

6 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Start of Term Arrangements

I am delighted to write to you today following the completion of the transfer of John Smeaton Academy to The GORSE Academies Trust (TGAT). TGAT is widely recognised as the highest performing trust in the country and we hope that we will enjoy a strong working partnership with you and your child as we unite in ensuring all students have the opportunity to 'Secure the Gift of Choice'. You can read more about TGAT and my vision as Principal on the academy's newly refreshed website: www.johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk.

As the start of the new academic year is fast approaching, I wanted to remind you of the start of term arrangements as well as providing you with some important updates regarding Health and Safety.

Start of Term Arrangements

As previously communicated, Monday 6 September and Tuesday 7 September are staff training days.

The table below provides a reminder of the date and time that students should arrive at the academy. Upon arrival to the academy, students should enter through the main gate located to the left of the car park entrance, where they will be directed to an outside area where, Mrs O'Connor, Senior Vice Principal, will share details of the students' Form Groups and students will line up ready for assembly.

Over the course of the first day, students will spend time with their Form Tutor where they will go through the Positive Discipline policy, receive their planners and timetables, and in the case of Years 7-9 will go through the details of their Induction Days. Students will also receive information regarding this year's Positive Discipline Reward trip!

Date	Year Group	Arrival window
Wednesday 8 September 2021	Year 7	8.25am – 8.40am
Thursday 9 September 2021	Year 8	8.25am – 8.40am
Thursday 9 September 2021	Year 9	9.45am – 10.00am
Friday 10 September 2021	Year 10	8.25am – 8.40am
Friday 10 September 2021	Year 11	9.45am – 10.00am

The full academy timetable will be in operation from Monday 13 September 2021.

Uniform and Equipment

The appearance and personal organisation of all students is exceptionally important. It is, therefore, essential that students return to the academy in the correct uniform. We expect students to wear their uniform in the correct way and to demonstrate pride in their appearance as they represent the academy in our school and across our local community.

Details of our school uniform, equipment and PE kit can be found on our website using this link: www.johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk/parents-and-carers/uniform-and-equipment/.

Should you need support in purchasing uniform or equipment for your child, please complete a Supporting Achievement Fund request form, which can be found on our website using this link: www.johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk/parents-and-carers/supporting-achievement-fund/.

COVID-19 Measures

The academy will have the following measures in place from September in response to the Schools COVID-19 Operational Guidance:

- Everyone is required to wash or sanitise their hands on entry to the academy;
- Everyone is encouraged to wash or sanitise their hands throughout the academy day;
- Increased cleaning procedures will remain in place;
- Classrooms and offices will maintain good levels of ventilation to allow for a flow of fresh air;
- For students travelling via a School or Public bus, the wearing of face coverings is recommended;
- The wearing of face coverings is no longer required on the academy premises.

There have also been some significant changes regarding the requirement to self-isolate. To help with your understanding of this, I have provided a short summary below.

- If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, they should self-isolate and arrange to take a PCR test. If the result is negative, they can return to the academy. If the result is positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance;
- If your child returns a positive Lateral Flow Device test result, they should self-isolate and arrange to take a PCR test. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive Lateral Flow Device test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test and your child can return to the academy. This is as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19;
- Students are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and advised to take a PCR test. During this period of time, students are expected to continue to attend the academy. Please note: schools are no longer responsible for the identification of close contacts.

We anticipate that the current guidance may change over the course of the academic year and we will work to communicate any changes to you as swiftly as possible.

If your child is required to self-isolate for reasons relating to COVID-19 they will continue to be able to access remote learning.

100% Attendance Club

I am sure you will agree that the attendance of young people at school is a crucial part of their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development as well as being a critical factor in terms of their academic achievements and future aspirations. Consequently, we are introducing the trust's 100% Attendance Club at John Smeaton Academy.

For students to become a part of the 100% Attendance Club, they will need to have 100% attendance over the course of the first half term. By gaining access to the 100% Attendance Club, students will be able to enjoy a range of exciting and exhilarating rewards, which will take place regularly across the course of the academic year. Further details of this will be shared with students during the course of the first few weeks of this term.

To support students in gaining access to the 100% Attendance Club I would ask that all parents and carers reinforce the important message regarding attending school every day.

We are of course aware that in some cases, absence from school is unavoidable. As a result, we operate an 'Exceptional Circumstances' procedure that allows parents/carers to let us know the reason for absence and request that the Principal allows membership of the 100% Attendance Club to remain. There are a number of different times where 'Exceptional Circumstances' will be granted including:

- To attend a specialist medical appointment linked to a life-long medical condition
- To grieve for and attend the funeral of an immediate family member
- To mark a religious observance

To apply for 'Exceptional Circumstances' to be considered, please complete our 'Exceptional Circumstances Form' available from our website: www.johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk/academy-information/attendance/.

In addition to the above, please be aware that in all cases where a student is required to self-isolate, exceptional circumstances will be automatically granted.

I hope, like me, your child is looking forward to the start of term. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us via email at enquires@johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk or by telephone on 0113 8313900

Yours faithfully



Mrs L Griffiths
Principal