

11 December 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

## **Autumn Term 2018 Newsletter**

### **King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham**

As you are all aware, the academy joined the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham on 1 September and we are now called King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy. The other schools in the trust are:

- King Edward VI Aston School
- King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys
- King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls
- King Edward VI Camp Hill for Boys
- King Edward VI Camp Hill for Girls
- King Edward VI Five Ways
- King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy

All of us are also now part of the King Edward's Foundation, which includes the two independent schools, King Edward's School and King Edward VI High School for Girls. The trust is now providing us with opportunities to collaborate, both for staff and students, such as:

- The whole of year 7 were invited to a Foundation Welcome Ceremony at the Great Hall at the University of Birmingham, along with all year 7s in the trust. They were given a presentation on the history of the foundation from its inception in 1552 to the present day, listened to some musical performances and heard the Head Girl and Head Boy from King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys deliver a speech on making the most of the opportunities that their education will offer.
- Currently the staff responsible for the curriculum in each school are working together to create a collaborative option block for years 12 and 13 to broaden the curriculum at A Level which will include art, drama, music, product design, French and German.
- Teachers will be involved in a joint training day on 7 January 2019, which will focus on adapting teaching to focus on the strengths and needs of all students.

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### **GCSE, A Level and L3 BTEC Examinations**

This year's external exam season went extremely well. This year, more reformed GCSEs were examined, so the vast majority of them were reported as grades 1 – 9 when the results were published. It will be the GCSEs taken next summer in 2019, which will all be graded 1 – 9. A Levels are still graded A\* - E but are now examined after a two year course rather than being split into AS in year 12 and A2 in year 13. We are still waiting for final confirmation of our results due to some successful remarks that we applied for but I was extremely pleased with what the girls had achieved this year. The results demonstrate that the academy has improved again from previous years and we achieved our targets. The performance tables will be published in January 2019 when we will know what our final results are.

### **Attendance**

I am pleased to inform you that this term attendance has improved to above 95%, so thank you for supporting us in ensuring your daughter attends the academy every day. However, I still continue to be concerned about the amount of students being taken out of the academy to travel abroad during term time. I cannot give permission for any of these requests as students are expected to be in the academy. Students have over 13 weeks holiday during the academic year, which provides ample opportunity for any trips to take place. I do expect full attendance from all students to ensure they do not miss out on learning which could impact negatively on their progress.

### **Church Lane**

We have been receiving complaints from our neighbours about parents/carers blocking their driveways when either dropping off or picking up their daughters. For those of you that do this, could you please ensure that you do not park over driveways and respect residents' right of access to their properties. The same applies to the academy's driveway. In addition, we have recently focused on road safety with the students in assemblies and have insisted that if they have to cross over Church Lane, that they must use the crossing. I would appreciate your support in this matter, as I am sure none of us would want any of our students to be involved in an accident.

### **Firefly**

Our VLE, Firefly, continues to develop with a bigger range of resources and information for our students. All home study is set on Firefly so if you want to see what tasks your daughter is being set then you can view those there. We also now use Firefly to publish letters to you and your daughter's progress reports. Although more of you are accessing Firefly now, parental

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engagement is still not at the levels we would like and therefore I am concerned that some families are not getting key messages and information. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you are having difficulty in accessing or using Firefly as we can provide some support for you. If this is the case, please use the following address [firefly@hwga.org.uk](mailto:firefly@hwga.org.uk).

### **Enrichment Activities**

I am very pleased that our offer of enrichment activities for our students continues to expand giving them increasing opportunities to engage in sport, the arts and subject-based clubs. A lot of our students are now attending these activities which benefit them enormously in terms of their personal development as well as developing an interest that they can pursue into adulthood.

- Mrs Hoey, our new Head of Music, took the choir to City Road Hospital on 7 December to sing Christmas carols to some of the patients. Our girls sang very well and I was told that some of the patients there were delighted to see them.
- Some of our other musicians also performed at Symphony Hall on 27 November with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra along with a few other schools, including King Edward VI Aston School. Since the summer term, musicians from the CBSO have been coming into the academy to work with a group of students to compose a piece of music which they performed in front of lots of parents and staff. I too attended that concert and was very impressed with their performance.
- Our football teams continue to play against other schools and are now winning matches which clearly demonstrates their improvement.
- Our annual production, which is Lord of the Flies this year, is now well into its rehearsals. The performances will take place between Wednesday 6 to Friday 8 February 2019 so I do hope that you will come along to one of those. Further details will be sent out in the Spring Term.
- Staff are also providing a wide range of trips for our students, such as:
  - Y12 students attended a residential at the University of Nottingham with students from King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls in October;
  - Y10 students visited Keeble College at the University of Oxford in November;
  - students studying GCSE Business visited the Bank of England in London and Y11 Art students visited the National Portrait Gallery, also in London.

Please do encourage you daughter to participate in at least one of the enrichment opportunities on offer as she will learn so much from being involved in an activity outside of the classroom.

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## Examination Invigilators

The external examination regulations demand that we have external invigilators who supervise the students whilst they are sitting their GCSEs, A Levels and BTEC exams. If you are interested in becoming an invigilator for the summer exam season 2019, could you please send an email to our Examinations Officer, Mr Hopkins, expressing your interest. He will then contact you with further details including the training that we offer. He can be contacted on [ahopkins@hwga.org.uk](mailto:ahopkins@hwga.org.uk).

## Academic Year 2018 - 2019 Key Dates

<b>Autumn Term 2018</b>	
Friday 21 December	End of Term – students leave at 12.00 p.m.
Mon 24 Dec – Mon 7 Jan	Christmas Holiday
<b>Spring Term 2019</b>	
Tuesday 8 January	Return to school for all students for Spring Term at 8.40 a.m.
Friday 15 February	Break up for half-term
Mon 18 Feb – Fri 22 Feb	Half-Term
Monday 25 February	Staff and students return
Mon 25 Feb – Fri 8 Mar	Y11, Y12 L2 & Y13 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mock Exams
Friday 12 April	End of Term
Mon 15 Apr – Fri 26 Apr	Easter Holidays
<b>Summer Term 2019</b>	
Monday 29 April	Staff and students return for Summer Term
Monday 6 May	May Day Bank Holiday
Mon 13 May – Fri 21 Jun	External Exam Season
Friday 24 May	Break up for half-term
Mon 27 May – Fri 31 May	Half-Term
Monday 3 June	Staff and students return
Friday 19 July	End of Term
Mon 22 Jul – Tue 3 Sep	Summer Holidays
<b>Autumn Term 2019</b>	
Wednesday 4 September	Return to school for students Y7 – 11 & Y13 8.40 a.m.

## Staff Leaving and Joining

Inevitably, at the end of the academic year, some staff leave for pastures new, retirement or for personal reasons, and this year is no different. This term we will be saying goodbye to Mr Blackham who is our Head of Maths, Miss Mustafa, teacher of science, Mr Gill, VLE Manager and Mrs L Kaur, cleaner and lunchtime supervisor. I would like to wish them all the best and good

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health for the future and to thank them all for their work at King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy. In January, Mrs D James-Powell will be joining us as a teacher of food

Thank you all too for the support you give to your daughter and the academy to help her progress and achieve success. This term finishes on Friday 21 December at 12.00 p.m. for the students and they start back on Tuesday 8 January 2019 at 8.40 a.m.

I trust you will all have a good break with your families and friends. I look forward to seeing you all again in January. Merry Christmas to you all and a very Happy New Year for 2019.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Walters  
Headteacher

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