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Headteacher: Mr S Yalden BSc (Hons) PGCE NPQH

Our Ref: SYA

18 July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

As this term draws to a close, I am writing to provide you with information about the new academic year.

I hope that the students have valued the experience of the new timetable this past month and the range of exciting activities in challenge week. In the new academic year there are several important changes in processes and staffing that I would like to draw your attention to.

### **September start**

In September the first day for all students is Wednesday 4 September. All students will attend from 8:40am commencing the day with their tutor in their tutor base until the end of period 2. During this morning students will attend an assembly, practice roll call and receive messages for the year ahead. Normal lessons will then continue for the rest of the day.

Year 7 will need to gather in the main hall for 8:40am where they will be organised into their tutor groups, meet their tutor and be taken to their tutor rooms. Year 7 will be given the opportunity to register for the canteen during the morning with the support of staff if they wish to use the canteen for snacks or meals. Year 7 will also be given the opportunity to have a slightly earlier start to break and lunch on the first two days so that they can be supported in accessing the canteen initially. We very much look forward to welcoming our new Year 7 to the Academy.

### **School Facilities**

I am happy to report that in September the first phase of our toilet refurbishment will have been completed. Some of our communal toilets will have been transformed into a series of single occupancy toilets so that students have self-contained facilities with everything they need. We know from students that they prefer the privacy of single occupancy toilets and over time all the toilets of the academy are being refurbished in this design. We believe this change will be very much welcomed by the students and look forward to this project's completion.

Reception will also be very different with any visitor to the school using the same access point that many of you are familiar with but there will now be a dedicated reception room. This means that visitors will no longer be able to interact with students whilst waiting in our reception space. Students will also have a medical room in which they can wait in privacy until such time as they are collected by parents or carers.

Our quad is being refurbished and will become a seated covered space so that Key Stage 4 students can use this as a sheltered all weather space during social times. Further canopies will be installed behind our Sports Hall and will benefit the Key Stage 3 students with additional covered outdoor areas.

Finally our academy will have the latest in bell and tannoy system installed with sounds to mark the beginning and end of each lesson and a further sound to remind students that the end of break and lunch is approaching. We hope that this supports good punctuality and clarity about any lockdown situation should one occur. We will be conducting a lockdown drill using this new system and will communicate to you about this beforehand so both you and your child are not unduly worried. Please note that in my time as Headteacher we have not had a lockdown initiated but it is right to be as well prepared as possible.

### **Staff**

As is usual at this time of the year, there are a number of staff changes. We say farewell to Mrs Odle, Teacher of MFL who is leaving us after 26 years of service to the school; Mrs Turon, Teacher of Drama; Miss Jones, Teacher of MFL and Mrs Kyte, Teacher of Technology who is retiring. Hazel Willars, Headteacher's PA also left earlier this term after over 15 years of service. We thank them very much for all they have done for the Academy and wish them well for the future.

Mr Webster will join us as Teacher of Technology, PE and Science in September as well as Mr Mariaire as a Teacher of MFL and Miss Brown as teacher of Drama. We also welcomed this term Miss Slattery as Teacher of Maths. Christa Diederiks will take up her role as Headteacher's PA in September.

### **Uniform**

We appreciate that the Academy uniform is worn properly by the vast majority of students and I ask for your help in maintaining our standards by purchasing only those garments described in our uniform policy, which is available on our website (go to "Information", then "Uniform and Equipment").

The only jewellery allowed in school is a watch and one simple, small stud in each ear lobe. Please note sleepers are no longer allowed from September to remove any ambiguity about earrings. Please bear this in mind when deciding on the best time to have ears pierced. It is against Academy rules to have other body parts pierced or jewelled such as nose studs.

From September tailored school shorts have been added to our uniform policy. This has been a popular request from students in hotter weather. Please however ensure that they are keeping with the tailored school shorts available from: <https://www.uniform-direct.com/>

There have been a number of recent correspondences and student assemblies about what is acceptable uniform. If you have any queries please do contact us as we will be strictly enforcing our uniform expectations on our return from the summer break.

Year 10 students will return in September wearing a white shirt.

### **Locker removal**

We have previously provided lockers for students to stow their bags, books and kit so that they do not have to carry everything around with them all through the day. We have found though that over time the use of lockers has contributed to lateness to lessons and students being out of class to collect things they have forgotten. It has also impacted significantly on our site team due to the number of students who lose their keys. We will therefore be removing all lockers from the end of term.

