



02 September 2025

Dear families,

### **Welcome Back 2025**

Tomorrow, we look forward to welcoming back Year 7 and Year 11 pupils, with the rest of the Academy following on Thursday. This letter covers our usual welcome back information, as well as other important details. We are very excited for the year ahead and full of optimism for what we can achieve together.

### **Summer Exam Results**

This summer we had another year to celebrate as a community. We saw an increase in positive outcomes for A Level pupils who secured high-quality university places, including an Oxford place, which is excellent. Year 11 also saw their hard work pay off at GCSE, with some impressive individual performances and pleasing outcomes in a range of subjects. We will build on this again as pupils return to us.

### **Summary of Key Changes**

This year I have made changes to the way that we operate in response to feedback from you and from the children. All pupils will have an assembly with me or the Vice Principal on their return to explain anything new. I am listing changes here for you so that they are clear:

- We have moved to a one-week timetable to make things simpler. Your child will have the same lessons every week, which I hope will make things easier when you are talking to your child about which lessons they have each day.
- We have extended lunch. This means there will be a whole-school 45-minute lunch, so that pupils have more social time, longer to eat and use the toilet facilities.
- PSHE, Careers, reading activities and our Behaviour and Safeguarding curriculum have moved to the beginning of the day, as well as assemblies.
- Lunch-time will be a sit-down meal using plates, knives and forks and pupils will not be able to take food bought in the cafeteria around the Academy.
- Lunch will not be split, but it will be staggered to manage queues. Key Stage 4 pupils will be able to queue from 12.25 and Key Stage 3 pupils will be able to queue from 12.45. Year 7 pupils will leave Period 3 early for at least the first week, at 12.15 as they get used to systems in the cafeteria.
- The astro-turf will be open all lunch, every lunch for pupils to play football or socialise together.

As we trial and practice new lunchtime routines, it may be that some queues are longer in the first week. If this happens, we will tell you and extend lunch if required to ensure that every child is fed and has adequate lunch time.

A reminder of the structure of the new Academy Day is here:

Staff and Student Breakfast (20)	
8.20 – 8.40	
<b>Staff on gates from 8.20. Whistle at 8.38am</b>	
Tutor Time (40)	8.40 – 9.20
Period 1 (55)	9.20 – 10.15
Period 2 (55)	10.15 – 11.10
Break (20)	11.10 – 11.30
Period 3 (55)	11.30 – 12.25
(Lunch) (45)	12.25 – 1.10
Period 4 (55)	1.10 – 2.05
Period 5 (55)	2.05 – 3.00
Accelerate	3.00 – 3.50

### **New Year 7 Pupils**

We are very excited to welcome our third cohort into The Bridge for their first year with us. I know it can be an anxious time for both pupils and their families and a big change to routine. When pupils arrive on 3 September, staff will be on hand to support your child, and the start of the day will work in a very similar way to the transition days. We will do all we can to make sure your child has a fantastic first week.

A reminder that all our information for Year 7 families can be found here:

<https://www.dukeries.attrust.org.uk/admissions/open-evening/>

### **Attendance**

Attendance remains a very high priority for us as a community. The GCSE results show us that pupils with attendance under 90% were 35% less likely to pass their English and Maths. If pupils are not in school, we are not able to help them do their best. It is vital that all children are in school.

The Education Secretary shared the same message nationally over the weekend. You can read the article on the BBC here: <http://bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cg7jk3rr225o>

The information shared by the government suggests that if your child misses a day in their first week, they are 57% more likely to become persistently absent (have attendance below 90%). Let's work together for a great start and have all our pupils here from the first bell.

As part of your child being in the Academy every day, we offer a wide range of support and maximise the opportunities on offer to improve school attendance. For example:

- We offer free breakfast for all pupils every day from 8.20am in the cafeteria.
- We timetable enrichment and extra-curricular activities so that all pupils get access to extra-curricular.



- Our enrichment offer extends after-school with a comprehensive list of activities pupils can take part in.
- Our attendance team work proactively with families to identify attendance barriers and plan to remove them. This includes staged meetings we invite families to on a systematic basis.
- Every child has a dedicated Tutor, Pastoral Leader and Head of Year.
- We create a warm, welcoming and kind environment and teach pupils what it means to belong.
- We work with numerous external agencies and partners to provide additional support outside of the Academy, including our own on-site counselling service.

Our commitment to improving attendance, alongside our families, is steadfast and I hope that together we can make even more significant improvements in the year ahead, because attendance must continue to get better if we want our children to succeed.

### **Inclusion Centre**

This year we are establishing a new Inclusion Centre, which will replace our previous SSF facility. In partnership with Think for the Future, this provision is opening in September. Think for the Future will be leading and managing the Inclusion Centre, and we welcome four new staff who are working with the children who have been informed of their place in the centre.

