

Dates for the Diary

Year 9 AP1 Assessments

Monday 8th - Friday 19th December 2025

Christmas Dinner (Free for all students)

Thursday 18th December 2025

Christmas Fayre

Thursday 18th December 2025: 3pm-5pm

Last Day of Autumn Term

Friday 19th December 2025 - *Students finish at 12:30pm*

First Day of Spring Term

Tuesday 6th January 2026

Student Value of the Term

**NO HUMAN
IS ILLEGAL**

House Points - Week Ending 12th December



103,018
ALI



96,011
SEACOLE



82,376
AUSTEN



75,561
HAWKING

Leadership Message - Helping a Child Feel Safe Is the First Step to Helping Them Thrive

As we come to the end of term, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Mrs O'Neill, and I've recently moved from The Upper Academy, where I was the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to take on the same role here at The Lower Academy.

My job is to make sure every child feels safe, supported, and able to thrive. I'm really looking forward to working with students, families, and staff; building relationships and making sure that home and school, work together to keep children safe.

Christmas is often a time of joy, rest, and cherished memories. Yet we also recognise that for some children and families, the festive season can bring challenges. Safeguarding remains just as important during the holidays, and I want to reassure you that although school will be closed, support is still available. Wider services continue to operate throughout the Christmas period, and details can be found on our school website should you need any support.

This December, you will also receive our Half-Termly Safeguarding Guide for Parents. This resource is designed to strengthen families' understanding of safeguarding, highlight potential risks, and build confidence in recognising concerns and supporting children.



If you have any safeguarding concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Safeguarding Team via the [Contact Us](#) page. We are always here to listen, support, and work alongside you.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your family a safe, peaceful, and joyful Christmas break.

S.O'Neill

Senior Student Development Leader & Designated Safeguarding Lead

Parent Drop In - Tuesday 16th December

This week's Parent Drop In will be on Tuesday 16th December between 10am and 11am.

There will be no need to book an appointment, just sign in at reception and staff will be happy to show you to the venue. There is no set topic for the drop in sessions, if we are not able to answer any specific questions, we will follow up and then feedback to you. Please note, if your matter is of a confidential nature, we kindly ask that you call the school to arrange a separate appointment, as parent drop-in sessions are not intended for one-to-one discussions.



Candy Cane Lane Christmas Fayre Thursday 18th December - 3pm-5pm

Get ready to step into the festive spirit at The Lower Academy's Candy Cane Lane Christmas Fayre, taking place on Thursday 18th December from 3pm-5pm. Families are warmly invited to join us for an afternoon of festive fun and community spirit.

Preparations are already in full swing, with students hard at work creating exciting games and imaginative stalls, all in friendly competition to raise the most funds! Every penny raised will go towards supporting our chosen charity, the Fairtrade Foundation.

Enjoy live performances from The Lower Academy Choir throughout the event, while you tuck into BBQ hot dogs and hot chocolate, and take part in our fantastic raffle with prizes to be won. Don't miss our 'Photo Corner', a great spot to snap some festive photos.

Please note: The Christmas Fayre is **cash only**, and we kindly ask families to bring **small change where possible**. All items will be priced at **under £1**.



Christmas Jumper Day – 19th December

All students are invited to take part in this year's Christmas Jumper Day on the last day of term, Friday 19th December.

The Basildon Academies are raising money for Save the Children, and we ask that all students taking part make a small donation. Staff will be at the front door with collection buckets to greet students as they arrive.

Please note that this is not a non-uniform day. Students are expected to wear full school uniform, with the option to add a festive jumper in place of their school jumper or blazer.



Your Child's Voice Helps Shape Our School

Every half term, the safeguarding lead (DSL) and I meet with students in something called **Student Voice Panels**. These meetings happen on both school sites and give students a chance to tell us what they think is going well and what could be better.

Pastoral staff choose students to join the panel. We ask a few simple questions and listen carefully to their ideas. This helps us make sure that **everyone's voice is heard** and that our school works for all.

Because of these panels, we have already made some big changes:

- Changed the **start and finish times of the school day**
- Made lessons **shorter** (1 or 1.5 hours)
- Added extra **safeguarding measures**
- Improved **catering areas** e.g. More chairs, access to condiments, queuing systems.
- Set up a **Student Services hub** at BLA, and one is coming soon at BUA

After each panel, we send out a **"They Said, We Did"** update so you can see what changes have been made or are being planned.

It is a real privilege to hear from our students. Thank you for supporting your child to share their ideas—they make a big difference to our school.

R.Rees - Headteacher



Home Learning

If you have any queries regarding home learning, including access issues or, to celebrate the work your child has completed at home, please visit the [Contact Us](#) page via the Basildon Lower Academy website and select the option for Home Learning/Homework.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding our students is at the forefront of everything we do. Parents and carers can access information via the following link www.escb.co.uk which offers guidance and signposts to resources on various safeguarding issues. Please contact our safeguarding officers if you have any concerns about your own child or another student at the Academies.

www.basildonloweracademy.org.uk/safeguarding

Supporting Your Child's Wellbeing with Parenting Smart

Parenting Smart, created by the children's mental health charity Place2Be, offers practical tips and guidance to support your child's wellbeing.

