



March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we have just passed the mid-point of the academic year, I am writing to advise you of some changes that we are proposing to introduce from the start of academic year 2020/21 as well as to reflect on some successes and re-state some existing procedures and policies that I would like to raise student and parent awareness of.

Firstly, I would like to thank parents, carers and students for their positive support of the academy over the course of the year so far. The students are generally working hard in class, attaining well and also taking advantage of the extra-curricular opportunities on offer. They are supported by parents who have the interests of their children at heart and support the academy as we collectively seek to mould them into successful, polite and respectful young people.

The past half-term saw some notable successes on the sporting front, in particular the under 14 girls football team who have reached the quarter finals of their national competition and the dance team who recently won their local competition at the Tower Ballroom. My congratulations go to both these groups of students and thanks to the staff who work to facilitate their performance. Additionally we had two very successful trips in the skiing and New York visits that took place over the half-term break with the students making the most of the opportunity to broaden their horizons.

### **The academy day**

We have recently undertaken an extensive review of our curriculum and will be making some changes to our Year 8 options process in order to broaden the curriculum offer. I will be writing to Year 8 parents to outline these changes in the near future. Additionally, as part of our efforts to embed a reading culture into the academy and support vocabulary development, we are proposing to introduce a 20-minute reading period into the academy day in addition to the five hour-long lessons. In order to do this we are proposing to alter the academy day to start at 8:40am and finish at 3:00pm. The consultation process around this change is now open and further information as well as the opportunity to contribute to the consultation can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HAPASD20>. The consultation closes on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 9am.

### **Academy uniform**

Could I please remind students and parents of my message regarding footwear in the letter sent prior to the end of the last academic year:

*Over the past few years, we have grown tolerant to the wearing of trainer-shoe hybrids in school, such as 'Stan Smith' style footwear. This tolerance will extend over the next academic year in fairness to families who have already purchased such footwear on the fair understanding that it is allowed. However, from August 2020 such footwear will not be allowed and therefore we request that your next footwear purchase for your child should be formal school shoes.*

This rule has had over a year of notice to parents and lead-in time and will be rigorously applied when we return in September 2020. In my next communication I will be sending some photographic examples of acceptable footwear, however if you are unsure then please get in touch.





## Parental communication

I am delighted that over 97% of parents have activated their ClassCharts account which allows you to be updated with information regarding your child's education promptly. As stated in our behaviour policy, ClassCharts is the primary way in which parents are notified of behaviour issues and achievements. Any parent who has a technical issue with the ClassCharts system is encouraged to contact the academy so we can support you.

## Academy rules

Please find below a reminder of particular academy rules which have been a source of an issue with some students over the course of the year so far. Each of these has a perfectly reasonable rationale and we ask for your support in reinforcing these with your child:

- The mobile phone policy is clear and can be found on the academy website. In particular, a second offence leading to confiscation requires parents to collect the phone from reception.
- Chewing gum is not allowed on the academy site, due to the mess its inappropriate disposal makes, and students found chewing will be sanctioned with a lunchtime detention with further sanctions for repeat offenders.

## Toilets

I would also like to clarify our approach to the use of toilet facilities by students during the school day. In common with many schools, we encourage students to use the toilets before school, during the morning break and at lunch time, rather than during their lessons. This is to minimise any disruption to their learning and to avoid the need for students to move around the site unsupervised. There are, of course, some exceptions and flexibility within this policy. This includes teachers being able to use their judgement and discretion to allow a student to leave a lesson to use a toilet. Sensitivity and common-sense are applied at all times.

As we have an aging building, we do not have the benefit of the 'open-plan' style of toilet facilities that some more modern school buildings have. Unfortunately, this has led to a small minority of older students visiting the Year 8/9 toilets and creating an unpleasant and, at times, intimidating environment for the younger students. This predominantly happens during lesson changeover time and other times when these toilets are not routinely supervised. In order to attempt to preserve the environment for the students we have purchased and installed a shutter blind on the doors of these toilets so that they are not used during lesson times. They will of course remain open before school, at break and lunchtime when they are under the direct supervision of a member of staff. I have spoken with some students, particularly female, who expressed some concerns and I have reassured them that other toilets around the school are easily accessible and remain open throughout the day for students to use if required. For example, there is another girls' toilet less than 15 metres away from the one which has the shutter.

In closing could I please express my thanks to the parents and students for all your efforts so far and look forward to continuing success for the remainder of the year.

Yours faithfully

I. Siddall  
Headteacher

