

20 October 2022

Dear Families,

I hope my letter finds you all in good spirits. I write to you at the end of a long, but successful half term. Almost all students have returned with a superb attitude towards learning and the atmosphere and environment for our students is purposeful, engaging, and productive. Students are beginning to feel tired after 8 weeks of working hard; however, I am proud of the way they have responded to our high expectations at the start of the year. We have had more than 20% fewer events of negative behaviour recorded in comparison to the same period last year, which is really encouraging in terms of students making the right choices and the reduction in disruption to students' learning. More encouragingly, we have had more than double the achievement points logged in comparison to last year. An astonishing 41,000 achievements have been logged over the past 8 weeks. This is fantastic and is an indication of the positivity and hard work of both students and teachers. We are incredibly proud of this and we will continue to look for more ways to recognise students for making positive choices and helping to make the academy a special place. We still have much work to do to be a consistently exceptional academy; however, we will continue to work hard every day to reach our goals.

Focus on Learning Habits

After half term, we will reset expectations and remind students of our learning habits and why we follow our routines for learning. As part of this, we will be focusing on one learning habit for each of the six weeks of the next half term. In the first week back, we will be focusing on *Carry Full Equipment*. We will be adding a highlighter (we will provide these for everyone) to the expected list of equipment. Please ensure that you encourage your child to be fully equipped for learning. The equipment shop is open before school, and at break and lunchtime. In week 2, we will focus on wearing perfect uniform. A reminder that our uniform information, and many other useful pieces of information can be found here: <https://www.dixonsaa.com/admissions/familyhandbook>

The importance of good attendance

At DAA, we expect exceptional attendance from all students. The correlation between attendance and academic performance is clear; students with good attendance are much more likely to meet their targets and make positive progress than students whose attendance is below 90%. Please help us to help your child by making sure that they attend school every day and only have time off school when necessary. If your child is ill, please contact the attendance team, and please ensure that you share the reason for your child's absence. This avoids us having to record the absence as unauthorised. We do sometimes receive term time holiday request forms. It is Trust policy to never approve any term time leave. We want to ensure that students do not miss valuable learning time by taking leave during term time, rather than during the 13 weeks of holidays we have each calendar year.

Year 11 Mock Examinations

For two weeks, from Monday 14 November, Year 11 will be sitting their mock examinations. Please support your Year 11 child by providing a quiet, calm space at home for them to study. Please ask them about their exams and encourage them to revise. They will have revision guides and resources including a revision timetable. Should you want further guidance on how you can help your child, please contact Mr Hanif or their subject teachers.

Visitors to the academy

It is wonderful that we can welcome visitors to the academy this year, and we have had two great visits this week. Firstly, the BBC put on a theatre show and workshop which tackled issues relating to teenage life. We also had a visit from Mo Syed, who is the media content creator for the 'Youtuber' KSI. Mo came to work with our Media Club students – they were very excited to meet him and find out more about how he developed his career and became a millionaire from social media. Please keep an eye on our Twitter page for more details about academy events and visitors.



Library

Our library space is now open to students following the arrival of our new Librarian. The Library is also open for an hour after school, including on Fridays. The library opening times will be communicated to students in Collective Learning.

Chewing gum and sweets

Chewing gum is banned in school. It makes a mess of our carpets and floors, can ruin school uniform and is very difficult to remove from surfaces such as tables and chairs. Chewing will result in students receiving a correction. We ask that students do not bring chewing gum into the academy. The same applies to sweets and chocolate. We are accredited as a *Healthy School* and cannot permit students to bring in sweets, fizzy drinks, energy drinks or chocolate. If a student is found to have any of these items, they will be taken and only returned to the student at home time.

Homework expectations and support

If you feel that your child is struggling with homework, please urge them to speak with their teacher in the first instance. If there is more support needed, please email the subject teacher and the advisor before speaking to your child's Year Manager.

Car parking

Parents must only use our car park if they have a pass. If you are not permitted to use the car park, please ensure that you do not enter at any time. Car parking is reserved for families who need to use our reserved spaces for several reasons. If non-pass holders try to use these facilities, they are taking them away from the people who really need them. If you feel that you require a pass, please notify our reception team who will liaise with Ms McDonald and get in touch with you to discuss this.

Driving around the academy

When driving near the academy, please take care to consider pedestrians and other drivers. The changes to the school day have eased the traffic at certain times; however, the road is still busy. We ask that all families please observe the speed limit, avoid dangerous manoeuvres, and don't drop children off in the middle of the road or at the crossing. Our main concern must be the safety of all our community, please bear this in mind when driving to and from school. Please could I also ask that families respect our residents and avoid blocking driveways or double parking. We are trying to build community relations, and this is difficult when residents make complaints about parents' driving, parking, or behaviour towards them. This has also resulted in enforcement officers from the council visiting the academy and being present before and after school; they are issuing fines where necessary.

Recognition and Principal's lunch

As part of our recognition project, students have started joining the principal for a special lunch on a Friday. This has been a wonderful experience for me, and it is lovely to be able to spend time with students who are fantastic ambassadors for our school. We aim to ensure students who work hard, follow expectations, and demonstrate exemplary learning habits are recognised for their contribution to making DAA a great place. If your child attends principal's lunch, they will receive a certificate on the day.

We are also introducing certificates and recognition for achievement points to recognise students' positive choices and consistently good behaviour.

Finally, we will be holding a recognition assembly next half term to celebrate students who have been nominated for excellence in their subjects, for good and improved attendance, and for outstanding achievements. We will also have performances from students in Performing Arts and music. In the new year, we aim to extend an invitation to families to join us in celebrating these achievements – I will share further details about this in future correspondence.

School Day and Term Dates 2023-24

Our term dates for 2023-2024 are now on our website: (select *Calendar* from the menu): www.dixonsaa.com



Key Dates

- **Academy closes for October half term** – Friday 21 October 2022
- **Academy reopens to all students** – Monday 7 November 2022
- **Academy Data Days (School closed to all students)** – Thursday 8 and Friday 9 December
- **Academy closes to all students for Christmas** – Friday 16 December 2022
- **Academy reopens to all students** – Tuesday 3 January 2023
- **All dates are on our website – select ‘Calendar’ at www.dixonsaa.com**

Thank you

As always, we are grateful for all families’ support. We are working hard to ensure we give the guidance, support and inspiration to all students to work hard, be good and be nice, and achieve good outcomes that allow them to have ambitious life choices. We cannot do this without working in partnership with you to have high expectations of our children; we all want the best for them, and I appreciate those of you who support us in achieving this goal.

Yours sincerely



Danny Carr
Principal