From managing screen time to handling big emotions, the website provides short, easy-to-follow articles and videos designed to help parents navigate everyday challenges with confidence.



Explore helpful resources here: <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>

Young Carers Club

Tuesdays
3:15pm-5pm
Venue: G7



Various activities each week including board games, cooking, photography, arts & crafts.

Refreshments provided. Talk to others, relax & have fun.

Student Nurse Drop In

If students are worried about their health, would like a confidential chat or would just like to find out more about how our school nurse can help them, the nurse can be found:

Every Thursday
Breaktime

Location: The Lower
Academy SEND
Department



Online Safety Hub: Top Tips to Protect Your Child's Digital Privacy

Being mindful about sharing personal information, understanding how an app or platform tracks, collects, stores, and uses data, and practising good digital hygiene can go a long way in helping to protect your child's privacy online. [Click here](#) to access information and top tips to help protect your child's digital privacy.

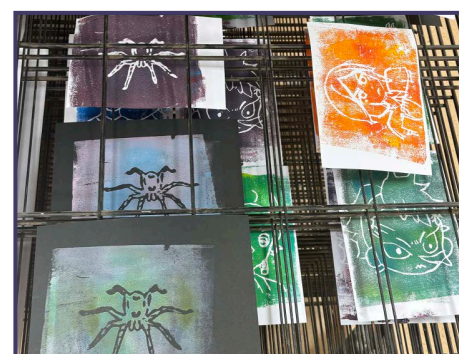
The Online Safety Hub is an online resource with lots of expert advice and guidance to help find out how to keep our young people safe online. You can access it for free here: [Online Safety Hub - The Basildon Academies](#)



Year 8/9 Art Club : Printmaking Showcase

This term, Mrs Cawson's Year 8/9 Art Club has been developing their skills in printmaking, building on techniques learned in previous years. Students have experimented with a wide variety of media to produce exciting, original, and highly creative prints.

Their enthusiasm, imagination, and willingness to explore new artistic processes have been evident throughout the term. We are extremely proud of the outstanding work they have created and look forward to seeing how their skills continue to grow.



Lower Academy Presentation Event

Last week, we held our End of Term Presentation Event, recognising students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement across all subjects.

Awards were presented for Passion for Learning and Growth, celebrating students who have shown enthusiasm, determination and impressive progress throughout the term.

It was a wonderful occasion shared with invited families, and we are incredibly proud of all our award winners for their hard work and commitment.





Students Prepare to Bring Candy Cane Lane to Life

In the lead-up to this week's Candy Cane Lane Christmas Fayre, students have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure the outside quad area will be transformed into a festive walkway on the day. Their creativity and teamwork have been shining through as they bag sweets for the sweet stall, craft handmade Christmas cards in support of the Fairtrade Foundation, and prepare a range of activities for visitors.

They have also been busy building a giant Gingerbread House photo corner, organising raffle prizes, designing decorative bags, and creating fun games ready for families and guests to enjoy.

The students' enthusiasm and effort promise a fantastic event, and we look forward to welcoming our school community to celebrate the festive season together.



FREE HOT CHOCOLATE & COOKIE



Free hot chocolate and cookies will be available to all students in the Dining Hall during breaktime on

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER



EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRAINING PROGRAMME

Winter Term

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Before School 7.30am-8.20am *Gates open and close at 7.30am sharp. Please manage your timekeeping accordingly	Year 7, 8, 9 Girls Netball	Year 7, 8, 9 Girls Basketball	Year 7 Boys Football Year 7, 8, 9 Girls Football	Year 7, 8, 9 Cross Country	Year 8 & 9 Boys Football
After School	Fixtures *	Fixtures *	Fixtures *	Fixtures *	Fixtures *

* Fixtures will vary week-by-week. To be eligible for selection, you must attend before-school training.

NHS Guidance: Is your child too unwell for school?

As seasonal illnesses become more common, the NHS offers clear guidance to help parents and carers decide when children should stay at home and when it is safe to return to school. The advice covers common conditions such as coughs, colds, sickness, diarrhoea and fever.

You can view the full NHS guidance here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



VEGANUARY MONTH

Throughout January the Dining Hall will be serving a Vegan Dish of the Day



Christmas Dinner

Thursday 18th December

Main Meal Options

Roast Turkey & Pigs in Blankets
Quorn & Roasted Vegetable Wellington

Served with: Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Peas,
Brussel Sprouts, Yorkshire Puddings,
Stuffing & Gravy

Dessert Options

Christmas Pudding
Mince Pies
Chocolate Yule Log
Festive Meringues
Jelly

Christmas Dinner comes with
Fruit Juice & a Christmas Cracker

Christmas Dinner is free to all of our students

Free Online Counselling Service

www.kooth.com is a free, confidential, safe and anonymous way for young people, aged 11-18, to ask for help from a team of highly qualified and experienced counsellors and support workers.

