



Letter from Mr M. Kelay

July 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of my first term as Associate Principal at Thorns, it is a good time to reflect on all we have achieved; to remind you of some important changes and to look forward to an even more successful 2017/2018 when we become Thorns Collegiate Academy.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support for the school. I have enjoyed meeting so many of you. The community of the school has been most welcoming and I am very excited about working with you in the years to come. I also thank you for working in partnership with us to ensure that your child always achieves their best.

Below are some of the key achievements of this year. Of course, we await the summer results, but I am confident that the hard work of our teachers and students and the support from the parents of Year 11 will yield good outcomes for our young people. Year 11 students may collect their exam results from school on Thursday 24th August from 09.00am. We wish all our leavers every success in the future.

Attendance and Punctuality

We have continued to make improvements in attendance over the year. Thank you all for making sure your child attends every day and is here on time. We have reduced lateness to school and will continue to make this a priority in the coming academic year.

PTFA

The PTFA continues to support the school by raising money and bringing the community of the school together at key events throughout the year such as the Christmas and Summer Fayre. We are grateful for a donation of £2,000 which we will spend wisely to benefit our students.

Sports

There have been a number of sporting achievements this year. In particular, we congratulate our Year 8 Girls Football team who won their league as well as the 5-a-side cup. The Year 9 Girls Football team also won their league. Year 9 boys were runners up in the cup and the Year 10 Boys Football team came 2nd in a strong league. Our annual Sports Day, organised by the PE department, will give competitors and spectators the opportunity to enjoy an afternoon of athletics.

I am very keen for your child to participate in after-school activities and the range of activities we have to offer will be made available to you when we return in September.

Year 11 Prom. Bewdley Safari Park

Once again, our Year 11 students celebrated the end of their exams and indeed the end of their time with us at Thorns. It is traditionally, a wonderful event where staff and students get dressed in their finest and enjoy dinner and dancing and a time to reflect on and to create happy memories.

Year 6 Induction

We welcomed Year 6 students from a number of our local primary schools for the day and their parents for the evening. Children were introduced to their class teacher and were given the opportunity to participate in some lessons to help them make the transition from their primary school to Thorns as smooth as possible. We hope that we will see many of them at our exciting Summer School which runs from Wednesday 27th July to Friday 29th July.



Letters home (2/4)

Uniform

I am looking forward to meeting students in September and seeing the effect of some of the changes we have made to our uniform. We have made significant improvements to some of the details of the school uniform and I know that our students will feel an increased sense of pride and belonging as we move to become Thorns Collegiate Academy. I thank you for your support and patience as we await the delivery of badges and ties which we anticipate to be during the summer holidays. We will notify you when they arrive and hope that you will be able to collect them on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th September during our INSET days.

- Black shoes (plain black, polishable leather-type shoes, with no logos, colours, coloured laces or trims)
- A black blazer (new Thorns badge will be provided for you free of charge no later than September)
- Smart black trousers – (no jeans, jeggings, jean-style trousers or leggings) OR a plain black knee length or ankle length skirt
- Plain white shirt (long or short sleeves) – tucked in with top button fastened
- Optional plain black V-neck jumper or long-sleeved cardigan
- Plain black or white socks
- Head scarves or salwar kameez, if worn, should be plain black.
- A sensible, waterproof coat
- Black academy tie with embroidered Thorns logo

Behaviour Management Services (BMS)

I have also been delighted with the change in the learning behaviour of our students due to the introduction of BMS. Any student who interrupts the learning of others or who makes it difficult for the teacher to teach, is removed. This student then completes work in isolation. Fixed and mobile camera equipment is also used to ensure that the behaviour of a minority of students is carefully monitored. Staff, and indeed students, have noticed and are benefitting from the calm, purposeful learning atmosphere this system has helped to create.

Mobile Devices

May I take this opportunity to remind parents that if students choose to bring a mobile device to school, it must not be visible anywhere on site. If you need to get an urgent message to your son or daughter during the day, please contact reception on 01384 816225 and we will ensure that the message is passed on. If students do bring mobile device to school, we will not take responsibility for loss or damage.

We are pleased that we are now able to communicate with families more effectively through social media. I hope that parents will ensure that students who post comments on the Thorns Facebook page follow guidelines for safe and responsible on-line behaviour. We look forward to continued effective dialogue with our community.

