

Dear parents,

I hope that you all enjoyed the Easter break. Before the holidays, I wrote to you explaining that we were having an explicit focus on standards and behaviour this half term. It has been pleasing to see that the vast majority of students have returned with a positive attitude and have been able to uphold our high standards. I also wanted to thank you for ensuring that your children returned in full academy uniform.

### **Mobile phone policy**

After the last letter I sent, I have had a few parents asking about our mobile phone policy. Our policy is that students in Years 7-11 will not be permitted to be seen with mobile phones on site. We understand that mobile phones may provide a level of safety for students on the way to and from the academy and so we are aware that students may have a mobile phone with them. The expectation is that if a student has a mobile phone on their person, it is turned off and is away. Students should not be seen with a mobile phone for as long as they are in the grounds of the school building. This is inclusive of social time, including break and lunch and applies whether students are inside or outside of academy buildings. If a student is seen with their mobile phone out at all on the academy site then it will be confiscated. It will be turned off and will be stored securely in locked drawers at reception. Students will be able to collect their phone at the end of the day. If a student is continually breaching this rule then we will contact parents.

### **Lunches**

Students can now purchase lunch at the academy. Again, thank you for ensuring that you provided a packed lunch for your child during the period of time that we needed you to do this. Please remember that if students are continuing to bring their own food and drinks into the academy then cans of drink and high sugar drinks of any description are not allowed to be brought onto site.

Due to the need to have staggered breaks and lunches and separate facilities for different year groups, Key Stage 3 students have their social time in the main dining room. I understand some of you would like students to be able to spend more time outside during the academy day. Whilst we all agree about the benefits of fresh air, we need to be able to ensure that we have sufficient staff to supervise students at social times. We are hopeful that we will be able to do this after the May half term holiday. In the meantime, we would like to emphasise that students will be able to have at least 10 minutes of their lunch outside (weather dependant), if they need to move around the building to specialist teaching rooms we will use outdoor routes where possible, and students will continue to have 3 hours of PE per week.

### **Thursday 6 May**

Very frustratingly, the academy has been informed that once again we will be used as a polling station for local elections. Whilst we have tried to appeal this decision it is completely out of our hands. The chief executive of Middlesbrough Council has written to us to apologise and to explain that whilst the Council tried hard to find alternatives they had not been successful. For safeguarding reasons and due to the buildings that need to be used for voting, we will need to ask Key Stage 3 students to work from home on this day. Staff will teach Teams lessons to students in Years 7, 8 and 9 following the usual academy

timetable. Key Stage 4 and 5 students should come in to the academy as normal. We understand that this will be frustrating, especially due to the amount of school time that students have missed over the past year.

### **Centre assessed grades for Years 11 and 13**

Staff at the academy are starting the process of gathering together evidence to be used when determining centre assessed grades for Year 11 and Year 13 students. I will write separately to parents of students in these year groups next week with more information about this process. It is absolutely essential that we get this right and that we do the very best we can for our students and so this is reminder that on Thursday 13 May we will be closing the academy to students at 12.10pm. Lessons will continue as normal up to that point and will resume the following day. This will give staff an extended period of time to work on the standardisation and moderation of centre assessed grades.

### **Sports enrichments**

Lastly, some positive news to share. We are delighted that we are able to begin some sports enrichments for students in Years 7, 8 and 9. Enrichments will take place from 2.40-3.40pm and any student wanting to take part just needs to turn up! Each year group has been allocated a day and there will be a range of sports on offer (Monday Year 8, Tuesday Year 7 and Wednesday Year 9); I hope to see lots of students there.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the academy.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs R Coning  
(Head of School)