Our Inclusion Centre will be a 15-place provision for our children who need the most help and support and will be based on the ground floor of what was the Sixth Form building. This may expand in the future to accommodate more places.

### **Academy Entrances**

There is a small change this year to how pupils enter the building from Whinney Lane. This is to make reception more efficient and support for visitors more readily available. These are detailed here:

- Pupils attending the Inclusion Centre will walk up the main drive and will be greeted by Think for the Future staff, before turning right into the Inclusion Centre.
- Staff and visitors will use Main Reception as normal.
- Any pupils arriving late to school will use the old SSF entrance to the left, where Standards Gate, Late Gate and members of the pastoral team will be based to ensure pupils are ready for school and have the correct registration marks.

### **Uniform and Equipment**

At the start of the school year, I need to give my usual reminder about the expectations and policies for uniform and equipment as the new year begins. Information about this can be found on our website: <https://www.dukeries.atrust.org.uk/parents/uniform/>

High standards of school uniform and equipment are an important part of our culture. If we get the small things right, then it makes all the work we do much more straightforward.

Therefore, I do expect that all pupils meet the standards outlined in our policies, which are like any secondary school nationally. Our pastoral team is experienced and effective, with a Head of Year for each Year Group as well as a Pastoral Leader and experienced teams of Tutors. As an Academy, we will always work positively with you to support high standards of uniform. We already invest in Standards Gate, providing items of new uniform and equipment for pupils to borrow, and we expect



that our families work with us in the same way. High standards of uniform set the bar for everything else we are working hard to achieve.

These standards of uniform extend to our PE kit. The expectations and policies for this are also clearly detailed in the link above. We also provide clean, washed PE kit for pupils who do not have theirs and expect pupils to participate in kit provided for them.

It is also important that your child arrives at the Academy equipped to learn. Pupils are expected to arrive with blue or black pens, a green pen to improve their work, with a ruler, rubber and pencil as a minimum. We would also expect pupils to have a scientific calculator which are reasonably priced and readily available from our Maths department. Being equipped means that teachers are not wasting time at the start of lessons handing out equipment and learning can begin immediately.

### **Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices**

Mobile phones and electronic devices continue to be a challenge for families and schools across the country. We know that constant exposure to social media and short-form content is damaging to children's ability to learn and negatively impacts their engagement with and interest in long-form content commonly found in schools, such as reading or extended writing.

We understand that pupils may need a mobile phone to contact family on the journey to and from school, but beyond that, I am reminding you that we are phone free. They should be always switched off and in bags. This prevents pupils engaging in phone misuse.

Families should not be contacting their child by text or instant messaging apps during lesson time, nor should phone calls be made between parents and children on private mobile devices during the Academy Day. In an emergency, or if required, we will always provide space for children to speak to family members in an appropriate setting, such as in a Pastoral Office and supervised by a member of staff. The key detail in our policy remains that:

- If a pupil is found to be using a mobile phone or electronic device of any kind on the Academy site, these will be confiscated and securely stored.
- Devices can only be collected by the parent/carer from the Academy reception.
- Refusing to hand in an electronic device can result in our most serious sanctions.

### **Staffing and Recruitment**

After a successful round of recruitment, we have managed to ensure that the Academy is staffed with subject experts. We are excited about the highly qualified and experienced new colleagues joining us for September. We welcome the staff below to the Academy this year, with more new recruits joining us at the end of September. Importantly I have been able to:

- Significantly expand the SEND team so that there are more Teaching Assistants.
- Add full-time Intervention Assistants in English and Maths.
- Secure our staffing position in key subjects.

I am sure you will join me in welcoming our new staff to our team and Academy community.

Mrs Anbalagan – SEN Teaching Assistant

Mrs Mair – SEN Teaching Assistant

Miss Dickinson –Teacher of English

Miss Freeman – Teacher of English



Mr Dench-Smith – Faculty Leader – Science  
Ms Milner – Administration Assistant  
Mr Ball – Subject Specialist Leader – Maths  
Mr Mukailaare – Maths Intervention Assistant

### **New Building Update**

I have continued to work over the summer with our partners from the DfE, and other stakeholders involved in the building project. We are now close to being able to release further details to the community, and there will be a consultation period through which the community can have their voice heard on the project. It is exciting to have a brand-new purpose-built facility confirmed and the development of this underway

We are going to raise the bar again this year. My commitment on taking up this post was to deliver a truly great school that our Ollerton community can be proud of. We continue to make strides towards this goal, and we will not stop until we get there.

Thank you for your continued support,

Mr M Brett



Principal

