

11UL_0008

Dear Parent,

As we draw towards the end of the second week of term I just wanted to write to you with some information and to invite you to express an interest in being involved more closely with the Academies.

Parents will recall that in April OFSTED inspected the Academies and drew attention to poor behaviour and the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As the new Principal (and Head of both sites) I am very conscious that children only get one chance at education and so I have therefore made it my priority to quickly improve behaviour and to ensure that students are engaged with their learning whilst in lessons.

We began the term with a crackdown on uniform and then moved on to insist on behaviour which would improve the learning in lessons. During the summer term I noticed that significant amounts of time were being wasted in some lessons dealing with students who turned up without equipment, and so we have brought in minimum expectations for equipment.

As a result of these changes we already have two much calmer, quieter Academies where students who wish to learn can do so. Bullying has been reduced, misbehaviour in lessons has been reduced and as a result we have had better staff attendance than at any point in the previous two years. This means that we no longer have the former permanent need for cover teachers and we can therefore give students a much more consistent quality of education. We still have further to go but children and staff are consistently telling us that there is much more learning going on in their lessons!

I am particularly keen to improve homework and so I am enclosing with this letter a copy of the homework timetables by tutor group within each year group. This will inform parents which homework their children should have each night of the week. Homework should also be written by students in their planners. Each year group should experience on average 2 homeworks per night. Years 7, 8 and 9 children should have the equivalent of 2 x 30 minute homeworks each night whilst Years 10 and 11 should have the equivalent of 2 x 45 minutes per night; the Sixth Form should have 2 x 1 hour of homework each night. I will be monitoring that homework is being set and marked but if you find that your child has not received their homework allocation please inform me so that I can improve the situation.

As a result of several questions about uniform I would like to confirm the following:

- Girls (and boys) socks should be black in colour and of ankle length
- Hair bands should be plain and flat, black in colour with no added ornamentation
- Students also need to carry a reading book as part of their 'learning kit,' as many lessons begin with a few minutes of silent reading so that students can build up their powers of concentration and their literacy skills.

- To ensure consistency of interpretation any queries about uniform are referred for a final decision to Mr Gary Smith in the Lower Academy and Mrs Jeanne Rowe in the Upper Academy.

Several students have said to me over the last week that they are very proud of how much they have improved their behaviour, and they wished their parents could see them. I would therefore like to offer parents the opportunity to visit the Academies and see their children working hard in lessons. If you would like to visit us please indicate when you would like to visit and return the tear off slip to reception at either site.

I am ambitious for our students and I have noticed that some of our younger students particularly benefit from parent volunteers who spend time listening to them read. If you could spare us an hour or two a week and would like to help in this way do please fill in the tear off slip and return it to let us know.

As we move forward at the Academies I am conscious that there are a range of decisions we need to take about future courses and curriculum provision and we would benefit from hearing your views and discussing ideas. If you could spare us an evening each half term to meet and discuss plans then we would be very grateful if you could let us know via the tear off slip below.

In order to help us improve communication with parents I would also like to develop an e-newsletter which would go out directly to parents via email. If you have an email address and would like to receive the newsletter do please write your email address below and return the slip so that we can update our records.

Yours sincerely

Dr. R. Fox
Principal

Reply slip – Please return to

Parent Name _____ email address _____ Student name-----

I would like to visit the academy..... Tuesday 10am Lower Academy

Wednesday 10am Upper Academy

Thursday 10am Lower Academy

Friday 10am Upper Academy

I would be interested in volunteering at the Academies as a reading partner to listen to students reading

I would be interested in joining the Parents forum (give contact details)

Please return this slip to Reception at either Academy