

Headteacher's Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 2025 Edition

Dear Ratton Parents/Carers,

I hope this edition of the monthly bulletin finds you and your families well. It has been a great start to term. School has felt calm, and we have seen so much focus, and our virtues of effort and teamwork in all our lessons across the curriculum!

Start of the new academic year

It was a great start to the new year with our new Year 7 families joining us before school on day one for a family breakfast with staff – despite the rain! It has also been good to see that parents and carers have been taking the opportunity to come in and meet with the Year Leadership team during the coffee mornings we have provided. I've been encouraged to see our new students take the challenges of secondary school in stride and they seem to have settled in well. I've dropped in on several of their lessons, and I've been impressed with how they have already shown they can meet the different demands of secondary school. There is a real eagerness to learn and work with us, and some fantastic effort being put in. I spoke to them earlier this term in assembly about our virtues and how we expect students to show these at school.

It was also great to see so many families at the Year 7 Success Evening earlier in the month. We felt the evening gave us a chance to meet some new faces and build on the foundations of a crucial parent/carer and school partnership fostered from induction meetings onwards. If you are a new family to Ratton, do be aware that you can access curriculum details to support your child here: [Curriculum| Ratton](#) - click on the subject links to access medium term plans teachers use to deliver in the classroom, and key lists of vocabulary you can help you child with at home.

Last week we were visited by our Educational Advisor from the local education authority. Although we are an academy school, we always welcome in visitors from the local authority, from other local schools and Trusts, as well as school improvement advisors we use through our own Trust. This is to ensure that we are doing the best job we can, and to take advantage of others' knowledge and experience of the school system. The advisor met with a range of senior leaders, and we took a tour of the school in action, both visiting lessons and walking the site at breaktime. It was gratifying to receive a report that remarked upon: 'a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school'. Well done to all students and staff!

Year 11

It is a crucial year for our senior students in Year 11, and to help prepare them for their next steps Post-16, Mrs. Peters, our Careers Lead has organised our Year 11 Careers Day on the 10th of October to help inform those all-important decisions that our Year 11 students will need to make in the coming months.

Please support your Year 11 child by speaking with them about their college and course choices, and whether they will fit in with their career or university aspirations. This week, we have visitors from a number of Post 16 providers delivering assemblies to our Year 11 students to share details on what they offer. Again, it was really pleasing to welcome Year 11 families to school last week for our Revision Evening. It will be a challenging end to term for Year 11 with their first set of Mocks. We have a set of mock GCSEs to allow us to identify any gaps in learning, followed by a further round of mock exams in the spring of 2026.

We are really pleased with how our Year 11 students have settled back into their learning after the summer, and we have had some very positive feedback from teachers regarding a positive attitude to their studies – senior staff have certainly seen this in action when visiting lessons. Well done to our Year 11 students!

Open Evening

You may have been aware that earlier in September we hosted our annual open evening for prospective students and parents who are choosing our secondary school. I'd like to thank all students involved in helping us out on the evening, working with curriculum areas, touring visitors and performing on the evening.

Please find **attached** digital version of our new school **#Prospectus**, shared with our attending families at our open evening this year.

Special thanks to two of our new Year 7 students - Olivia and Liam - who were incredibly brave and articulate speaking to families in the hall about their first few weeks at Ratton School, and Ellie and Jack, our Head Students in Year 11, who gave us the benefit of their years of experience at Ratton. Tremendous thanks to our performers on the night, and the Performing Arts team, who gave us an uplifting taster of our upcoming show in January 2026, **'The Addams Family'** which will, as usual, run at the **Royal Hippodrome Theatre – tickets available now!** [[BOOKING LINK HERE : Ratton School: The Addams Family School Edition - Royal Hippodrome Theatre](#)].

Sporting Success

- Fin L-F (#TeamYear11), a huge well done for wining the Eastbourne 5K this month with a PB of 15mins and 36 seconds!
- Well done to the Year 7 boys football team who, earlier this term, played a strong Gildredge House team. We are excited to see what the season has in store for you all.
- A big congratulations to our U15 girls football team, who came away victorious in the English Schools FA Cup recently. We are really proud of you here at #TeamRatton!
- A big shout-out goes to our representing Year 7 girl's rugby players, who recently took part in a Rugby Festival hosted at Seaford Head Rugby Club. We look forward to seeing how you progress this year.

