



RIVER ACADEMY

Issue 2

## Headteachers Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we end our first full week at River Academy we have a lot to be proud of. Our pride stems from the amazing work the students have put in across the week. On Tuesday we completed our four-day matriculation in which the students had been given a thorough grounding in our expectations, our systems and methods as well as having opportunities for team building and community events. The day ended with all of the year group singing 'You've got a friend in me' at full throttle. It was a lovely sound and represented our values of community and respect.

Since Wednesday when the timetable started, we have seen the benefits of our induction sessions with the students being superb in the commitment to their learning, participating, writing independently, delivering choral responses and absolutely full effort in our stretching curriculum. We look forward to further discussing our curriculum and teaching methods with you further at our Parent Welcome meeting on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Parent Welcome Event**

This will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September in the Main School Hall. Please click on the link [here](#) to register your interest so we may organise our seating and hospitality appropriately. The event will include short presentations from myself, Mrs Billingham our Curriculum Deputy, Ms Moore, our Head of Year 7 and the Heads of Maths and English. The evening will conclude with a tour of the buildings and site.

### **Uniform and photos**

A huge thank you to you all for your support with the uniform. The students look fantastic, and we have had many complimentary remarks from our visitors and neighbours about how smart and dignified the students look. They all had their individual photos taken on Thursday afternoon and the photographer thought they all looked fabulous.

### **Dining**

I am aware that the dining systems are not working how we would wish at present. I know the queue is taking too long to get through and I want to reassure that I am meeting the catering team daily, deploying extra staff and trying hard to ensure things improve. I hope the implementation of a second till along with pre-plating some meals will speed things up, and you have my assurance we will keep reviewing our methods until it is much quicker. However, contrary to some comments that have been shared with me from social media, following some positive modifications during the week, the students were all served within 16 minutes of lunchtime starting on Thursday which is considerably quicker than the 25 minutes at the start of the week. We will keep trying!

The seating for our dining room will also change later next week, as tutors now know the friendship groups and students will be sat with a friend but also with other students they don't know as well as we continue our socialisation process and continued building of Team River.

Additionally, as promised the menu is diversifying as the new team in the kitchen get up to speed. Please see the link to our **menu** for next week.

## **Electives**

On Wednesday our students attended our Electives Fayre. This event saw the students select their choices from 14 options for our Wednesday afternoon session. These choices included basketball, rowing, rock band, orchestra, watercolours, badminton, mindfulness colouring, chess, board games, Latin, First Aid, piano and archaeology. We can wait for them to start next week and to see the students develop their interests and skills as a result of these sessions.

Linking to our Electives, the PE department have requested that students do not wear Nike Air Force shoes for PE. These are leisure shoes rather than for sport and their hard sole lacks support for the growing feet of our students.

## **Lockers**

Our lockers will become available next week, when we will write to you regarding the allocation of them. The lockers themselves are free but the students must have a padlock for them on the Parentpay shop [here](#).

## **Reading book**

Please can we ensure all the students have a personal reading book for Monday. This is part of our Tools for Learning and also a necessary part of our huge push on literacy.

## **Detentions**

We held our first 'same day' after school detentions yesterday. This was as result of students not following instructions despite a warning. Whilst we do not wish for our students to have these sanctions it is really important that the students focus quickly and work as expected so the whole class can move forwards.

In the first week or so we will phone parents to let them know this is occurring but moving forwards this will come through an alert on My Child at School, so please make sure you have the app on your phones.

## **Homework**

We will be launching our homework booklets early next week, so please look out for these and the homework notifications on your My Child at School app. All the students will have a homework folder with their booklets in that they must bring to school each day. In each booklet, there will be homework that ties with each lesson clearly laid out with dates for completion. We will also be holding a homework club every Tuesday and Thursday after school for any students that wish to attend.

Our Maths homework however will be set on the Sparx platform. Students will be given log in details in the next few days. Sparx has help videos, tutorials and support so all students can access the work and students will be expected to complete the work and gain a percentage pass rate. They will be rewarded for their endeavours and achievements on Sparx with league tables and awards given.

## **Computer Science**

Very frustratingly, our Computer Science teacher did not start with us last week. I am interviewing two candidates next week and hope to have some news on this soon. In the meantime, rather than teach Computer Science ineffectively, the students will doing an extra maths lesson until we can begin the curriculum with an expert in charge of the lessons.

## **Attendance**

Attendance will always be a hot topic given just how important strong attendance is to school success. Please can I remind you that all appointments, where possible, should be made for outside of school time. Ms Hinton will be contacting any families who are struggling with attendance to look at ways that will improve attendance for their child.

## **Superstars**

Lastly, I'd like to pay testament to my team. To get the school up and running in the very short time we had available has required long days, many staff working long evenings and real dedication. River Academy is very fortunate to have such a talented, well qualified and dedicated team.

I will be running a Staff and Student Star of the Week in this newsletter each week moving forwards with a link provided for you to recognise and nominate winners. Watch out for the launch of this next week.  
Have a great weekend everyone

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Hartley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the word "Hartley".

Andy Hartley  
Headteacher