

July 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

As we reach the final week of the academic year, I would like to use this opportunity to share with you some of the key changes that will take place as we move into September 2018 and the end of term arrangements.

Last week of term

The last week of term continues to be extremely busy with a number of rewards trips and our whole academy Sports Day on Monday 23 July. On this day please can all students come to school in their TRGA PE kit, they will remain in this all day.

As you will be aware, the academic year finishes on Wednesday 25 July, on this day students will finish at the earlier time of 12.05 pm. If your son/ daughter would like lunch on this day I would request that they inform their form tutor before Tuesday 24 July so that we can arrange this for them.

KS4 and GCSE

September is an important landmark in the academy's history as for the first time we will have a Year 11 cohort, and thus, students in every year group: 1079 to be precise! It is commonplace within our secondary academies that Year 11 students attend a number of revision sessions every week, to assist in ensuring our students reach the highest grades possible, and I would urge you to support us in continuing in this tradition and to encourage your child to attend as many extra learning opportunities as possible. As a reward for their effort and attendance in these sessions, students will receive discounted tickets for the Year 11 prom; Miss Loveday, Head of Year 11, will be communicating more about this when we return in September.

In addition, earlier in the year we made the decision to move to a three-year Key Stage Four curriculum. This means that students from Year 9 upwards are studying their GCSE subjects, and in BTEC and VCert subjects will be taking examinations that count towards their final grades over the course of the three years. It is imperative, therefore, that students are present in school every single day as this really does make a significant difference to the grades they will achieve when they leave school at the end of Year 11. Government (DfE) research suggests that 16 days absence or 92% attendance in any one year equals a full grade drop in GCSE attainment.

Please compare your son/daughter's attendance this year to the chart below:

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Approximate weeks absent	The number of lessons missed	Absence over 5 years
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50	¼ year
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100	½ year
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200	1 year
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	288	1 ¼ year
60%	80 days	16 weeks	400	2 years
50%	100 days	20 weeks	500	2 ½ years

We do have a small percentage of students who will receive their first GCSE grades this summer. If you would like to come into the academy to collect your results on GCSE day school will be open from 10.00am – 11.30am and your results can be collected from the library.

Changes in the pastoral team

As we continue to grow as a school, we have recruited additional colleagues to strengthen our pastoral provision. From September, each year group will have a non-teaching Pastoral Officer who will be responsible for dealing with any day-to-day issues; the Head of Year will continue to oversee the year group and an Assistant Principal will oversee the strategic direction of the year group, as well as act as an escalation point and be the lead on any child protection concerns.

In September, the pastoral team will be joined by Miss Williamson as Head of Year 9, Miss Shaw as the Pastoral Officer for Year 8 and Mrs Holden (Assistant Principal) who will oversee Year 8.

This means that the pastoral team will be as follows:

	Pastoral Officer	Head of Year	Assistant Principal
Year 7	Miss Brown	Mrs Coulborn	Mrs Flower
Year 8	Miss Shaw	Mr Plummer	Mrs Holden
Year 9	Mrs Hallas	Miss Williamson	Mrs Norton
Year 10	Miss Dryden	Miss Barker	Mr Moncur
Year 11	Mr Bell	Miss Loveday	Mr Shuttleworth

It is our intention that through this robust structure, should any concerns arise, we will be able to address and resolve them quickly. This model also ensures that through the Assistant Principal who leads your son/daughter's year group, you have an experienced member of the academy's senior leadership team as a key point of contact.

In addition to these staffing changes, we will also be welcoming 29 new members of staff to join the team in both teaching and non-teaching roles. At a senior level, there will be a new Vice

Principal, Mr Cornfoot, who joins us from The Morley Academy, and two new Senior Assistant Principals, Mrs Moore and Miss Brand, who also join us from other schools within the Trust. I am sure you will join me in thanking Miss Mir and Mr Hall for the work they have done at The Ruth Gorse Academy in recent years and in wishing them well, as Miss Mir joins the central team of The GORSE Academies Trust leading teaching, learning and assessment across the secondary phase, and Mr Hall joins The Stephen Longfellow Academy.

Catering and money in school

Thank you to all our parents who have been supportive in the smooth transition to a cashless site through your proactive approach with Parent Pay. I am sure you are finding this is an easier method of transferring money for your son/daughters' use in school. If you have not yet managed to resolve this, please do ring the academy and ask for the Finance team who will be able to give you support.

Linked to this is our change to a new catering provision. We are really excited about the new team who will oversee this aspect of our work and continue to ensure a high, yet affordable standard of food for our students. The new menus are now on our website if you would like to view them.

First day of school

Please note that the school calendar for 2018/19 and TRGA staff training days are on the website. The first day of school for students for the new academic year is **Wednesday 5 September 2018** with each year group arriving at the following staggered times:

Year 7:	8.25am
Year 8:	9.00am
Year 9:	9.45am
Year 10:	11.20am
Year 11:	12.00pm

I would be grateful if siblings in different year groups could make their own way to school, noting the above start times, with the exception of any who are bringing a younger brother or sister in Year 7 for their first day of school. If you wish for an older sibling to do this, we are happy to accommodate the older student in the library until their year group starts.

Please note that we will continue to have compulsory extracurricular time on a Thursday. This will begin on Thursday 13 September, therefore, students will return home at the usual time on the first Thursday of the academic year.

Uniform and Appearance

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about uniform and personal appearance. Occasionally students return from the summer holidays wearing incorrect uniform, and this immediately causes an unnecessary conflict, with students being placed in Isolation, which we

would like to avoid. For further details please read the revised PD policy that is in place from September 2018 and available on the academy website. Just to reiterate:

- School trousers must be tailored, not skinny fit;
- Hairstyles must be no shorter than a grade two;
- Hair must be of one natural colour;
- Students may only wear one earring in the lobe of each ear;
- Smart watches are not allowed on site and, in line with the mobile phone policy, will be confiscated for 48 hours if seen;
- School shoes must be plain leather/leather-look, below the ankle and not black trainers;
- Acrylic nails and nail polish must not be worn;
- Belts must be plain black.

Whilst I have only been back from maternity leave for a short period of time, it has been a pleasure to come back into the academy and see the students excelling academically, rising to the challenges placed upon them, and watching them continue to mature and develop into exceptional young people.

I have also learnt of our many achievements this year including, to name just a few:

- The Ruth Gorse Academy winning the GORSE Games - an inter-Trust competition spanning all secondary academies within the Trust;
- The many activities which have been taking place to help fund the awaiting adventure for 40 students who have been fortunate enough to be given the change to travel to Trinidad in February 2019;
- The fantastic school production of Oliver! which was a great success and saw much talent unleashed on our stage.

I am sure that I will have the chance to see many of you over the course of the remaining week and a half through our Prize Presentation evening, the GORSE Games evening and the Trinidad concert, but if not, I hope you have a fantastic summer break and I look forward to seeing you in the new academic year.

Yours sincerely

Rebekah Taylor
Principal