

A Brew with



Gabe West, IT Technician

Welcome to A Brew with...! Each month, we catch up with an Outwood Family colleague to learn more about them and their career. This month, we caught up with Gabe West, IT Technician at Outwood Academy Freeston!

First up, what are you drinking?

Coffee with sugar, please!

When did you first join the Outwood Family?

I first joined the Trust as all the students came back from the first lockdown in September 2020.

What were your initial thoughts when you began working at Outwood?

It was quite scary and nerve-racking for me on my first day. I was 18 at the time and I'd never worked in a school before so I had no idea what to expect, but at the same time, I relished being back in an educational environment. After a couple of weeks, once I'd settled in, I saw the lengths that staff were going to for the benefit of the students. I was in awe and couldn't wait to get stuck in and fully trained so I could do that myself.

What do you love most about your job?

My favourite part has to be seeing people smile when I fix their IT issues. A big part of why I started doing IT support in the first place was so that I could help people with their issues, it has to be the single thing that gives me the most joy and the fact that I get to do that every day is a blessing.

"it was a pleasure to be a part of something that helped to develop students' talents"

What is your favourite memory working at Outwood so far?

My favourite memory has to be assisting with the "Freeston's Got Talent" show that we held for parents to watch their children perform. We had some truly amazing acts on and it was a pleasure to be a part of something that helped to develop students' talents and confidence in performing in front of a crowd of people. The show was very entertaining and the comedian was excellent at developing and improvising their jokes. It was just truly inspiring to see the students take part in this.

Is there a particular colleague who you enjoy working with who you'd like to give a shout-out to?

Many names come to mind for this one but I think I have to choose Pete Clough who is the Assistant Network Manager for Outwood Grange Academy, City Fields and Freeston. He's the most hard-working person I know; always has time to listen to me talk about work or other issues and is just generally amazing at supporting me. He does an excellent job of being a great colleague and an excellent friend. He sometimes goes unnoticed for a lot of his work that goes on in the background but I hope he knows that I appreciate everything he does for me and the Trust.

"The amount of work that everyone's put into it is truly inspiring."

What do you think has been the biggest change since you began working at Outwood?

The biggest change would have to be the transformation at Outwood Academy Freeston over the last few years. The amount of work that everyone's put into it is truly inspiring. When I started, the IT infrastructure wasn't the best - for example, we were using a really old computer to manage the door access which used a really out of date operating system (Windows XP for those of you who remember it). With the hard work and effort of my team as well as Central IT, we've managed to get to a place where we can confidently say that we're in a comfortable position.

When you're not at work, how do you like to spend your time?

Some of my spare time is spent learning new IT related things or studying for courses so that I can further my knowledge. I'm also a big fan of music so I try to get to gigs as much as I can, my most recent one was Blink-182! I also play guitar, enjoy playing the odd video game every now and then and spend time with my family on weekends.



Which three people, dead or alive, would you want to have a brew with?

First would have to be Robin Williams, his battle with mental health was really inspiring and watching his amazing, comical acting helps me see the bright side on rainy days. I feel like a brew with him would be an insight into his mind on how he too saw the bright side on rainy days.

Second, Mark Hoppus. As a member of Blink-182, his songwriting and creativity introduced me to the world of pop punk (which is now my favourite genre of music). He was diagnosed with stage four lymphoma in April 2021 and was declared cancer free 6 months later. His journey from diagnosis to being able to get back on stage and tour again is admirable. We also share the same humour so a brew with him would be a great laugh.

Third has to be any UK police officer. I often find myself thinking of questions to ask them about their role but I never want to disturb them when I pass them in the street. I think a brew with them and an insight into their everyday job would really interest me.