Kooth is a well-established, award winning online counselling agency and is accredited by The British Association of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BACP).



Christmas and New Year opening hours

You can access Kooth any time you need; we're always open. If you're looking for a one-to-one chat with our team, check below to see when they're available over Christmas and New Year:

Christmas Week	New Year Week
<div>6 – 10PM</div> <div>Saturday 20th December</div>	<div>6 – 10PM</div> <div>Saturday 27th December</div>
<div>6 – 10PM</div> <div>Sunday 21st December</div>	<div>6 – 10PM</div> <div>Sunday 28th December</div>
<div>12 – 10PM</div> <div>Monday 22nd December</div>	<div>12 – 10PM</div> <div>Monday 29th December</div>
<div>12 – 10PM</div> <div>Tuesday 23rd December</div>	<div>12 – 10PM</div> <div>Tuesday 30th December</div>
<div>12 – 8PM</div> <div>Christmas Eve Wednesday 24th December</div>	<div>12 – 8PM</div> <div>New Years Eve Wednesday 31st December</div>
<div>4 – 8PM</div> <div>Christmas Day Thursday 25th December</div>	<div>4 – 8PM</div> <div>New Years Day Thursday 1st January</div>
<div>12 – 8PM</div> <div>Boxing Day Friday 26th December</div>	<div>12 – 10PM</div> <div>Friday 2nd January</div>

From 3rd January 2026, our team will be available as usual: 12 - 10pm Monday to Friday and 6pm - 10pm at weekends.



Young Minds

[Young Minds](http://YoungMinds) is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. Just as people's bodies can become unwell, people's minds can become unwell too.

Young Minds offer information to young people and children about mental health and emotional wellbeing. If you need to talk, they can let you know about organisations that listen, plus they offer online support and info.

YOUNGMiNDS

BASILDON ACADEMIES

WORD OF THE DAY

15th - 19th December 2025

Monday:	Garrulous (adjective) балакучий in Ukranian – excessively talkative, especially on trivial matters. <i>The garrulous boy often distracted others in class.</i>	
Tuesday:	Voracity (noun) کفایت شعاری in Urdu – great eagerness or hunger for something. <i>Her voracity for learning was infectious.</i>	
Wednesday:	Recalcitrant (adjective) bosh tortuvchi in Uzbek – stubbornly disobedient. <i>The recalcitrant student ignored repeated warnings</i>	
Thursday:	Splendid (adjective) lộng lẫy in Vietnamese – magnificent and very impressive. <i>The Christmas tree stood in splendid decoration in the hall.</i>	
Friday:	Mirth (noun) gorfoledd in Welsh – amusement, especially expressed in laughter. <i>The classroom was full of mirth during the festive quiz.</i>	

Job of the Week: Personal Trainer

What does a Personal Trainer do?

Personal trainers help their clients reach their personal health and fitness goals.

You'll talk to clients to find out about their fitness level and health history. You'll then:

- Set short- and long-term goals and plan programmes for reaching them.
- Give advice on health, nutrition and lifestyle changes.
- Help clients with their workouts.
- Check and record clients' progress, using methods like measuring heart rate and levels of body fat.
- You might work full time as a gym instructor and do personal training outside your normal hours.

Labour Market Information

- 140,003
- 4,080 in your local area of Essex
- +.2% 1,593 jobs
- -5.8% in your region of East of England, an decrease of 4,201 jobs



What Qualifications do you need to do this job?

You'll need:

- To have knowledge of anatomy, physiology and nutrition
- Public Liability Insurance
- A first aid award, which must include a cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate
- You'll also need a recognised qualification in fitness and exercise instruction.

Let's Talk Money

UK annual median:
£24,371

There is a real drive to ensure that TAs are highly skilled and deployed effectively to meet the needs of learners. TAs feel well valued and were able to articulate how they are given opportunities to develop their skills through CPD and often receive public recognition through the 'Star of the week'.



Best Practice with
Teaching Assistants Award

2023-2026

Follow The Basildon Lower Academy on our social media channels



Absence Procedures

Please let us know as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend school, ideally by 8am, by email to lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk or by calling **01268 498881**.

- Parents/carers must contact the school by 8.30am each day their child is absent.
- If no reason has been received for a child's absence, the Academy will initiate first day calling.
- Parent/carers may be asked for medical evidence to support absences after 3 days or reoccurring absence patterns.
- Wherever possible, parents/carers should make appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable students should attend school before and after the appointment.

Please familiarise yourself with our attendance procedures found on the school website within the Parent Information section, so you know who and when you need to contact us. www.basildonloweracademy.org.uk/attendance



Essex County Council
Education

GOOD TIMEKEEPING



What to do the night before:

Get everything you need for school ready



Set your alarm allowing plenty of time

Make your lunch and drink if you bring a packed lunch to school



Turn off devices half an hour before bedtime

Have a good night's sleep - a minimum of eight hours!

