



Principal's Newsletter Issue 12 - March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the first spring term Principal's newsletter for parents and carers. This newsletter will provide an overview of the key events from our last half term and some detail about important changes that are being introduced during this half term.

Year 11 and 13 Mock Exams

Mock exams for Year 11 and 13 took place at the start of this term culminating in mock results days for each year group. I am pleased to report how hard the students worked as a whole and how seriously they took the opportunity to practice for the real thing. The final few weeks are now ahead of us so keep up the good work and speak to us if you need any more help than you are currently receiving.

New Student Leadership Team

Last week saw the election and interview processes for appointing our new student leadership team. I am pleased to announce the Head Girl for the coming year will be Jessica Marshall and the Head Boy will be Awaad Faisal. The Deputies will be Jack Hardman and Molly Williams. Prefects and School Captains were also chosen and will be announced on the website once any changes of schools that may be required have been decided. Congratulations to all who put themselves forward to serve the academy in this way, it was a hard-fought contest with some very strong performances. Thank you also to our outgoing student leadership team who have led some of the most successful events the academy has ever run. Good luck to you all in your exams and for the next few years – whatever they may hold for you!

Success outside the classroom

There are a couple of exceptional achievements to mention this half term. Firstly, our basketball team attending an intentional basketball tournament in Denmark in January and, although they did not win, they represented the school admirably and were very sportsmanlike and were a firm favourite with the other teams and staff in attendance. Our Dance Elite squad last month won first and second places in the regional Big Dance Off competition and will now progress to the national final in London. Georgina Tasker in Year 12 has recently been selected to play for the under 18s England women's rugby squad, Megan Adair in Year 10 has been selected for the girls under 14/15 England Basketball talent programme and James Clarridge in Year 10 has been selected to play football for England for his age group.

PSHE Days

Over the past half term, Year 9 and 10 students have taken part in a variety of sessions that explored a range of topics relevant to supporting them in the wider world. Sessions covered how to travel safely as a passenger, the dangers of drugs and "legal highs", the rise of knife crime and how to stay safe, consent in all aspects of our relationships, healthy relationships and what constitutes unhealthy behaviours, a session on sexual health with staff from Sexions based at Kingsmill hospital and input from Alex, our Chaplain, on how to live our Academy Values in the wider context. We hope students found these sessions informative and we will continue to call in local experts to deliver age appropriate important PSHE sessions.

New Teaching and Learning Strategy

This half term we have launched a new teaching and learning approach across all departments and in all year groups. Every lesson will now follow the same pattern so that our students become familiar with the same learning routines, therefore achieving consistency across the whole academy. Each lesson will now include the following elements:



1. A 'do it now' task that will give students the opportunity to experience memory recall tasks.
2. A starter that will introduce the new material for the current lesson.
3. A collaborative learning task where students will work together to discover the new material and help each other to solve problems.
4. A silent task which will allow the students to apply what they have learned in the previous task in the form of an extended writing task, practical task or past exam question.
5. A plenary to review the progress made within the lesson.

We are confident that this approach will enhance the rate of progress for all our students.

Changes to our pastoral system

Currently, learning managers oversee year groups 7-11 with students across all 5 school houses (Hardwick, Newstead, Rufford, Sherwood and Welbeck). Although this system works well, it is the vertical school system that has always been part of the academy's ethos; this is something that we strongly want to reinstall at the Samworth Church Academy.

From Monday 18th March, the academy will operate a pastoral school system; this means that a learning manager will be attached to a school rather than a year group. A school system will give the learning manager greater access to assemblies, tutorials and break times, all of which already operate in the school system. Learning managers will therefore work with students of all ages, between years 7-11 and with all siblings within a family that attend the academy together.

In order to accommodate this change, many staff have relocated to alternative areas in the building, with staff now based in the school that they are responsible for. Each learning manager will work closely with and share the same office as the school leader for the same school to support effective communication between those that oversee the development and academic progress of your child.

We understand that many strong working relationships have been forged between students, parent/carers and academy staff. Please note that we will work hard to maintain these close relationships. We will also implement a period of overlap where the staff that knows your child the best will continue to support their education and working collaboratively with their school leaders.

When wishing to contact the academy, in the first instance parents/carers should ask for the relevant learning manager as identified in the table below.

School	Learning Manager	School Leader
Hardwick	Miss Simons	Mr Mills
Newstead	Mrs Severn	Mrs Fletcher
Rufford	Miss Lee	Mr James
Sherwood	Miss Reeks	Mr Vallance
Welbeck	Miss Goodwin	Mr Bennett

We believe these new arrangements will allow us to act quickly to resolve issues and provide you with the important information and support for your child or children to be the best that they can be.

Attendance

This half term sees a real push to support our students to improve their academic achievements through improved attendance. Actions we are undertaking include, asking students to complete an online survey to help us understand possible barriers to good attendance, requesting the parents of 165 lower attending students provide medical evidence before absences can be authorised, supportive parental



meetings, attendance criteria for involvement in the half termly reward event and training and support from a local education psychologist for those staff who work with students with a diagnosis of anxiety.

We have seen some amazing successes with students trying hard to come in to school with the support of great proactive parenting. Thank you from the attendance team for your continued efforts.

Key dates this half term

15 th March	Fundraising for Comic Relief
28 th March	Careers Café
4 th April	Reports available via Parent Portal
8th – 22nd April	Easter Holidays

Please refer to our calendar on the website for further dates.

And finally...

Thought for the half term – from Alex our Chaplain

This half term we are exploring the value of vocation. It is one of our Christian values and forms an important aspect of our academy ethos. Our aim is to educate students so that they develop the attributes needed to be “best they can be”.

Vocation is all about living life in all of its fullness, whether in school, the future workplace, with families or wider community and world contexts. It is not always about doing a particular job (though that does play a huge role). It is more about doing our best with what we have in order to affect change in the world that we live in.

Whether you choose to make a difference through your work in healthcare or education, run for office and influence change politically or volunteer in your spare time to assist and support others who are more vulnerable, there are so many ways to work out our vocation. The Bible teaches a lot about the work that we do. Here is a verse I find inspires me when things get challenging; it may also help you.

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

Yours faithfully

Lisa McVeigh
Principal