

18 September 2020

Dear parent/carers

Re: Start of term update

I am writing to you as we reach the end of our second full week back at the Academy. I have enjoyed meeting our existing students and welcoming new members to our community in Year 7 and Year 12. We have had an exceedingly positive start to the year, and I have been delighted by the way our students have adapted to our new coronavirus (COVID-19) routines. These positive behaviours have ensured the safety of every member of our Academy community.

I would like to remind you that your child should not attend the Academy if they exhibit any of the main COVID-19 symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If we suspect your child has COVID-19 symptoms when on the Academy site, we will isolate them and contact you to come and pick them up immediately.

When a child has COVID-19 symptoms they should self-isolate and you should seek a test for them using the website <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. You should inform the Academy immediately if your child has a positive COVID-19 test result, and they should self-isolate for a total of 10 days. If the test is negative then your child should return to the Academy when they feel well.

If any member of your household has COVID-19 symptoms, all other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days, even if they are not showing symptoms. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the household became ill. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for at least 10 days from when their symptoms appear, regardless of what day they are on in their original 14-day isolation period.

Please ensure you contact the Academy Absence line on each day of the absence to confirm your child's absence and provide an update on their condition. We will provide a packed lunch for students who are eligible for Free School Meals whilst they are self-isolating.

I have appreciated your support as we have established high standards in relation to behaviour, uniform, presentation and equipment. Our rigorous and consistent approach has ensured we are making strong progress towards a culture of disruption-free learning, which is allowing great learning to take place.

At The Dukeries Academy we expect everyone to wear our Academy uniform with pride. An overwhelming majority of students are meeting our uniform and presentation standards every day. You can find our full uniform and presentation expectations on the Academy website. I would like to highlight the following:

- We have adapted our policy on skirts. They should be plain black, mid-thigh or longer and the style should fall away from the body. No tight, stretchy styles, but pleated skirts are acceptable.
- Socks or tights should be black in colour. No white or coloured socks are allowed.
- Shoes: Sensible black shoes - no high heels, boots, trainers or canvas shoes.

Following parental feedback, we will carry out a uniform consultation, later in the year, for implementation in September 2021.

We prioritise health and well-being at the Academy. Over the first two weeks I have noticed an increase in the number of fizzy drinks and energy drinks being consumed. These drinks are not allowed on the Academy site. Please work with us to encourage students to choose a healthy drinks option, preferably water.

We have been trialling the use of Class Charts in the Academy since the start of term. We will be launching the app to parents and carers from Monday 28 September 2020. This web-based app will allow you to keep track of your child's behaviour, access their weekly timetable, view assigned home learning tasks, track scheduled detentions, create wellbeing submissions and view announcements from the Academy. From October half-term we will also use the app to record attendance. We will write to you with login details. More information about the Class Charts app can be found at:

https://pages.classcharts.com/wp-content/uploads/Class_Charts_for_parents_guide.pdf

To align with the move to Class Charts, we will also be launching a new Home Learning Policy from Monday 28 September. We will write to you next week with details.

I am pleased to inform you that we are opening our school library from Monday 21 September 2020. I am grateful to the library team and Inspire for their work on the reopening plans. All students will have access to the library each week in order to select or exchange books. The development of reading is an Academy priority, and we expect every student to carry their library book with them every day. Please encourage your child to read regularly at home.

Finally, we have a Virtual Open Evening for parents and carers of students in Year 5 and Year 6 who are interested in finding out more about our high performing Academy and our ambitious plans for further improvement. The Open Evening is on Thursday 1 October 2020 with sessions starting at 5pm and 6pm. Links to the event can be found on our Academy website under the Open Evening tab. Please share the details of this event as widely as you can.

Kind regards



Mr Ged Rae
Principal