



September 2024

Autumn 2024 Half Term 1 Letter

Dear Families

I thought I would write to you all now the term is underway with some key messages and items which are coming up. The students have come back really well, especially those focussing on their GCSEs. It has been lovely to meet our new Year 7 cohort who are a pleasure to have in the Academy. There follows some key information:

Notification of Training Day – Friday 18th October

There is a training day in this half term on Friday 18th October 2024.
The Academy is closed to students on this day.

Arbor Sign Up

A big thank you to everyone who has signed up to the Arbor Parent Portal so far. It is really important that you do, as this will be one of our main ways of communicating with you moving forward. You will be able to see details of clubs and give consent for trips as well as see all of the usual information regarding your child. Log in or create your account at <https://login.arbor.sc/>
You can also download the Arbor App to receive messages instantly.

Family Forum – Wednesday 2nd October

We hold a Family Forum event each term. This is your opportunity to come and hear a little bit about the plans for the Academy and to share feedback with us. Each meeting will have a specific focus: this meeting will include a discussion about how we can better engage with families.

We are hosting two sessions on Wednesday 2nd October, 2:30pm – 3:15pm and 5:30pm – 6:30pm. Afternoon tea-style refreshments will be available, served by our students. You can still sign up to attend here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/x6PMAUG3jS>

Year 7 Settling In Evening – Thursday 10th October 3:50pm – 7:30pm

Year 7 Settling In Evening is taking place on Thursday, 10th October.

This is your opportunity to meet with your child's Literacy for Life teacher about how they have settled in so far. This is a really important evening so please do all you can to attend.

Appointments can be made through the Arbor Parent Portal, by ringing the office or your child can make an appointment by asking their teacher – we will do our best to find a suitable time for you.

SEND Key Worker Meetings – Thursday 10th October 3:30pm – 7:30pm

If your child has a SEN and an Inclusion Key Worker you will be invited to a meeting to see how have settled into the year so far.

Again, these meetings will be booked on Arbor but if you are having difficulty, you can contact reception and they can make an appointment for you.

Post 16 Providers Day – Thursday 10th October

Year 11 are having a Post-16 Focus on this day where they take part in some invaluable activities to support them in making choices for their next steps, after Year 11. We are welcoming a number of Post-16 providers into the academy in the afternoon and they will be on hand afterschool for families to come and meet them and ask any questions you may have.

Year 11 – Revision and Exam Preparation

Year 11 have made a very strong start to the new academic year and are showing great enthusiasm and motivation for their learning. Intervention sessions for Year 11 coursework are underway and attendance to Art and DT so far has been fantastic. The progress made by these students is really starting to show.

Study Support sessions and interventions in all other subject areas are beginning this week. To start, students will be directed to sessions that they most need to attend according to where they need the most help.

You will be sent a copy of their personalised Study Support timetable via Arbor so please support us by ensuring that students attend their sessions.

As an incentive to encourage them to attend, we are launching Revision Reward Cards, where students can earn a whole range of rewards and house points, just for going to study sessions. They will also be able to redeem points against a Prom ticket if they would like to attend – we hope that all students do.

In addition to this, all Year 11 students are being set regular homework and revision tasks by their subject teachers. Please ask your child about this and encourage them to complete it. Teachers will contact you if they have concerns; it is crucial that we work together to ensure the best results at the end of the year.

Clubs and Societies

We are excited to launch the first round of clubs and activities on offer and your child should have brought a letter home about this. Please return the letter to show which clubs they would like to take part in. We will then set up these clubs on Arbor.

Black History Month Competition

This year's Black History Month theme, "Reclaiming Narratives," marks a significant shift towards recognising and correcting the narratives of Black history and culture. By emphasising this theme, we shine a brighter light on stories, allegories, and histories that underscore our commitment to correcting historical inaccuracies and showcasing the untold success stories and the full complexity of Black heritage.

