

Dear Families,

Well done on getting through the first full week of school!

This week, our team has met with every Year 7 SEND student to learn more about their aspirations, hobbies, and what they enjoy or find challenging in school. From these conversations, we have created adaptive strategies for teachers so that your child is supported in the best way possible.

Your child has also completed two key assessments:

NGRT (New Group Reading Test): This helps us understand your child's reading ability, including how well they can decode words and comprehend different types of text.

PASS (Pupil Attitudes to Self and School): This is a short survey that gives us insight into how your child feels about themselves as a learner and about school in general, which helps us identify any hidden concerns such as anxiety or low confidence.

The results from both assessments will be included in your child's updated Learner Support Plan, giving teachers a stronger understanding of their strengths and needs. We are aiming to have all profiles completed by Friday 26th September, after which we will share them with you for your feedback.

Year 7 Residential Trip

We know that trips and changes to routine can sometimes feel difficult for students with SEND, particularly when faced with new environments or different schedules. Please be reassured that our team is here to help your child feel prepared and supported. We strongly encourage all of our SEND students to take part in the residential trip, as experiences like this can be a fantastic way to build confidence, independence, and friendships. If your child is feeling anxious, please let us know so we can speak with them in advance and make sure they feel ready. If you as a parent have any concerns, we are also here to provide reassurance.

Fire Drills

We know that fire drills can sometimes be a scary experience for children with SEND, especially those who have sensory difficulties with loud sounds or who find crowded areas overwhelming. From time to time, the academy carries out fire drills, either as a practice or in response to a real situation. For practice drills, only senior leaders are informed in advance so that staff and students can rehearse what to do in a genuine scenario.

Please be reassured that students are trained in what to do, and staff are always on hand to support them. As an extra layer of reassurance, you might want to remind your child that:

Drills are just a practice for safety.

Teachers will always be there to guide them.

The alarm is loud so everyone can hear it, but it doesn't mean there's danger.

Simple reminders like these, alongside calm breathing strategies, can really help children prepare.

Assemblies – “Everybody Belongs”

Next week, I will be leading assemblies for all year groups on the theme of “Everybody Belongs.” This assembly is not aimed at the 180 students who already have SEND, but rather at the 800 students who do not. The focus will be on teaching respect for differences, raising awareness, and reinforcing the message that Arena Academy must be a safe and inclusive place for every single student. By educating the wider student body, we can strengthen our culture of understanding and acceptance, ensuring those with SEND feel valued and supported.

Year 11 Support – Ms Kaur

We are delighted to share that Ms Kaur, one of our teaching assistants, has been promoted to oversee all Year 11 SEND students. She will act as an extra level of support for families and students as they prepare for their GCSE year.

Ms Kaur will be:

Making regular phone calls to parents and carers to keep you updated.
Running SEND drop-in sessions after school where students can come for support.
Helping your child with revision tips and exam preparation.
Supporting with Access Arrangements to ensure your child receives the adjustments they are entitled to in exams.

If you have any concerns about your child in Year 11, please contact Ms Kaur directly at: tkaur@corearena.academy

Sandwell SEND Careers Event – Year 11

Please save the date: Tuesday 25th November 2025, 10:00am – 2:00pm at The Hawthorns, Halfords Lane, West Bromwich (B71 4LF). Sandwell Council is hosting a bespoke SEND Careers Event for Year 11 students. More details will follow soon, but if you would like your Y11 child to attend, please reply to this email to register your interest.

Communication

We are committed to responding to all emails and missed calls within 48 hours. To support this, we’ve introduced a new system where missed calls are forwarded to all leaders within the SEND team, increasing the chance of someone getting back to you quickly.

Workshops for Families

We are pleased to share information about upcoming workshops for families of children diagnosed with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder). These are run by external providers, not Arena Academy, but we believe they could be very helpful in supporting you and your child. Details are attached to this email.

Further Information and Contact

For more details about how we support SEND students at Arena, please visit the SEND section of our website:

<https://www.corearena.academy/our-academy/send/>

If you have any concerns about your child's provision, please use this feedback form so we can make sure nothing is missed:

<https://forms.office.com/e/BB9XTeCPF7>

If at any time you feel that your child's needs are not being met, you may also contact my line manager, Mrs Kilroy (Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion & Safeguarding), so that your concerns are fully addressed.

Closing Message

Thank you for your continued support. We are really excited about the year ahead and look forward to working with you to ensure your child feels happy, confident, and successful at Arena.

Many thanks,
Mr Ahmed
SENDCo
Arena Academy