



Our ref: MBA/MSI

8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

I hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable Summer holiday. It has been such a delight to have students back in the building after such a long time away. Students have responded maturely to the new 'bubbles' that exist and have already shown incredible dedication to their studies. I imagine that there will be a number of challenges to us as an Academy in response to the ongoing pandemic, but I know that we will overcome each one by working together. All of our plans and risk assessments are shared on the Academy website and we will continue to update these as National Guidance evolves.

All parents can be assured that the staff remain relentless in their pursuit to ensure each and every child feels safe, makes academic and social progress, and is known to staff. We want all children to experience the joy of success in and out of the classroom and to enjoy and achieve in equal measure.

A special welcome to parents and carers of all our Year 7 students who are new to Padgate Academy. As parents and carers of youngsters in Years 8 -11 will confirm, the first year at secondary school will go extremely quickly and before you realise it, your sons/daughters will be enjoying their Year 11 Prom. We are pleased to welcome you to the Padgate family and look forward to working with you over the next 5 years.

#### **Welcome from Chair of Governors – Mr John Monaghan**

I would like to introduce myself as Chair of the Padgate Academy Governing Body. I have been a Governor at Priestley College for over 15 years and am currently a Vice Chair of the Governing Body. In addition, I am a Trustee Director of TCAT, The Challenge Academy Trust, of which Padgate is now a part, and I hold a similar role at St Rocco's Hospice.

My role is to both support and challenge the Academy to ensure that they are successful in their aspiration to become one of the most successful academies in the country. I know that in the current climate it is likely that the next few months will bring their own unique challenges but I am confident that as a community, we can work together to overcome them ensuring that we provide the very best education and pastoral support to your children.

We will shortly be contacting you all to invite nominations for the role of parent governor. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of the Governing body who meet twice a half term with senior leaders to shape the future of the Academy. We would welcome your nomination.

#### **Attendance**

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks students falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school.

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered student at school and they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

**No one with symptoms of coronavirus should attend school for any reason.** If a family member suffers symptoms, then children should not return to school for 14 days, if a child themselves displays symptoms, the guidance is that they self-isolate for 7 days. You will also need to inform school of this.

All those children eligible to attend school, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing, parents/carers will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents/carers will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.

Families should notify the Academy as normal if their child is unable to attend, so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.

### **Closure of car park to parents and carers**

During school hours, our car park is closed to parents and carers in order to reduce risk and ensure the safety of our students and staff. Staff will be in place to prevent vehicle access to the site at the beginning and end of the school day.

Students are encouraged to walk or cycle to school as much as possible, however, if you need to drop your child off, please do so away from the school entrance to avoid congestion.

### **Uniform**

As part of our drive to continually raise standards, I would like to request your full support in ensuring that your child attends school punctually every day, and that they are fully equipped and prepared for the day ahead. In particular I would ask that our students wear their academy uniform with pride at all times. Shoes should be black leather, with no trainers or canvas material permitted. For health and safety reasons, the only jewellery permitted as part of the academy uniform is a wristwatch.

In addition to smart uniform it is essential that students are fully prepared for their learning each day, having checked their planners each evening to ensure that they have all the necessary books, equipment and homework for the following day.

### **Mobile phones**

One key objective for the Academy continues to be improved student progress and attainment, and I therefore wish to focus on all aspects associated with learning, eliminating distractions and disturbances.

One particular distraction to learning is that of mobile phones. I would like to request the support of parents/carers in reminding their child that these are not allowed in the academy during the school day. Students who are seen using a mobile phone during this time will have it confiscated and stored safely for parents to collect.

### **Holidays in term time**

I must also draw your attention to important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. Since September 2013, the new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.



Any applications for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

As an Academy, we fully appreciate the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holidays. However, there is an expectation that all schools introduce firm policies and stringent checks to ensure that there is a significant reduction in the number of absences during term time.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the academy to thank you for your full support in this matter by not taking your child out of school during term time.

I continue to place a high premium on regular communication between home and the Academy. We update our website and social media regularly with copies of letters, key dates, news about the Academy and individual student successes.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continued support and involvement as we work together to secure the best outcomes for all our young people.

Yours sincerely



Mrs M Barclay  
Principal