From September, Thorns will also be a chewing gum free site. This will give us the opportunity to address the litter problem cause by gum and the unpleasant and offensive sight of chewing gum stuck in places such as underneath classroom tables.

Thorns is a non-smoking site and no-one, including visitors and adult users, should be smoking once on site.

Road Safety

I would ask parents whose children ride bikes or scooters to school to remind them about safety. We have had a number of adults draw our attention to students who ride their bikes without due care and attention and who risk injury to themselves and other road users. I would prefer to see cyclists wearing helmets and I do not want to see any students performing stunts on their bikes on the way to and from school. They should also be mindful of pedestrians.

Letters home (3/4)

The Curriculum

In September, there will be important changes in our school day, not least the move to a 5 session day:

Year 7 and Year 8

Registration and Form time 08.45-09.15

- Session 1: 9:15 – 10:15
- Session 2: 10:15 – 11:15
- Break: 11:15 – 11:35
- Session 3: 11:35 – 12:35
- Lunch: 12:35 to 13:10
- Session 4: 13:10 – 14:10
- Session 5: 14:10 – 15:10

Students will be dismissed at 15:10 each day

Years 9 to 11

Registration and Form time 08.45-09.15

- Session 1: 9:15 – 10:15
- Session 2: 10:15 – 11:15
- Break: 11:15 – 11:35
- Session 3: 11:35 – 12:35
- Session 4: 12:35 – 13:35
- Lunch: 13:35 to 14:10
- Session 5: 14:10 – 15:10

Students will be dismissed at 15:10 each day

Literacy for Life

Literacy for life aims to develop both our students' academic and life skills with a particular focus on raising levels of attainment in both Numeracy and Literacy.

Students in Year 7 and 8 will experience an innovative, thematic curriculum, which is competency based, in a learning environment similar to that experienced at primary school. Students will spend a large proportion of curriculum time with one teacher in one classroom, thus reducing the need to move around the site in what can sometimes be an overwhelming change from primary. Students will all have access to a surface device and will be challenged to use time and technology to achieve.

Farewells

Of course, it is the time in the year when we sadly say goodbye to some staff. This year we have said goodbye to a number of colleagues. We miss them and thank them for all their hard work and dedication to the school.

I would like to thank our Governors for their dedication and tireless support of our school. I would also like to thank all the staff – both teaching and support staff who make this school a great place of work and learning.

Please find below some key dates for your diary:

- Open Evening - 28th September 2017
- INSET Days - 4th September 2017, 5th September 2017, 10th November 2017, 2nd January 2018 and 16th April 2018
- Year 7 Settling In Evening - 12th October 2017
- GCSE Presentation Evening - 23rd November 2017
- Carol Service - 14th December 2017
- Year 9 Options Evening - 10th January 2018
- Parents Evenings - Year 8 – 14th November; Year 11 – 24th January; Year 9 – 22nd March; Year 10 – 14th June; Year 7 – 18th July



Letters home (4/4)

- Dance Production - 27th March 2018 and 28th March 2018
- Year 11 Prom - 28th June 2018
- Summer Festival - 12th July 2018

Arrangements for the first day back – Wednesday 6th September.

We would like students to arrive at the following times on the first day to give us the opportunity to check uniform and set expectations for the coming academic year.

Year 7	08.40	Meet in the playground
Year 11	09.15	Go to the Hardwicke Theatre
Year 10	09.45	Go to the Hardwicke Theatre
Year 8	10.15	Go to form rooms
Year 9	10.15	Go to Hardwicke Theatre

We will finish early on Friday 21st July. Lessons before break will be as normal and sessions 3 and 4 after break will be slightly shorter to allow for an early finish. Break will be longer than usual to allow students to get lunch. Students will be dismissed by their form teachers at 12.40pm.

As the new academic year approaches, I am excited about our journey to become an academy. Your partnership in this journey is very important and I look forward to working with you to provide our young people with an education they can be proud of. I hope you all have a wonderful summer and I look forward to welcoming your child back, smart in their uniform and fully prepared for learning, on Wednesday 6th September.

Yours faithfully,

Mr M S Kelay
Associate Principal