstone.academy

# SAFEGUARDING



## Hospitalisations from Vapes

Dear Parent/Guardian

We know that for a range of reasons, some children are regularly using vapes or at risk of trying a vape for the first time, some as young as 7 years old.

While vaping is currently viewed as a way for adults to cut down on cigarette smoking, buying or selling vapes to children under the age of 18 is illegal.

A lot of young people use vapes because of their popularity. It's easy for them to buy vapes online, in local shops and through friends or social media, however, many of the vapes targeted at children not only have high levels of nicotine, making them very addictive, they often contain illegal drugs or chemicals.

Some of these vapes are so strong that for some children, just taking one puff is causing them to become very unwell with some children requiring hospitalisation.

This is a worrying trend and we would like to ask for your help in raising awareness of the risks and sharing some safeguarding advice with your children;

- If they don't vape – do not start. Explain the dangers and risks, even if you vape yourself. The dangers to children are far greater.
- If they do vape, try cutting down with the aim of trying to stop
- Do not use a disposable vape with more than 2% nicotine or with more than 600 puffs. This constitutes an illegal and therefore unregulated vape.
- Do not use a vape which claims to have THC, cannabis, spice or any other illegal drug content. These can cause children to become very unwell, very quickly.
- If a child feels unwell after using a vape, tell a trusted adult immediately and seek medical advice. If a vape makes a child feel unwell it is likely to contain an illegal product.

If you are worried about your child's use of vapes, seek the advice of a health practitioner or your GP.

Additional help for children to give up vaping can be found here [Quit Vaping](#) | [Smokefree Teen](#)

West Yorkshire Police's aim is to keep children safe and reduce the risk of any further hospitalisations or serious side effects from using illegal vapes.

We are currently working with schools to deliver awareness education for children and professional awareness training for teachers. We are also carrying out regular testing of potentially harmful vapes.

Thank-you for your support.





# Vaping and e-cigarettes The facts



**Nicotine vapes can help adult smokers to stop smoking.**

**Smoking causes disease and early death.**

Vaping is much less harmful than smoking as you don't inhale the toxic tar and carbon monoxide you get from tobacco smoke.



**But vapes are not harmless.**

Short-term effects can include coughing, headaches, dizziness, and sore throats. long-term effects are as yet unknown.



**Most children and young people don't vape or smoke.**



# Vaping and e-cigarettes The facts



## Most children and young people don't vape or smoke.

Vapes containing nicotine are age-restricted products: it is illegal to sell them to under 18s and for adults to buy them on their behalf.

## Vapes are not harmless.

Short-term effects can include coughing, headaches, dizziness, and sore throats. Long-term effects are as yet unknown.

## Harmful for the environment.

Over 8 million vapes are thrown away every week or recycled incorrectly. Vapes contain batteries and difficult-to-recycle plastics that break down in landfills.



Those who knowingly sell to under 18s are driven by profit and don't care who they sell to.

## Don't be duped!



Developed by Smokefree Sheffield in collaboration with Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

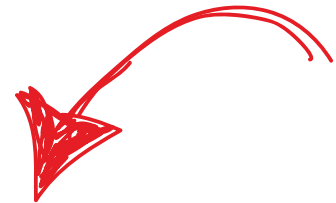
[talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)



[info@featherstone.academy](mailto:info@featherstone.academy)

