



# Whitley Academy

Principal: Mrs Kathryn Wright

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Acting Principal: Miss S. Bloom

thebestyoucan  
be

SBL/SBA

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this communication finds you well.

I am incredibly impressed and proud of the conduct of the overall majority of Whitley Academy students over the past half term. Our new systems are now embedded and students and staff are comfortable with the new routines. Thank you once again for your support in ensuring that students are in the correct uniform and have the correct equipment in school. A significant part of our COVID-19 control system is the need for self-sufficiency and the avoidance of shared equipment is paramount, so your proactivity in ensuring that your child is prepared for each school day is much appreciated. Although, I know I have said this a number of times another crucial element of us trying to keep everyone safe is for both staff and students to wear face coverings when not in classrooms; we would appreciate you continuing to ensure your child arrives wearing a face mask and also has a spare one in their bag. If every individual does the right thing, the risk for everyone reduces.

Whilst we are working tirelessly to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in school, we have no control over how our students socialise in the wider community. It is clear that coronavirus is transmitted in the community and the way to stop this is to avoid being in close proximity with people from other households. I know that this is extremely difficult, especially for young people, however, I urge you to remind them to play their part, to keep themselves and others safe.

As you are aware we are stringently following Public Health England guidelines. Therefore, should a member of your household display symptoms of COVID-19: a new continuous cough or high temperature or loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell, it is important that from the outset of the symptoms you keep your child/children at home to self-isolate for 14 days. If a student displays any of these symptoms whilst in school, they will be sent home. Once a COVID test has been taken and the result returns negative then the household can stop isolating.

If any student does test positive for COVID-19 over the holiday period, please email [admin@whitleyacademy.com](mailto:admin@whitleyacademy.com) a.s.a.p. so we can notify all necessary parties. Similarly, if we are made aware of any staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 over the holiday period who your child has been in close contact with, we will notify you.

When we return after the half term break there will be some changes to the groups in years 7, 8 and 9. This is due to the increased number of COVID-19 cases across the city, and in view of Health and Safety measures where we feel there is too much movement in corridors. Students will be grouped in the same ability group for all subjects and will remain in the same classroom for all lessons. We are aware that this is not an ideal learning environment for all students but feel it is necessary to protect the safety of staff, students and their families. Once the groups have been determined and put into the system, you will receive an email informing you which room your child needs to go to for tutor period on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. All students will continue to enter and exit through the same door they currently use. There will also be lists displayed in corridors for students to check their location.

You will be aware that the government recently announced the three-tier system across the country; Tier 1 (medium risk); Tier 2 (high risk) and Tier 3 (very high risk). At the time of writing Coventry, has just been moved to Tier 2 as from midnight on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. I have included some useful information explaining what that means and how it will

affect you. The Prime Minister has made it clear that schools will remain open in all three tiers, and from 22<sup>nd</sup> October all schools have a legal duty to provide virtual learning to students who are unable to attend school due to coronavirus. We successfully launched virtual learning during lockdown, and have been using this system for those students who are self-isolating, but are fit and well. If your child is impacted please encourage them to complete the work provided and submit it for marking so they do not fall behind.

The atmosphere in school is calm and students are focused on learning. I am delighted to have handed out 82 Rising Star certificates, and accompanying cookie and juice vouchers for the canteen this half term. Our Rising Stars are nominated by their teacher, they are students who try hard; help others; produce an exceptional piece of work etc. I will also be handing out 12 Acting Principal Commendations at the end of the half term, along with a voucher. These students will have been nominated by their link senior leader for making an impressive start to the year. There are also hundreds of students who have received multiple achievement reward points, and each and every student should feel very proud of their success.

It is very important that if your child has a medical condition we are aware of it, for the unlikely occasion that they require medical assistance. Mrs Winterburn, Assistant Senco, has attached a questionnaire to this letter, and would be very grateful if you could complete and return it to her as soon as possible so we can ensure our database has all of your child's important and up to date information.

A reminder that if your circumstances have changed recently and you wish to check if your child/children are eligible for free school meals and/or make an application please follow the link below:

[https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free\\_school\\_meals/2](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free_school_meals/2)

Whitley Academy is on a rapid improvement journey. Since taking over as Acting Principal in mid-December 2019, myself and the senior team have introduced considerable changes to ensure our students are in a disciplined, stimulating and caring environment, which allows them to grow in knowledge, skills, understanding and character, so they can be the best that they can be. We would like nothing more than to invite parents and carers to another Parent Forum, however, obviously at the moment this is not possible. In order to keep you informed, I have summarised some of the main points we have been focussing on in order to deliver a high-quality learning environment for your child.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team were re-organised in the summer term ensuring each member of the team had distinct areas of responsibility and within their areas they work with other members of the leadership team to develop Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Outcomes or Support, Inclusion and Experience.