As this is a significant change to policy we will be refunding a part of the £5 historically non-refundable deposit based on the years over which a student has had access to the locker. For every year a student will be unable to use a locker a £1 refund will be available to those that have paid this charge. During the last

three days of term students will be permitted to have a bag with them should they wish and at any stage between Monday 22 July and Wednesday 24 July students can hand their keys in at reception. On handing in their key we will check Parent Pay and if the £5 was paid the appropriate refund will be made to that account.

### **Equipment**

Students must bring the following equipment to school:

- Two pens (black or blue)
- Two pencils
- A ruler
- A strong school bag for PE Kit, coat etc

The following equipment is also incredibly useful but not compulsory:

- An eraser
- A pencil sharpener
- A set of coloured pencils (felt tips are unsuitable for some tasks)
- A dictionary
- A calculator
- A purple pen

### **Term and other key dates**

The term dates for the 2024-25 academic year are as follows.

Autumn Term                      Tuesday 3 September 2024 – Friday 20 December 2024  
(Half Term)                        Monday 28 October 2024 – Friday 1 November 2024

Spring Term                        Monday 6 January 2025 – Friday 4 April 2025  
(Half Term)                        Monday 17 February 2025 – Friday 21 February 2025

Summer Term                      Tuesday 22 April 2025 – Wednesday 23 July 2025  
(Half Term)                        Monday 26 May 2025 – Friday 30 May 2025

Bank Holiday                        Monday 5 May 2025

The following are INSET days and therefore the school will be closed to students:

- Tuesday 3 September 2024
- Friday 22 November 2024
- Monday 6 January 2025
- Monday 24 February 2025
- Tuesday 22 April 2025
- Monday 30 June 2025 – Please note this is a change to the previously published date.

The first day back for all students will be Wednesday 4 September 2024. School photographs will be taken on Tuesday 10 September for Year 7 and 11 only.

### **Timings of the academy day**

We have reviewed the format of the academy day as we seek to maximise the time for learning and daily morning registration activities such as reading which is a fundamental skill for life and learning. Whilst the beginning and end of the academy day are unchanged the timings for September will be as follows:

Breakfast club	08:00 – 08:30
Registration	08:40 – 09:15
Lesson 1	09:15 – 10:15
Lesson 2	10:15 – 11:15
Break	11:15 – 11:35
Lesson 3	11:35 – 12:35
Lesson 4	12:35 – 13:35
Lunch time	13:35 – 14:10
Lesson 5	14:10 – 15:10

Warning bells will sound at - 08:35, 11:30 and 14:05 to assist punctuality of students to the sessions that follow.

Lunchtime detentions will be reduced to 20 minutes so that students continue to have the same element of lunchtime remaining after they have completed their detention. Lunch service is finished well within the time available so there will be no impact due to the new schedule.

### Medication

Students that need to medicate during the school day must make the appropriate arrangements through Student Services. Please ensure we are updated on any medical needs. An online form will be sent out separately for you to confirm if there are any medical needs that we need to be aware of.

### Attendance

Our aspiration is for a student's attendance to be in excess of 97% across an academic year. Just a week's worth of absence can have a marked impact on a student's progress at school. There will be, on occasion, unavoidable reasons for absence and it is our aim to work together to support you and your child in minimising the impact of this. Term time holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and so are best avoided and students who received 10 or more unauthorised session absences in a rolling academic year may be subject to the fixed penalty notice process through the local authority. This is a change from 12 sessions as of August 2024 under a new national framework. The academy does not receive any income from this process. Please note the following relevant information from the Department for Education- <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/29/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/>

*From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.*

*This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.*

*In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.*

Whilst we will follow our attendance procedures, (<https://www.smart-trust.net/attachments/download.asp?file=203&type=pdf>) to work together to support attendance we also welcome your contact if you need any advice or support with any aspect of attendance. If you need additional support, please do not hesitate to contact your child's registration tutor in the first instance. If this is not possible you can contact our Attendance Officer, Mrs Martin ([jmartin@looea.net](mailto:jmartin@looea.net)). Please note each case is treated individually and support will be offered to improve attendance. If, however, attendance does not improve due to lack of engagement, the school may have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service.

When the term ends, I wish you and your family a very good summer holiday and I look forward to welcoming the students back in September. Please note the last day of term is Wednesday 24 July.

Yours faithfully



**Mr Scott Yalden**  
**Headteacher**