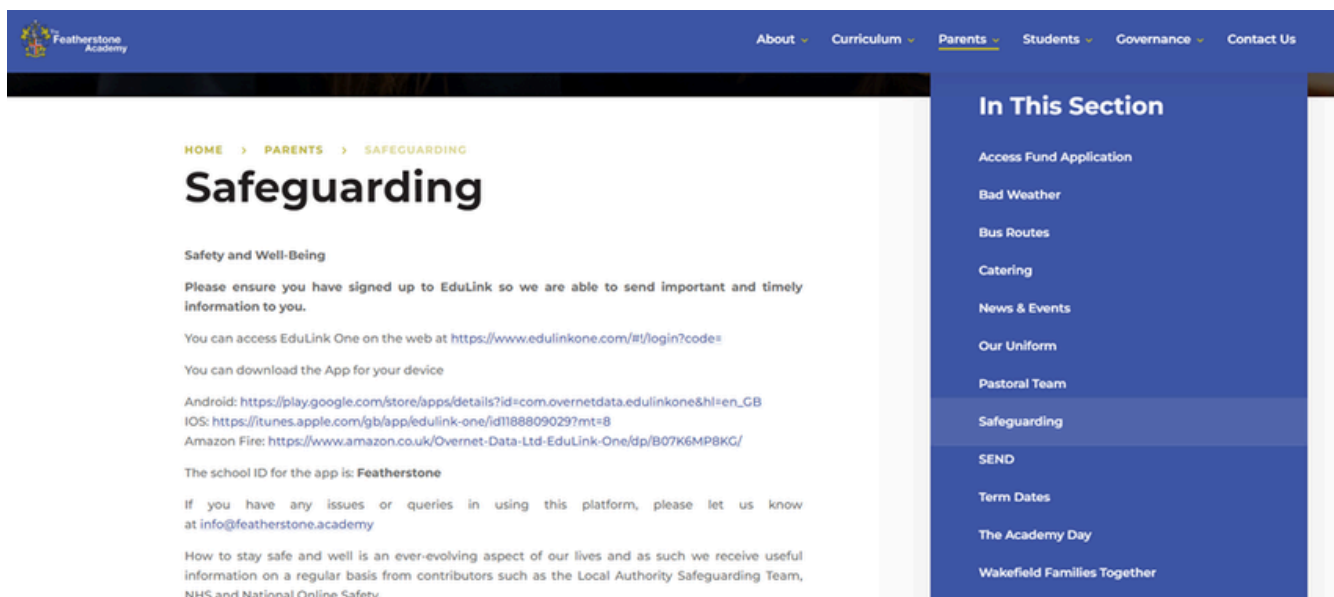


# SAFEGUARDING OVER HALF TERM



**CLICK HERE**  
**FOR MORE**  
**INFORMATION**

Although the school building is not staffed over the half term holiday, parents and carers can still contact **Wakefield Social Care directly on 0345 850 3503** with any concerns. Social Care will then contact the academy's Safeguarding Team directly during the holiday period. Additionally, if you are looking for some general help and advice there are numerous links available directly on the academy website – please use the link above.



The screenshot shows the Featherstone Academy website. The top navigation bar includes links for About, Curriculum, Parents, Students, Governance, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Safeguarding' under the breadcrumb 'HOME > PARENTS > SAFEGUARDING'. The page content includes a section for 'Safety and Well-Being' with instructions to sign up to EduLink, download the app, and provides links for Android, iOS, and Amazon Fire. It also mentions the school ID and contact information for issues. A right-hand sidebar titled 'In This Section' lists various links such as Access Fund Application, Bad Weather, Bus Routes, Catering, News & Events, Our Uniform, Pastoral Team, Safeguarding, SEND, Term Dates, The Academy Day, and Wakefield Families Together.



# AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS



## MONDAY

- Football – all year groups – mixed
- Homework Club – Bridge – all year groups – **until 3pm**
- Netball – all year groups – girls only
- Past Paper Club (Maths) – P10 – Y10/11
- Sparx Maths – P10 – all year groups
- Table Tennis – all year groups – mixed

## TUESDAY

- Homework Club – Bridge – all year groups – **until 3pm**

## WEDNESDAY

- Homework Club – Bridge – all year groups – **until 3pm**
- Pop Choir – R1 – all year groups
- Rugby – Y7 boys only
- Wheelchair Basketball – all year groups

## THURSDAY

- Badminton – all year groups
- Fev Run – all year groups
- Homework Club – Bridge – all year groups – **until 3pm**
- Rugby – girls only – all year groups

## FRIDAY

- Chess Club – P4 – all year groups
- Performing Arts – Drama Hall – all year groups – **until 3.15pm**



**LOCATIONS ARE NOTED NEXT TO EACH ACTIVITY**  
**FOR SPORTS CLUBS, MEET AT THE CHANGING ROOMS**  
**ALL CLUBS FINISH AT 3.30PM UNLESS STATED**