



14 December 2017

Dear Families

As we come to the end of the Autumn term, it is a good time to reflect on all we have achieved this term; to remind you of some important changes, and to look forward to an even more successful 2018.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support for the Academy. I also thank you for working in partnership with us to ensure that your child always achieves their best.

Year 9 Career Choices

Students in year 9 have been preparing for their option choices next term with some careers activities during their PSHE lessons. They have been using a careers website to explore jobs which would suit their skills and interests. I would encourage you to ask your child to show you the profile which this activity has generated and to discuss with them which qualifications they should pick in the options process. The web site can be found at <https://www.startprofile.com/>; students know their login details.

Below are some of the key achievements of this term:

Attendance and Punctuality

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

PTFA

The PTFA continues to support the Academy by attending and helping at key events throughout the term such as GCSE Awards Evening, Gig Night and the Carol Concert. We are grateful for their commitment and dedication.

Uniform

Thank you for supporting students in maintaining high standards of uniform. If any families are considering buying replacement footwear for students over the Christmas period, there will be updated guidance on our website in the next few days.

Shoes must be black, polishable, leather-type shoes with a small heel – ie, not Converse, Vans or trainer style footwear. They must be smart. Black trainers are not permitted. Please see our website for further details.

Communications and Social Media

We are pleased that we are now able to communicate information with families more effectively through social media. I hope that parents ensure that students who post comments on the Thorns Facebook page follow guidelines for safe and responsible on-line behaviour. In addition to this, the Facebook Inbox Message Facility is occasionally checked out of the Academy hours (evenings and weekends) but this is not a regular occurrence. Please be aware that you may not receive an immediate response to messages sent to this facility. We also ask that enquiries are sensible and written in an appropriate tone. We look forward to continued effective dialogue with our community.

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In addition to this, we would like to update our records regarding photo permissions. Please read the attached letter carefully and respond if you feel it is appropriate.

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 from lessons and 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.

Updates

May I take this opportunity to remind parents that if students choose to bring a mobile device to Academy, 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 Academy, we will not take responsibility for loss or damage.

From September, Thorns has been a chewing gum free site. This has given us the opportunity to address the litter problem caused by gum and the unpleasant and offensive sight of chewing gum stuck in places such as underneath classroom tables.

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

Road Safety

Earlier this term, we welcomed the Police who met with all students who come to the Academy on a bike or scooter. They reminded them of some important safety messages and warned them about certain aspects of antisocial behaviour that can occur from groups of youths on bikes.

All students who use bikes and scooters to travel to the Academy should have been issued with a permission letter to obtain a bike pass. If students flout our rules and expectations regarding bikes, they will have their passes revoked. 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 the Academy.

Students have been instructed that they are to push their bikes in any pedestrian areas. They must push them while on the Academy site and at the end of the day, they must push them on the pavement until they get to corner of Acres Road (where there is a member of staff on duty) or until they are clear of the congestion if they are travelling down Stockwell Avenue.

Students were also warned not to congregate in shopping centres and car parks, particularly McDonalds and Tesco on the Stourbridge ring road as the Police are issuing warning letters to youths on bikes who are not behaving appropriately. We thank parents and families for your continued support to ensure the safety of our young people and other road users.

Farewells

Of course, it is the time in the year when we sadly say goodbye to some staff. This term we say goodbye to three colleagues, Mr Morris, Mr Griffiths and Mr Timmington. We will miss them and thank them for all their hard work and dedication to the Academy.

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SHIRELAND
COLLEGIATE ACADEMY TRUST

Registered Office:
Waterloo Road
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I would like to thank our Governors and Trustees for their dedication and tireless support of our Academy. I would also like to thank all the staff – both teaching and support staff who make this Academy a great place of work and learning.

Forthcoming Events

Please find below some key dates for your diary:

- INSET Days (staff training) - 2 January 2018 and 5 February 2018 (**NB change from 16 April). The Academy will be closed to students on these dates**)
- Year 9 Options - 22 March 2018 (**NB change from 10 January 2018**)
- Parents Evenings - Year 11 – 24 January; Year 9 – **to be confirmed**; Year 10 – 14 June; Year 7 – 18 July and Year 8 – 14 November;
- Dance Production - 26 April 2018 and 27 April 2018. 15 April 2018 will be the dress rehearsal
- Year 11 Prom - 28 June 2018
- Summer Festival - 12 July 2018

We will finish early on Wednesday, 20 December 2017. Lessons before break will be as normal. Break will be longer than usual to allow students to get hot food. Students will be dismissed by their form teachers at 12.40pm.

As the New Year and academic term approaches, I am excited about our journey to become an outstanding 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 festive break and I look forward to welcoming your child back, smart in their uniform and fully prepared for learning, on Wednesday, 3 January 2018.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Yours faithfully

Mr M S Kelay
Principal

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