At WBCA, we are celebrating Black History Month with a competition to celebrate the narratives of significant Black figures from History. There are four options to choose from to participate in the competition:

<p>Famous Literary figures</p> <p>Write a poem which celebrates the achievements of your chosen famous literary figure.</p> <p>Resources here: Heroes of Literature</p>	<p>Famous figure from the Armed forces</p> <p>Design a medal or a statue which celebrates the achievements of your chosen famous figure from the Armed Forces.</p> <p>Resources here: Heroes of the Armed Forces</p>	<p>Famous figure who fought for Social Justice</p> <p>Design a poster which celebrates the achievements of your chosen famous figure from who fought to have Black voices heard.</p> <p>Resources here: Heroes of Social Justice and Black Voices</p>	<p>Famous STEM figures</p> <p>Create a fact-file or a mood board - which celebrates the inventions or achievements of your chosen famous figure from STEM.</p> <p>Resources here: Heroes of STEM and Inventors</p>
--	---	--	---

Students can click on the links above to find some resources on the Student Portal which can help them to choose their famous Black figure and some information to help them get started to enter the competition. We are encouraging all students to get writing / creating / designing to get involved and enter the competition!

All competition entries are to be handed in to Mrs Percival by Friday 25th October 2024.

We are awarding Amazon Vouchers as prizes for the best entries in each category!

Free School Meals Vouchers

We have received notice from the council that they will no longer be providing Free School Meal vouchers over holidays. Instead, they have asked if we will point you to 'Holiday Activities and Food' during the school holidays, where eligible children can enjoy fun activities and a meal, free of charge. Parents/carers can register by going to <https://holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk> for more information.

In addition, for families who need extra financial support during the school holidays, we have been advised to inform you that help is also still available on the 'Supporting Sandwell information hub', which includes financial advice. You can go to <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell> for more information.

Open Day Thanks and Applications

We had a fantastic turn out at our recent Open Evening with lots of high praise for our student volunteers and tour guides. Our students are a real credit to our school and we thank you for supporting them to attend events like this. A reminder that the deadline for secondary school applications is October 31st 2024, so please remember to apply if you have children in Year 6.

Colder Weather - Coats

It is important that students bring a suitable coat to the academy to keep them warm and dry as the weather is turning colder and wetter.

Coats should be shower-resistant or waterproof.

A reminder that hoodies, tracksuit tops, tech fleeces are not allowed and will be confiscated by staff. They are not allowed as they do not keep students warm and dry, and they do not look smart.

Car Parking and Vehicle Gates

Although we are based on a busy main road, we are very lucky to have a large car park, and many drop off spaces. Please make sure that you use these when you bring your child to school or collect them at home time.

Do not stop in the road for children to get in or out of cars – it is dangerous and causes queues to build up behind.

Also, if you are on foot, you must use the pedestrian gates to leave the site, not the vehicle gates. Again, it is dangerous for both adults and children to be walking between queued cars, and we would hate for there to be an incident where someone gets hurt. Our staff will remind you and the students where we see this happen so, please cooperate with us so that everyone stays safe and the traffic moves as smoothly as possible.

Holidays in Term Time

A reminder that holidays should not be taken in term time as they will not be granted or authorised. Attendance to school is crucial for students to be learning and making good progress.

To give an example, our Academy baseline attendance target is 95% - this is our minimum expectation. Even with this, if a child's attendance is 95% over the academic year, this is still equivalent to 2 weeks, or 50 hours of missed learning.

Put like this, you can see that it makes a big difference, so please work with us to ensure that your child's attendance is as high as possible.

If your child is a little unwell, please still send them to school, we have a large team of staff trained in First Aid and will contact you if your child is too unwell to continue in school.

Half Term

The Academy closes for half term on Friday 25th October at the normal time of 3:25pm. We will welcome students back after the break on Monday 4th November at 8:40am. Thank you all for your continued support, and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at Family Forum on Wednesday.

Kind regards,

Mr G Faux

Principal

Director of Secondary Education