



23 August 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you have all been enjoying the holiday, even though it seems to have rained a lot, and are now turning your thoughts to the start of the new school term.

In view of the challenges that many people are facing with the cost of living, you will be aware that we have modified our uniform expectations slightly. All students now have to be wearing either a Lyng Hall blazer, a Lyng Hall jumper, or, a Lyng Hall fleece as their outer item of uniform. Students can wear any combination of these three elements but they must be wearing at least one. We will be insisting on this from the start of term. Cat Ballou have a good stock of all these items. Other jumpers, hoodies or fleeces are not acceptable. Students must also wear a white shirt and their college tie (new Y7 students will be given their tie on their first day). Black skirts or trousers can be worn but these must not be excessively figure hugging or very short!! Denim or leggings are not acceptable. Footwear must be plain black shoes or trainers. If trainers are worn they must be plain with no coloured logos etc.

We think that this is a very smart uniform option and is much cheaper than the expectations from some other schools so we will insist that students wear it and look smart. Sixth form students should also be dressed smart/casual as though they were going to work in an office environment. Students who turn up in denim or are otherwise unacceptably dressed will be sent home to change.

The high standard I am describing is the same across all schools in the Multi Academy Trust and is important as there will be lots of opportunities for collaboration with students from the other schools.

There will be a big emphasis on reading this year and there will be opportunities for students to read using books and electronic devices. We are also introducing a new app which allows the students to share how they are feeling and to ask for help and support if they are worried about anything. It does mean that we will be allowing students to use their phones under very controlled conditions in some lessons. However, it does not change our overall policy which says that students must not have their phones out or be using them (including to listen to music) at any time during the school day, including break and lunchtimes. The only exceptions will be when they are given permission by their teacher. Students who breach this ruling will have their phones removed and they will be given back to them at the end of the day. If the problem occurs persistently, you will be asked to come in to school to collect the phone and we will put in place a plan moving forward.

There has been a lot of research published recently about the terrible impact that negative social media and messaging has on children's well-being. If students send or receive unkind messages, we need you to act to stop it. If we find out about it at school, we will support you. If the problem continues we may involve our link Police Officer, or we will give you the contact details of the parents of the child sending the messages, so that you can contact them directly. Too much of children's time is being lost to unhappiness caused by negative social media. The new app we have introduced will give students the opportunity to send positive messages to each other, to you, or, their teachers. The messages are selected from a menu, so can only be positive. We hope this will help students to see how you feel much better when you send and receive positive messages.

We have a number of additional staff this year to enable us to give more support to the students. This includes a full time SENCo and Deputy SENCo who do not have a teaching timetable and can work all day supporting the students. We have a full complement of teachers and they have been busy working on the new curriculum we will be delivering for the students.

Behaviour in school is very important and we spend a lot of time focussing on student's attitude to their learning. We use a comprehensive system of codes to log positive and negative behaviour and we intervene to maximise the positive! You can check on your child's conduct record using the TALAXY app. You should have log in details but, if after the first week back you are not sure what to do please contact the school. Attendance, punctuality and homework are all also recorded on this app.

A concern during last year was the number of students who wanted to leave lessons to go to the toilet. We have to find a balance between those who really need to go and those who are just seeking to get out of lessons! From September we will have a list of children who have a medical reason to go to the toilet more often. Other children will be expected to use the toilet during the social times. We will build a small "toilet window" into the middle of our 2-hour lessons but access to this will be strictly monitored. I am sure you will appreciate that in order to get the best outcomes, children need to be in the classroom!

Attendance will be another focus for us next year. Too many students are missing on average more than one day every 2 weeks which gives an overall attendance below 90%. The Government classes this as persistent absence and requires some further action. Please make sure that your child(ren) attend(s) school every day and arrive on time. We are going to be sharing information with you each week about your child, if they are persistently late to school or lessons. We will tell you exactly how much time they have missed and how this can be made up. We are doing this because all the evidence shows that students who have an attendance below 95% are likely to fail to meet their targets. Obviously the lower the attendance, the lower the grades a student is likely to achieve. We rely very heavily on you to make sure that your child comes to school every day and arrives on time for an 8:50am start.

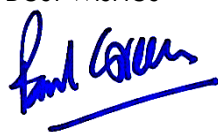
We are having an extension to the dining room built during the Autumn Term and we are introducing a food servery in the covered courtyard. It will make queues smaller and increase the options we can offer. The entire school has been painted during the summer holiday and is ready to welcome all of the children back.

Please discuss this letter with the students so they are fully aware of what will be expected when they return.

Year 7 and Year 12 students join us at 8:50am on the 6th September.
All other students join us at 8:50am on the 7th September.

We are all really looking forward to the coming year, but enjoy the remainder of the holiday.

Best wishes



Paul Green
Headteacher