

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of the first half-term of the academic year, I would like to send a big thank you for your support in enabling such a positive eight weeks. The standard of uniform, equipment and engagement in lessons has been excellent. Students have worked incredibly hard in lessons to make sure they make every moment count.

Due to the recent successes at the academy; I have been fortunate enough to tour colleagues around the academy from a number of different secondary schools, and they have been blown away by the application and behaviour of our students. There has been a drive at the academy around self-regulated learning; teaching the students the best way to revise in the run up to assessments. We know if students start getting this right in Years 7-10, then it will really help them when sitting formal examinations in Years 11, 12 & 13. The application from students with their revision skills has been outstanding.

Attendance

You may have seen in the news, the current national picture with regards to school attendance post Covid. There is no doubt that we are also seeing a significant increase in absence compared to levels before Covid. I appreciate that there will be times when a student is just too unwell or unable to attend, but attendance really does matter. When the students are in the academy, they have more opportunities to mix with their peers; they do not create gaps in their learning, and in the long term it makes a significant impact on the grades that our students achieve.

By using last year's Year 11 cohort as an example; the students with attendance above 95% went on to achieve progress scores which placed them in the top 15% nationally. The students with attendance below 90% achieved progress scores far below this.

The table below details the number of days across the year and how absences impact a student's attendance. It shows how achievable it is to ensure attendance above 95%, our minimum requirement. Please make sure that you contact your child's Head of Year or the Attendance Team if your child requires any support to overcome the barriers to attend.

Attendance	Days off across the year
100%	0 days off
95%	9 days off
90%	19 days off
85%	29 days off

Curriculum Pages

At the academy we regularly update our curriculum, reflecting on how well students have learned and are always looking to make it better. The curriculum was praised by Ofsted, which has led to a number of schools approaching the academy for guidance on their own curriculum; but we know that this is a piece of work that we should never finish. We provide detailed Curriculum Maps on our website; this allows parents to see exactly what the students are learning to the granular detail. We met with our Parent/Carer Council last academic year who appreciated the Curriculum Maps, but explained for lots of parents/carers the level of detail is too much. Taking this feedback on board; we have now reduced down the content we share, as well as providing the detailed maps. I have provided a [LINK](#) to a video, informing parents/carers on how to navigate through the website to get the information on what their child is learning.

Charity Drive

You will have seen the updates on our social media page of the unbelievable charity work undertaken by two of our Year 10 students; Archie and Connor. This has involved a number of activities such as bake sales, sponsored runs and there will be a staff football match after school on Friday 27 October to raise funds for the relative who needs treatment abroad. Last academic year we held a 'Rock and Run' event in memory of Mr Sykes; his widow was keen to donate the majority of the money raised towards this charity.

I am incredibly proud of the two boys and the way our community has supported them in their efforts – they typify our core values on a daily basis. Please refer to our social media pages for further information if you would like to donate.

Standards

We firmly believe that our students' education should not be hampered by a lack of equipment. Below is a list of equipment that is non-negotiable so that students can access their learning.

- A school bag that can at least hold a PE kit, exercise books and equipment. Any bag that can't hold these items is not a suitable school bag.
- Pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, pencil sharpener.
- A green pen (provided by the academy)
- PE kit on those days they have PE. Students will be expected to borrow a kit if they forget their own.

To make sure that staff focus can be on students learning and wellbeing, can we please make sure that students return back in November with the correct school shoes and uniform. Students are not permitted to wear false nails, nail varnish, fake eye lashes or dye their hair an un-natural colour. Further information can be found on the Uniform section of the academy website.



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Together Students Achieve

Principal: Mr P Willerton

Return Dates

A reminder that **Monday 6 November is a staff training day**, and so all students will return at the normal time on Tuesday 7 November. The academic calendar for 2024/25 has now been agreed by Trustees and is uploaded to the academy website.

I hope that everyone enjoys a restful half-term and we look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday 7 November.

Yours faithfully

P Willerton
Principal



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