This half term, we have focussed on improving the behaviour and attendance of students to ensure productive learning takes place in lessons. The number of consequences compared to the same point last year has decreased by almost a half. Each year group is in a zone at break time and lunchtime which is supervised by members of staff including the senior team. Two members of staff are on duty every lesson to address behaviour issues promptly so they do not impact on the learning of other students. Some students who disrupt the learning of others have alternative provision implemented, thus enabling teaching and learning to take place in lessons, whilst they are supported and reintegrated in to their lessons. Staff who issue a consequence are required to have a conversation with the student about how their actions impact on the learning of others and find a way to move forward to ensure all students are working in a productive learning environment.

Attendance is currently almost 93%. National attendance of fully open state funded secondary schools was 90% on 8<sup>th</sup> October. This improvement is due to our Home School Liaison Officer increasing the frequency of parental liaison regarding attendance through phone calls, home visits and meetings. By moving our tutor time to the start of the day, tutors are now able to be more involved in monitoring attendance and having conversations with students and parents and carers as soon as attendance starts to slip. Every week senior staff meet to analyse and discuss absence which is tracked by year group and by tutor group and actions/interventions are updated.

During lockdown, our curriculum leaders worked with other curriculum leaders across the secondary schools in the Finham Park MAT to develop a curriculum that would encompass any learning the students had missed since March.

We have developed a lesson structure which is used consistently by all teachers when planning and delivering their lessons and we have carried out well over 200 lesson drop-ins to monitor the quality of teaching and learning that your children are receiving. We continue to improve and develop our teaching and learning practice through regular departmental, action research and whole school meetings.

We are aware that staff retention has previously been raised as a concern. However, I'm pleased to say we have been fully staffed since September. Staff morale and well-being continues to be a high priority and we are aware that in the current circumstances our daily lives and routines have become more stressful. The safety of staff, as well as students has been a high priority during the pandemic and staff have been kept well informed about the measures put in place. All meetings are now expected to take place remotely, and staff are encouraged to have after school meetings from home where possible. I present Super Staff awards for staff who go over and beyond their normal responsibilities every week. We continue to offer support and training opportunities for staff to continue to improve the teaching and learning experiences for students. We also continue to develop our links with other schools in the Finham Park MAT in order to share good practice.

Our Interim Executive Board (Governors) meets once a month to discuss and monitor the progress we are making and the Chair is in regular contact with the Academy. The Academy is currently in the process of joining Finham Park Multi Academy Trust, and once this process is complete, the MAT will help us to appoint a new Local Governor Board.

I am confident that the vast changes that have been implemented since January 2020 have made a significant improvement in our educational provision, and we continue to introduce further improvements. I trust this has begun to allay any previous concerns, and please be assured that we have the highest of expectations for your child.

In order to gain a comparison of parents and carers views since our Ofsted inspection in January 2020 I would appreciate it if you would complete the short questionnaire found here:

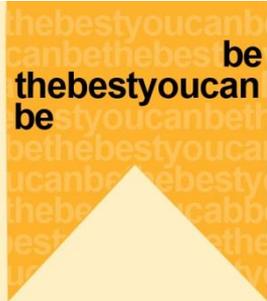
[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ca6u7klufEiNrX8hIbCbsJCMNw1Y7I9Lt4ph2\\_wlHZVUQ1dYSjBN0UxMRIFBWU41MUFEMUJDQ1IBTC4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ca6u7klufEiNrX8hIbCbsJCMNw1Y7I9Lt4ph2_wlHZVUQ1dYSjBN0UxMRIFBWU41MUFEMUJDQ1IBTC4u)

I hope you have a relaxing half term, and thank you as always for your support.

Yours sincerely



Miss S. Bloom  
**Acting Principal**



## MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

We would like to complete an audit of all diagnosed medical conditions of students at Whitley Academy. Please could you fill in the table below and return, as soon as possible, to: [b.winterburn@whitleyacademy.com](mailto:b.winterburn@whitleyacademy.com) . Please use the same email address if you have any queries.

Surname	Forename	Diagnosed Medical condition	Prescribed medication

Thank you in advance

Mrs Winterburn  
**Assistant SENCO**