

Ref: U:BER/LETTERS/SUMMER 2015

8<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of year, it is a good time to reflect on what we have achieved, update you on some important changes and look forward to an even more successful 2015/2016.

Firstly, may I thank you all for your continued support for the school. I have enjoyed meeting so many of you at Parents' Evenings and Academy events throughout the year. Parents' Evenings are an essential method of communicating the success and needs of the students and your support at these events is greatly appreciated.

From September we will hold our traditional parents evenings, and in addition, parents support evening will be introduced. We will remind you of these via the academy website and with letters as the dates approach. The partnership between the Academy, parents and the students is essential to raise the achievement of our young people.

Without us working together we could not have achieved so much. Of course we await the summer results but I am confident that the students and staff could not have put more effort into their work during the last year. I am looking forward to celebrating the success of our young people during our Prize Giving evening which will celebrate academic, sporting and community success and will be held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

### **Ofsted**

At the start of the year we had an OFSTED visit that placed Don Valley Academy into Special Measures. We have been working with our HMI and have had two further successful visits since Christmas. We are all working towards moving Don Valley forwards and out of Special Measures in the near future. The implementation of a new behaviour code has been very successful, however it is essential that students and parents are aware that uniform, punctuality, attendance and behaviour policies are followed by all students at all times and are non-negotiable.

In September the OFSTED criteria is changing and our judgements will include issues such as 'students using inappropriate language'. We are already tackling the use of inappropriate language in school but I would ask for your support in reminding our young people on the importance of using appropriate language at all times. It is very important that we prepare the students to go into a competitive job market where they can compete confidently against students not just from Doncaster but from all over the UK and we must raise their aspirations to ensure that they realise their full potential.

## **Attendance, Punctuality and Conduct**

We have made great strides in improving the attendance and punctuality of our pupils and I thank you all for making sure that your child attends every day and arrives on time. If your child is absent from the academy, please ensure that a telephone call is made, preferably before 8.30 a.m. to inform us of the reason for absence and expected date of return.

## **The Curriculum**

With effect from September 2015, there will be some important changes in our curriculum, not least the move to a two-year KS3 and a three-year KS4. This will really support your child to achieve well in their final exams. The grading system for the GCSE exams is also changing and we have parental support evenings, as mentioned earlier, to explain these changes in November 2015 and January 2016.

## **Concerts and productions**

It is important that our students have enriching and enjoyable time at school. This year, we have held a number of events including the Shakespeare in Schools Festival and the production of Bugsy Malone, both extremely successful events. I am very keen for your child to participate in after-school activities and a full menu of what we have to offer will be made available to you when we return in September.

## **Communication**

There are many changes imminent at Don Valley Academy especially as we prepare for our new building. To aid in our decision making I would like to hold some parental forum meetings next year where we can discuss possible changes for the young people. These meetings will be held in the SFC (Sixth Form Centre) and will be approximately 1 hour in duration. The first meeting will be on September 9<sup>th</sup> where the discussion will be based around healthy eating and the possibility of a summer uniform for next year. Minutes and actions from these meetings will be shared on the website. If you would like to attend these forum meetings, please contact the academy to express your interest.

## **Important Dates for Term 1 and 2**

September 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Students return to the Academy
September 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parents forum (Healthy eating) 3.30pm -4.30pm
September 24 <sup>th</sup>	Open Evening (Prospective New Y7 students for Sept 2016)
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	Year 11 Parents' Evening
October 21 <sup>st</sup>	Year 7 Parents 'Support Evening - 4.30pm -6.00pm
November 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Year 11 Opportunities Evening
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Academy Prize Giving Evening – 7.00pm -9.00pm
November 18 <sup>th</sup>	Year 10 Parents' Support Evening (Changes to GCSE)
November 25 <sup>th</sup>	Year 8 Parents' Evening
December 9 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12 & 13 Parents' Evening

## **Academy Uniform**

I have attached a uniform list as a reminder about what your son/daughter needs for the start of the new academic year. Below are some important points to be aware of:

Plain black V neck jumpers can be worn under blazers by both girls and boys.

Skinny, drainpipe and jeans type trousers with/without studs are not acceptable. As a guide, traditional style school trouser should be worn.

Skirts need to follow our '3 finger rule' (place 3 fingers at the top of the knee, the skirt should be no shorter than at the top finger), therefore being no more than 2 inches above the knee. Please do not buy tight lycra pencil skirts as these 'ride up' and are not acceptable.

Black school shoes are required. Trainers and boots are not acceptable.

All students need a coat or showerproof jacket. We are a large site and movement in the colder months can be uncomfortable if coats are not worn. Please do not buy a hooded sweatshirt or top as these are not acceptable

## **Behaviour for Learning**

Huge numbers of our students have behaved in an exemplary way this year, receiving positive sleuth points and rewards. We look forward to greeting our students in the new term and building on these successes. Your support as parents is invaluable. Here is a reminder of our expectations for students:

- Respond immediately to instructions from a member of staff
- Equipment is essential to take part in lessons (all students need 2 pens, pencil, ruler and a bag)
- Students must attempt all tasks to the best of their ability
- Punctuality to school and to each lessons is expected
- Every day is important (and every lesson!) - attendance at school is the key to success
- Conversations should not be held across a classroom
- Treat all members of staff and other students with respect - use good manners and courtesy at all times

## **Important Key Staff at Don Valley**

You may find that you need to contact the academy to discuss concerns or worries you may have regarding your child. The academy has a team of staff available to assist you:

Mr Oldfield is Assistant Principal for Behaviour and Inclusion, leading a team of Behaviour Support Staff. The first point of contact should be your child's support support officer; Mrs Cadman for KS3 Students (Y7, Y8 and Y9) and Mrs Hood, KS4 Pastoral Manager (Y10 and Y11) Each year group has a designated Year Team Leader as follows:

Y7	Miss Bellas
Y8	Mr Collinson
Y9	Mr Belk
Y10	Mrs Almond
Y11	Mr Whaley

For all attendance related enquiries, please contact the Attendance Team, lead by Mrs Hepworth, Attendance Manager.

