

14<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Clifford Moor Road  
Boston Spa  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 6RW

Dear Parents/Carers

Our plans to partner with The GORSE Academies Trust (TGAT) are moving at pace. In this letter I will bring you up to date with many of the changes as we prepare to convert. In a second letter, which will follow on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July, I will focus specifically on changes brought about by the introduction of the TGAT 'Positive Discipline' policy.

### **STAFF CHANGES**

To ensure a successful conversion we have made some changes to our Senior Leadership Team.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs Ryder from Leeds West Academy, who will be leading on personal development, behaviour and welfare. Miss Gully's current role on SLT will change, as she takes responsibility for leading on the quality of teaching and learning. Mr Brennan has been permanently appointed as Director of Sixth Form, while Mrs Jespers joins SLT taking responsibility for data, targets and timetable. These appointments have led to three other promotions in school: Mr Atkinson will lead Maths, Miss Hayes will lead Humanities and Miss Holmes has been promoted to SENCO.

### **TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

Following our consultation earlier this year, from September each school day will start at 8.45am and end at 3.00pm, with two half hour breaks at 11.00am and 12.30pm.

### **CONTACTING SCHOOL**

We want to make it easier to contact school by telephone and more efficient for you to reach the appropriate staff member. From September we will have just one phone number 01937 846636 for you to ring, from which you will be able to choose an appropriate option. I hope you find this an improvement.

### **EPORTAL**

Our partnership with home is very important to us. Where once Eportal was a market leader it is now lagging behind other products and we have become frustrated by the lack of development and investment by its suppliers. After much careful consideration we are replacing our management information system with a system called SIMS. This will also replace Eportal with a 'Parent App' that will work on multiple devices including smart phones and tablets. Your current Eportal link will therefore stop functioning during the summer, and you will receive details about how to access the new app in the autumn.



## **NATIONAL GRID FOR READING**

We believe that the promotion of reading, a love of finding out new ideas and experiencing new worlds, is central to the development of informed adults who establish a passion for lifelong learning. We are really excited, as part of our partnership with TGAT, to be launching the 'National Grid for Reading'. Over the course of next year all our students will be joining one of ten online reading circles through which they will establish a coastal shelf of knowledge, vocabulary, understanding and phraseology that will form a basis of success in their examinations. Miss Gully will be leading this important development and she will be sharing more information with you about this during the autumn term.

## **PURPLE ZONE**

In another exciting development, all lessons will include a period of independent and silent work, called 'Purple Zone'. This will be the hardest and most challenging part of any lesson. This will be carefully planned to develop challenge, independence and resilience and to secure rapid rates of progress. To help you identify which work is independent and which is collaborative, work done in 'Purple Zone' will be completed in a purple pen.

## **EFFORT GRADES**

We will continue reporting effort grades; they are an important part of our tracking of student attitudes to learning. Currently a score of 'four' is the best, but this will be reversed from September as we align our practice with that of TGAT, who use an Ofsted style criteria to quantify effort, with one being 'outstanding', two 'good', three 'requires improvement' and four 'inadequate'.

## **'BE SMART' DAYS**

We will, following the restructure of our school day, hold three 'Be Smart' days across the academic year which will focus on personal, social, moral and health education. There will be more information about this later in the autumn, and these days will be led by Miss Brierley.

## **HOME/ACADEMY AGREEMENT**

We have for many years adopted a Leeds City Council model for the Home School Agreement. This will be replaced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 by the TGAT Home Academy Agreement. I have posted this on the [website](#) for you; thank you in advance for your support with this.

## **STAFF FAREWELLS**

While all of the above is very exciting for the school, the end of the year is always a sad time when we say farewell to valued members of staff. Mrs Wright retires from the Science team whilst Mr Walker, Miss Welsh and Mr Wilson move to posts in other schools. Mrs Pittuck is relocating and Mr Ferguson is taking a break from teaching. Mr Magee retires after ten years' service as our Database Administrator. He holds the regard of all our staff, and I am pleased that Mrs Anderson will be taking on this role. Miss Tuchman also retires from her SLT post, after originally joining us in 2003 to lead Science. Each year she has fearlessly grappled with the unenviable timetabling puzzle, but done so with patience, grace and good humour. She has been a stalwart of the Science team, and we bid farewell to an excellent teacher. Miss Craig retires from SLT having joined the school in 1985. She has been the most loyal and faithful colleague; she is an exceptional classroom teacher, and has been admired, trusted and respected in equal measure.

## **TRAINING DAYS**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July is a training day, where the staff will focus on adopting the TGAT Positive Discipline policy. This means Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 is the last day of term for our students.

Training days for next year are on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September, Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June and Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July. Our Open Evening for primary children is Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017; this will be a half day, not a training day as in previous years, so school will close at 1.00pm.

## **ACADEMIC TERM DATES**

The new term for all students from Years 7 to 11 begins on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 8.45am; the same applies for Year 13. Year 12 start on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

The academic year 2017/18 ends for students on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018. All other term dates are as per the Leeds City Council school [calendar](#).

Thank you for your ongoing support. We are excited about the developing partnership with TGAT; it brings together two organisations that share the same values centred on a determination to ensure that all children have access to a brilliant education. Great things can happen when strong and like-minded organisations commit to working together.

If you have any questions about the above Mr Cooke (for Years 10 and 11) or Mrs Brennan (for Years 7, 8 and 9) will be pleased to take your enquiry.

Yours sincerely



CHRISTOPHER WALSH  
Headteacher