

Headteacher Mr S. Richardson

Westport Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 4LD



Co-op Academy
Stoke-on-Trent

Headteacher's Update 14.09.23

Dear Parents and Carers,

The start of term

I am delighted to be able to say that we've had a fantastic start to the new academic year. Our new Year 7 students have arrived with real excitement and have settled really well into their new surroundings. Furthermore, the other year groups have returned ready to begin the year positively. Thank you to you for all of your support in ensuring students arrive each day in the correct uniform. Uniform matters not because it has any bearing on learning, but because it gives us a sense of belonging to one community.

Car Parking

Further to messages that were sent last week, we are currently expanding the Academy. This requires considerable building work and the use of temporary classrooms. In turn, we have fewer spaces in our car park. Regrettably, we cannot accommodate parking by parents at any point during the drop-off and pick-up times at the start and end of the day. This is for health and safety reasons. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Attendance

Attendance is a major priority for the Academy. I have spoken to all students in assembly and been very clear: students are required to attend the Academy every day. It is a legal requirement that parents ensure their children arrive at school each day. As an Academy we ask students to aim for 100% attendance and achieve a minimum of 98%. Even with 98% attendance this still means a child has missed four days in an academic year, which by any standards is a lot of time.

Holidays during term-time are not permitted unless circumstances are exceptional. In the event students are taken on holiday during term time, we will follow the DfE guidance and recommend that Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to parents. The final determination about what constitutes an 'exceptional' circumstance rests with me as headteacher.

We know that COVID has caused parents to not always be clear about when they can send children to school if they have very minor cold symptoms. The NHS has issued the following [guidance](#) for parents called 'Is my child too ill for school?' This will hopefully provide reassurance that children are allowed to attend school with mild cold symptoms.

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Appointments during the Academy Day

Routine appointments to attend the doctors, dentist or opticians must be organised during the 13 weeks of school holidays throughout the year. A growing number of students take these appointments during the school day. This negatively affects their attendance and also means that they fall behind in their learning.

We do recognise that appointments for very specific reasons - visiting specialists or consultants, for example - are trickier and understand that parents do not always have a choice in when these appointments are scheduled. In the event your child needs to have an appointment like this, students and parents should follow the process below:

- Parents need to write them a note containing the time and date of the appointment.
- Students need to show the note to the teacher in whose class they are when they need to leave.
- Then they should come to reception to sign out.

Parents should use the intercom to inform reception that they are here to collect the student and students will then be permitted to leave. The onus is on the student to remember that they have an appointment and to excuse themselves from the lesson. We cannot guarantee that a member of staff is available to go and remind a child that they have an appointment. Therefore, it is important that, in those rare cases where students need to leave for an exceptional appointment, they are clear about the time they need to sign out.

Mobile Phones

A reminder that we are a mobile phone free Academy. This was one of the messages I re-shared with students during my first assembly. Students bring mobile phones to the Academy at their own risk and we accept no responsibility for them. Equally, if they are used inappropriately, we reserve the right to confiscate them and retain them until they are collected by a parent. By way of context, this was a decision taken by Governors in response to the concerns of parents and staff over five years ago. Nothing has changed during that time.

GCSE Results 2023

We are once again delighted to be celebrating some excellent GCSE results this year! Our Year 11 students achieved some exceptional grades which were testament to their hard work and commitment. It's easy to say that the last few years have been challenging, but for young people living through the most important time of their lives in a pandemic is especially difficult. To have achieved the results that they did is testament to their character and determination. We are incredibly proud of them and wish them all well as they take their next steps.

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Yours sincerely,

S. Richardson

Shane Richardson
Headteacher