## **Attendance and Requests for Leave of Absence for Holidays**

As you are no doubt aware, the link between attainment at school and attendance is very strong and we need your support to ensure that your son/daughter attends school. In line with government legislation, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, no holidays can be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances. For a holiday to be considered as an exceptional circumstance, we will require written evidence to support the request.

If the evidence does not fall within the circumstance criteria, we will have no alternative but to unauthorise the holiday request. Holidays which are taken by parents and have been unauthorised will be processed by the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

## **Academy Entrances/Exits**

The Stonehill Rise entrance/exit to the Academy is closed to all vehicles daily between **2.35 p.m. – 2.50 p.m.** This is to allow students to leave the site in safe and supervised conditions. When collecting your son/daughter from the academy please ensure that you park safely.

Students entering/leaving the academy on Jossey Lane should follow the clearly marked routes.

## **Bicycles**

It is recommended that all bicycles are locked up in the secure bike shed on the racks provided. The bike shed is locked up at 9.00 a.m. and re-opened at 2.30 p.m. in the afternoon. Bicycles brought into the academy are the owners responsibility and they do so at their own risk.

## **Concessionary Bus Fares**

The price of a concessionary fare on buses for young people is 70p per journey. This applies to all young people aged 5-15 years or a full time student aged 16-18 years.

## **Academy Term and Holiday Dates 2015/2016**

Please find attached dates for your diary.

## **Lockers**

The Academy has a number of lockers available for student use and cost £10.00 per academic year. Further details will be available from your child's Year Team.

### **Dining at Don Valley Academy**

1. **ALL Year 7, 8, 9 and 10** pupils will remain on the Academy site during lunch times unless specific individual arrangements have been agreed that ensure the pupil will be in the care of a named adult with responsibility.
2. If you wish your child to take up a healthy meal from our Academy restaurant then parents can now pre-pay for their children's school meal. (Cheque made payable to Chartwells).
3. The meals at Don Valley are exceptionally good quality and offer a vast choice of food to suit all tastes. Hot meals, jacket potatoes, pasta, sandwiches and salads are available daily. A hot meal consisting of main course and a dessert costs £2.00 per day (£10.00 per week). Sandwiches and healthy options are individually priced to suit all pockets from £1.10 upwards, desserts available from 60p. A large selection of drinks are also available priced between 50p and £1.00.
4. Students who wish to have a packed lunch are always accommodated in the same areas and supervised appropriately.

For your information, please find attached a copy of the menus for the dining hall.

### **Equipment**

All students are expected to come to school fully equipped for learning. May I respectfully ask parents to pay particular attention to ensuring that your son/daughter has basic school equipment to support their learning i.e. 2 pens (black or blue), a pencil, a ruler (**Plastic only**) and a suitable school bag which they bring to the Academy every day to carry their books and equipment.

A planner will be issued to each student in September. If this is lost it will need to be replaced at a cost of £3.50. Pens, pencils and rulers are available for purchase at Student Reception, each item is 10 pence.

### **Academy Policy on Mobile Phones and Jewellery**

Mobile phones/Ipods are allowed during breaks and lunchtimes **only** and students are expected to follow these guidelines. When used at any other times, the learning of others is disrupted and this is not acceptable. If a mobile phone/Ipod is seen during a lesson, it will be confiscated by a member of staff and can be collected by the student from Student Reception on the first occasion. Any additional occasions will result in parental collection. Refusal to hand over a mobile phone/Ipod will be classed as defiance and will be sanctioned accordingly. Please note that all personal possession brought into the academy are the responsibility of the owner and they do so at their own risk.

### **Contact Information/Data**

In order to keep our records as up to date as possible I would appreciate your help. Data collection forms have already been sent home to parents. If you have not done so already, please return this form to the academy before the end of this term. If you require a replacement copy of the data sheet please contact the academy as soon as possible. Although the Academy endeavours to avoid contacting parents at work unless absolutely necessary, it is important that accurate information with regard to contact names and telephone numbers is available to us.

## **Academy Trips & Outings**

For any Academy trip or outing each student must have written parental permission and a valid medical consent form. A medical consent form will be send home to parents to complete when a trip is taking place. It is vitally important that you inform Mrs. Wade, Educational Visits Co-ordinator, of any changes to either contacts or medical conditions throughout the year.

## **Results Dates / Exam Certificates / Sixth Form Enrolment**

### **AS/A2 results**

Thursday 13 August: Year 13 at 8.30 am, Year 12 at 10.00 am

### **GCSE results (including sixth form re-sitting) and Sixth Form Enrolment:**

Thursday 20 August 2015 at 9.30 am. This will be your opportunity to enrol. Other representatives are available to talk through other options.

*If you cannot collect yourself, please write a note for a family member to bring, giving them permission to collect, or give a stamped addressed envelope in advance to the Exams Office.*

### **How will I get my certificates?**

For students leaving school, certificates will be posted out to home addresses held on our database. Please ensure that, after your child leaves, you keep the academy administration staff up-to-date of any change of address, until you receive certificates. The academy cannot be responsible for any certificates sent to incorrect addresses.

For students who continue into sixth form, certificates will be given out during school time.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support and wish you and your family a very restful summer. We will see you again in September!

Yours sincerely,

K. Squire (Mrs)  
Principal