



13 October 2014

Dear Parents/Carers

**Academic Year 2014 – 2015**

We have now been back for just over a month so I would like to welcome you and your daughter back and to assure you that the students have all settled in extremely well, looking very smart in their new blazers. I look forward to working with you this year to ensure that your daughter enjoys her time here and achieves excellent qualifications by the time she leaves.

Our GCSE results this summer showed the volatility that is now evident in the exam system with us achieving 53% 5 A\*-C grades including English and Maths. This outcome is lower than what we were expecting but we did actually hit our formal target for achievement. These results are due to changes implemented part way through the GCSE courses in the way some exams were assessed. Assessment is now much more based on terminal exams rather than coursework or controlled assessments, which some of our students found quite challenging. We are now ensuring that the current years 10 and 11 are getting a lot of exam practice so that they can cope much better with their exams. We are expecting a significant rise in results for the current year 11 in August 2015 and the students are fully engaged in their studies now.

On the other hand, the results at A Level were very good with 37 students gaining a place at university, including some Russell Group ones, and others choosing either to take up an apprenticeship or go to college, which is a tremendous outcome for the academy. What is important, though, is the fact that with these qualifications, our students are able to make their own decisions about their future careers and we are now seeing them access a very wide range of courses.

We have re-structured our student welfare system to provide greater consistency of support. Four new heads of year have been appointed who will take their year group and form tutors through until the end of year 11:

- Head of Year 7 – Miss S Hey
- Head of Year 8 – Mrs M Jaouen
- Head of Year 9 – Miss M Robin
- Head of Year 10 – Miss M Redican
- Head of Year 11 – Mrs H Newman

In addition, we now have a Head of Key Stage 3, Mrs S Williams, who is responsible for transition into year 7, monitoring attendance and progress in years 7 – 9 and providing support on behaviour management in those year groups. Miss S Walrond carries out the



same role in Key Stage 4, but works with Mrs Williams on transition to GCSE courses and the Associate Assistant Headteacher Director of Sixth Form, Mr Chohan, on transition to the AS/A Level courses. Mrs J Humpherson oversees the student welfare system as Assistant Headteacher and is also the academy's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection.

Achievement in GCSE and A Level examinations comes from hard work and commitment to learning. We have high expectations of behaviour, attitude and learning at Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy provide the basis for high achievement. It is therefore very important that all students do the following:

- ✓ Attend school every single day and arrive on time. Attendance of 95% and over enables students to gain high grades at GCSE and A Level. If it is below that, then students run the risk of not gaining the grades they should achieve.
- ✓ Wear the correct school uniform.
- ✓ Bring an appropriate school bag with all the necessary books and equipment for each day.
- ✓ Behave according to the school rules.
- ✓ Adopt a positive attitude to learning in all subjects.
- ✓ Ensure that homework tasks are written into their student planner.
- ✓ Homework should be completed on the day it is set, done to a high standard and must be handed in on time.
- ✓ Participate fully in lessons.
- ✓ Engage in our extra-curricular programme, e.g. sport, performing arts, music.

If your daughter follows the above advice, then she will find herself enjoying school and making good progress. As parents/carers I would appreciate it greatly if you could impress on your daughter the above practices and also check and sign her student planner on a weekly basis. You can also write comments in her planner if you want to raise something with her form tutor or contact the school directly either by email at [enquiry@hwga.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@hwga.org.uk) or by telephone on 0121 554 8122.

I would like to bring to your attention a few issues about our academy uniform. You will already have received information on our uniform, but I will remind you of what it is:

- ◆ Long smart black trousers or a skirt - no jeans; the length of the skirt must be between the knee and above the ankle.
- ◆ A 'V' neck black tunic with school logo can be worn over trousers
- ◆ Black shoes - please make sure that they are suitable for all sorts of weather conditions (**not canvas, fabric, black trainers or slippers/pumps**)
- ◆ A white blouse
- ◆ A black sweatshirt with academy logo and red stripe around the neck



- ◆ A black blazer with academy logo and red stripe
- ◆ A plain black headscarf (optional). The headscarf must be without any adornments or fringes and no longer than shoulder length.

We have had some health and safety issues with students wearing long skirts as they are more prone to trip up on the stairs and cause injury to themselves and students wearing very flimsy shoes, who slip in wet and icy weather. In addition, students who wear head scarves must make sure that they are plain black with no fringes or adornments on and are no longer than shoulder length, as again this can cause health and safety problems in practical lessons such as Technology, Art and PE. I would really appreciate your support in ensuring that your daughter is wearing the appropriate uniform, but also that she is safe when wearing it.

### Important academy events and holiday times for 2014 – 2015

Our website has important information about academy events and holiday times as well as a lot of other information which you should find useful. I would therefore urge you to use our website as much as possible: [www.hwga.org.uk](http://www.hwga.org.uk)

#### School Term Dates

<b>Autumn Term 2014</b>	
Thursday 23 October	Students break up for half-term
Monday 27 October – Friday 31 October	Half-Term
Monday 3 November	Students and Staff return to school
Friday 19 December	End of Term for students and staff
Monday 22 December – Friday 2 January	Christmas Holidays

<b>Spring Term 2015</b>	
Monday 5 January	Start of term for staff and students
Friday 13 February	Students and staff break up for half-term
Monday 16 – Friday 20 February	Half-term
Tuesday 24 February	Students return to school
Friday 27 March	End of term for students
Monday 30 March – Friday 10 April	Easter Holidays

<b>Summer Term 2015</b>	
Monday 13 April	Start of term for students
Monday 4 May	May Day Bank Holiday
Friday 22 May	Students and staff break up for half-term
Monday 25 – Friday 29 May	Half-term
Monday 1 June	Students and staff return to school
Friday 17 July	End of term for students and staff
Monday 20 July – Friday 4 September	Summer Holidays



Handsworth Wood  
Girls' Academy

**Teacher Training Days**

Friday 24 October 2014  
Monday 23 February 2015

In the meantime you can be assured that we are all focused on providing the best possible education for your daughter. If you have concerns about anything, please do not hesitate to contact the academy so that we can sort out the issue.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Walters  
Headteacher

**ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE**

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