



Dear Parents/Carers,

8th September 2023

It has been fantastic to welcome our new year 7 students to the academy and of course to welcome back our older students. Thank you for all your work to ensure children return smart and ready to learn. At the start of the year there are many important messages and reminders. As always, we will try to ensure as much as possible is contained within my weekly letter. However, information pertinent to particular year groups or classes will continue to be sent out separately eg parents' evenings and trips. Therefore, please do take the time to read this each week to ensure you are up to date with life at the academy.

The start of a new academic year is the time to ensure that all students are ready for school. A few key reminders for parents and carers;

- Students should be in full uniform including their blazer, tie and shoes.
- Hair should be of a natural colour and make up should be a subtle, natural look.
- No jewellery or piercings are permitted - students may wear a wristwatch only.
- Students are welcome to breakfast club at 7.45am but should not be on site otherwise before 8.30am.
- Students are expected to bring their 5 a day (pen, pencil, planner, knowledge organisers' and ruler) so they are ready to learn.

Please continue to refer to our academy website and handbook for further detailed [information](#) .

Attendance matters. As we start the new academic year, our form time and student training programme this week has been focused on establishing effective learning routines. The importance of attendance and punctuality and the impact this has on achievement is significant. Did you know that...

- Each day at school contributes just over 0.5% to a student's overall attendance
- To achieve "excellent" attendance, this is equal to only 2 days absence per year
- An attendance of 90% sounds good, but is half a day off each week
- Once attendance drops below 90%, statistics show that the average chance of students achieving 5+ GCSE grades at 9-5 drops by a half

Every minute of learning matters and our students being on time to school and to lessons is incredibly important. A polite reminder that students need to be at school for 8.30am, ready for their line up at 8:35am. After this time, they need to report to the Attendance door and will receive sanctions for continued and persistent lateness.

We know that sometimes students may feel under the weather and might prefer to stay at home. The NHS has issued a guide to help you with that decision making [you can read here](#) This reiterates that *"it's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold"*.

Further information on how we support, and challenge attendance can be found [HERE](#). Please contact the year or attendance team if you need any support in getting your child to school and we will do our utmost to help resolve those barriers with you.

Raising Achievement. To further support our students, I am delighted to inform you that Study Hall will be starting Monday 11th September after school from 3:10pm - 4:10pm and will be available every day to support students in all year groups with their learning. This is a great opportunity for your child to work with one of our fantastic Raising Achievement Mentors. During these sessions and using your child's Knowledge Organiser, students will be taught how to study effectively using the three 'Denes Desirables' to improve their subject knowledge and study skills. For Key Stage 3 students this will take place in the New Hall, with Key Stage 4 sessions taking place in the Entrance Hall.

Year 11s, we see the return of our Period 6 interventions starting Tuesday 12th September. If you have received an invitation for your child to attend, please can I ask that you encourage them to do so. Our Period 6 interventions have proven to be effective, especially when we look at the outcomes our 2022 cohort achieved, something we are very proud of. Should you have questions regarding P6 interventions, please contact a member of the Year 11 team.

Year 11 Raising Achievement Evening. This will be taking place on **Thursday 14th September**. Parents of Year 11 students will have received an invitation to this event on Thursday 7th September and we ask that if you wish to attend please complete and return the acceptance slip.

Rewards. Students have already earned 3850 positive points already which they will be able to spend in our Reward Shop, situated in Student Services. Students can access this before school or during social times and use their reward points to buy stationery, water bottles, small sweet treats and jump the queue cards but they can also collect paracetamol from here if they feel unwell (as long as the correct consent forms have been completed by parents).

Detention changes. Last year we had many success stories following the introduction of Ready, Responsible and Respectful. We appreciate that students sometimes need support in making the right choices. We have reviewed our detention structure so that the 40 minute after school detention is now 30 minutes long - we would like to take this opportunity to remind you that **consequences are booked for the same day** and that communication can be viewed on the Go 4 Schools website for parents. In addition to the 30 minute detention, we will also be supporting our learners by introducing a longer pastoral detention of either 45 or 60 minutes for more serious incidents, as a step between detentions and our Reflection Room.

This ensures that students take responsibility for their choices but will reduce lost learning time.

We look forward to another successful year ahead with students being responsible and respectful, and the further development of the valuable partnerships between the academy and families as we work together to ensure your child is happy, safe and successful. As always, please do not hesitate in contacting your child's form tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Manager with any questions or queries.

Cost of living support - Given ongoing news events highlighting pressures on the cost of living, please do not hesitate to contact us should you need any assistance, and we will do our best to help and signpost to any support available. We are increasing our stock of loaned uniform items as part of these efforts and should you have any old, unwanted or spare academy uniform items, including winter coats, please drop this into us so we can distribute them to those in greatest need. The [safeguarding page](#) of our website is routinely updated with support services that may be of interest to you. Our [mental health](#) and [parent/carer mental health](#) pages can also be found online.

Breakfast Club. We offer a free breakfast to every student every school day. Breakfast club opens at 7.45am each morning for everyone.

Lunch and Breaktime spending limit. We are pleased to confirm that we have raised the amount each child can spend on food, drinks and snacks from £3.00 to £3.50 a day with immediate effect. Parents can adjust this via their Parentmail accounts.

Free School Meals - Many of our students receive free school meals and can therefore "spend" up to £2.50 a day. Last term we established that many students choose to use their allocation to buy a snack rather than a meal deal. **Purchasing a meal deal represents better value for money. Please encourage your child to select a hot meal or sandwich meal deal each day.**

Enrichment - Enrichment is an important aspect of a students' experience at school and we would like to encourage all students to attend at least one enrichment activity each week. We will be promoting enrichment through our morning assembly programme and shortly after this we will be holding an enrichment fayre where staff and students will be promoting what's on offer for this term.

Thank you for your support. Through working together, we will make this year a successful one for your children

Have a nice weekend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kate Williams

Principal