

22 November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We continue to make good progress within the academy! Standards of behaviour in lessons and around school are markedly improved and the learning students are experiencing as a consequence is significantly enhanced. Furthermore, outside the classroom students are experiencing a much broader range of opportunities, a number of which I am delighted to share with you later in this communication.

We have, unfortunately, had some staff absence which we have tried to limit the impact of. Indeed, during the course of the last month we have recruited an additional nine teaching specialists (seven have commenced in post and two will start in January), a cover supervisor, an Attendance Officer and a Science Technician. In a number of cases this was to fill longer term vacancies. We are really excited about the contribution that these members of staff will make and the capacity that this will add to our ability to continue the transformation of the academy at pace.

Year 11

I would just like to take this opportunity to commend our Year 11 students for their exceptional attitude and the maturity that they have displayed during their mock examination period. There is no doubt that this has been a challenging time and they have risen to the importance of this period in an impressive manner.

Members of staff are working hard to diligently mark students' responses and we are also completing trust moderation to ensure our marking is of the highest standard. As previously communicated, the mock examination papers may be used to inform a Teacher Assessed Grade for a subject should the government invoke their contingency plan. I would, therefore, like to remind all students of the importance of sitting any examinations that they have missed and also remind all families that any mock examination grades shared with students or any predicted grades, are not an indication of a students' future Teacher Assessed Grade (should these be needed) as the process for awarding TAGs and examination grades is not the same and, therefore, the two are not comparable. We remain prohibited by the government from sharing any details regarding future TAGs at this stage so we would politely request that you refrain from asking subject teachers for this information. We are, however, very much looking forward to the Year 11 parent/carer consultation evening which is taking place in the academy on **Wednesday 8 December 5pm – 8pm.**

Student Ambassadors: Exciting Opportunity!

We are delighted to have launched our Student Ambassador programme. Students are being encouraged to submit an application to become one of the academy's Student Ambassadors. Within this role students will work with leaders to enact positive change for the academy and the wider community. As part of their role they will be working with Senior Leaders to design and develop a 'House System' which we would like to launch in the coming months. Furthermore, our Student Ambassadors will support the development of the academy's Student Council.

We are wholeheartedly committed to students playing a central role in the ongoing development of the academy and would greatly appreciate you discussing the importance of this opportunity with your son/daughter. The application form for the role of Student Ambassador can be located via the following link <https://forms.office.com/r/qWVy3h0nJML>; applications should be submitted no later than Tuesday 30

November 2021. Any student who completes an application will be automatically eligible to vote for the academy's 'charities of the year' who we will be raising funds for throughout the coming months.

Additional Training Day: Monday 6 December

Due to unforeseen training needs, the Chair of Governors and Chief Executive Officer have approved for John Smeaton Academy to take an additional training day in order to facilitate the time needed to complete some additional training with members of staff. This training will support a further enhancement in our pastoral offer in addition to greater personalisation within teaching and learning. We apologise for the short notice, however, we have had to work around various logistical challenges which have meant the only date possible is Monday 6 December.

Christmas Concert: Monday 6 December

We are pleased to say that despite the additional training day the academy will be open on the evening of Monday 6 December for our Christmas Concert 6.15pm – 7.15pm. We very much hope you will join us for a festive evening of joy and celebration, where our students will showcase their skills and talents. There will be singing, dancing, Christmas readings, musical solos, and a raffle. Tickets will be complimentary with any voluntary donations being donated to our chosen charity. Please book your tickets in advance through Eventbrite via this link: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/john-smeaton-academys-christmas-concert-tickets-208794057647?internal_ref=social

Christmas Jumper Day: Friday 10 December

On Friday 10 December, John Smeaton Academy will be taking part in Christmas Jumper Day. We know being charitable and kind is important to our students and the money raised will support a student nominated charity. As students and members of staff enter the academy on this date, we will be asking them to make a donation (£1 is suggested) into our collection buckets. Students wanting to be involved in Christmas Jumper Day will wear their normal school uniform with their Christmas jumper over their school shirt and tie. Furthermore, on this date students will be able to enjoy a **delicious Christmas Dinner** if they opt for a hot meal during our lunch service.

Last day of term: Friday 17 December

The academy will **close to students for the Christmas break at the end of morning school (12.30pm) on Friday 17 December**. Students will be made aware of this but if you have any concerns please contact your son/daughter's Head of Year/Year Team Leader. If any student would like to have lunch at school on this day sandwiches will be available in the Dining Hall at 12.30 pm. Please let your child's form tutor know if they would like to take up this offer so that the necessary catering arrangements can be organised.

If this causes any problems and you wish for your son/daughter to remain in school until 3.00pm, please let us know and supervision will be arranged.

Finally, a reminder that **the academy will re-open for all students on Tuesday 4 January 2022**.

Best wishes



Mrs L Griffiths
Principal