It was an absolute pleasure to visit our Sports Leaders' Rewards assembly last week and hand out certificates to students who have been involved in this incredibly worthwhile leadership programme.

Ratton has long run a programme of sports outreach to our local primaries, which includes our students working with children at infant and junior schools to plan and deliver a range of competitions and curricular activities. They have demonstrated our virtues of effort and responsibility and modelled the importance of teamwork to their younger peers across Eastbourne. Thanks as ever to Mrs. Upton

for leading this programme and ensuring that our students have such an excellent opportunity in terms of personal development.

We are proud of our extensive extra-curricular offering here at Ratton and encourage our students to take up clubs, sports or otherwise, at school. Students can ask their tutor for our clubs list, and this is also accessible to parents via our website (www.ratton.co.uk).

Attendance

Ms. Papagna will be overseeing our work around attendance as part of our strategic Leadership Team at school and will direct the attendance support team and pastoral teams in supporting regular and good attendance at school.

At the beginning of the year, I'd like to highlight the importance of good or better attendance of your child at school. To illustrate my point, I'd like to use some data generated regarding attendance and our GCSE results earlier this Summer. Students in Year 11 whose attendance was above 95% achieved almost a grade higher than target on average. Attendance between 90.1% and 95% gained just over a half a grade higher than target on average, but attendance below 80% meant that GCSE grades gained on average were up to 1.5 grades below target. The evidence really does prove that good attendance means good GCSE outcomes. 90% attendance may sound like a good figure, but this means absence from school 1 day in every fortnightly timetable rotation. This means potentially up to 100 lessons a year!

Staying with attendance, I would respectfully and politely remind all parents and carers that holidays are not permitted in term time. Government guidance states that we are no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances (and family holidays/trips do not fall into this category). I know it is difficult when holiday prices rise during school holidays, and with the current pressures with the cost of living rising, but it is our statutory (legal) duty to follow this guidance.

The consequence of your child taking an absence/holiday during term time is that it will be recorded as unauthorized and that we may request a Penalty Notice to be issued by the local authority to each parent/carer for each child should the child be absent during the requested period.

Reminders around communication

For new parents and carers, and a polite reminder for existing families, some information and tips regarding talking about any concerns you have about your child at school are below.

It is helpful if you can:

- check Edulink regularly for messages from teachers, view homework set for your child and any updates around reward or behaviour points – how to guides can be found on our website here: [EduLink One | Ratton School](#)
- keep in touch regularly with your child's tutor or year leadership team. Raise any concerns with them. Your relationship with your child's tutor and their year leadership team is important.
- If your concern is about a specific subject, email your child's subject teacher in the first instance
- If your concern is pastoral, about your child's welfare, email your child's form tutor in the first instance, who can then liaise with the Year Leadership team as necessary
- reassure your child that you will speak with the school. Talk to the school first. Then you can advise your child with a complete picture of what happened.

- ask for an appointment to talk to teachers. It is not always possible for school staff to meet parents immediately. If it is helpful, they may invite a senior teacher or other key staff, such as the special educational needs coordinator (SENDCO).
- give staff a chance to respond to messages about concerns before taking further action. Depending on the nature of the concern or incident, schools may need a few days to respond after investigating and gathering information.

Staff will aim to respond to emails between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, and within 48 hours if your question is not urgent. Please be patient and allow staff to gather any information needed to give you a full response. Schools are incredibly busy places and because of their responsibilities during the day, both teaching and non-teaching staff may not be continuously monitoring their email inboxes.

School Events

Next week, Ms. Bryden will be delivering assemblies on wellbeing to students to help them manage their mental and physical health as we celebrate World Mental Health Day. For our Year 10 families, yesterday we held our Year 10 Success Evening. This event was an opportunity to outline how you can help your child make a successful start to their GCSE courses. Thank you to all those that attended, it was a purposeful evening.

Year 10 and 11 Textiles students will be visiting Hastings Sea Life Centre next week, and we have a number of Year Workplace visits coming up too, including the Amex Stadium in Brighton.

Thank you for reading and, as ever, don't hesitate to get in touch with us should you need to. I'm a firm believer that good schools are built on good partnerships. Educating a child is a partnership between school and home and we want to work with you to support your child to achieve together.

Best wishes,



Mr Peevers
Headteacher