

WH/RNM/MARCH19

29th March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your support throughout this term. I am pleased to give you an update on some important changes within the academy.

A CASHLESS ACADEMY

We will, on 3rd June, become a cashless academy, with the installation of electronic tills in the Dining Halls.

Families will use '[ParentPay](#)' to open and then top up an online account from which students can pay for their meals and any additional ad hoc expenditure such as revision guides or school trips.

The system will use the students' fingerprints to make a debit from the account although the fingerprint is not stored on any database. The first time a student logs into the system their fingerprint is read and a unique algorithm assigned to the image. On each subsequent time the student buys an item, the fingerprint is read again and matched against the algorithm which then debits the cost of the meal from the student account.

It will be important that families maintain a credit on ParentPay as it will not be possible for students to buy a meal without the cost of that meal being in their ParentPay account. You will, however, be sent an alert when your ParentPay account is low. There will also be machines in the Dining Hall that will enable students to check how much is in their account. Students entitled to a free school meal will have £2.40 credited to their account each morning.

Cashless dining has a number of benefits to our school community. In addition to taking away the parental stress of finding enough cash each day it will also allow a faster serving of meals to our students. With all students using their fingerprint to pay for meals, those who are in receipt of free school meals will be afforded greater anonymity. The need for students to carry cash for food and drink will be entirely removed, ensuring that dinner money is only spent on that which parents intend. ParentPay will also provide you with 100% visibility and you will be able to see what your child has been eating.

To facilitate the introduction of ParentPay there will be two further letters coming to you. The first will be in the week beginning 15th April 2019 and the second in week beginning 29th April 2019. One letter will be to enable you to grant permission for your son or daughter to use the electronic tills and the other will facilitate you in setting up your own ParentPay account. Thank you in advance for your attention to these; **after 3rd June 2019, students will not be able to purchase meals in the academy without both these letters having been actioned at home.**

In the week beginning 13th May 2019 there will be no assemblies, but this time will be used to allow every student to log onto the electronic tills using their fingerprint.

Some families have paid in advance, by cash or cheque, for their school meals. On Monday 3rd June any credit on these accounts will be transferred directly onto your ParentPay account.

We will not be initiating ParentPay accounts for Year 13, as they only have a few days left in the Sixth Form by this stage of the year. Until their exams are over Year 13 students will still be able to use cash in the Sixth Form Diner.

At the point at which we go cashless on Monday 3rd June 2019, there will be two further payments due for the expedition to Iceland in October. These will continue to be cash or cheque transactions. They will be the last we do in this way; after Monday 3rd June all financial transactions with the academy will take place through ParentPay.

For families who would like more information there is a detailed section on the ParentPay website dedicated to data protection, security, encryption and compliance.

This is a big change for our academy, and we have been brilliantly supported by The GORSE Academies Trust in its implementation. We are sure families will find it efficient and effective as well as a significant improvement and I thank you in advance for your support with it.

YEAR 11 EASTER REVISION

Year 11 revision is already underway and our Period 6 programme of after-school revision is really well attended. There is a comprehensive [revision programme](#) during the Easter break and I am appreciative of all the staff who are giving up their time in support of this. I am also grateful to all the parents who will make sure their sons and daughters are attending.

After Easter we will begin the Year 11 'Runway' when we add revision and booster sessions into the timetable up to and during the exam period. A letter with the full programme will be sent home before this begins. If you have any questions about support for Year 11 in the run up to the exams please contact Miss Smith.

ELLIOTT HUDSON COLLEGE BOSTON SPA

Last night we held a successful Open Evening for students looking to join Elliott Hudson College Boston Spa in September from other local Year 11 cohorts. We were really pleased with the turn out and very impressed by the candidates.

A great deal of work is going into aligning Boston Spa with the best of Elliott Hudson College for September, including careers provision that will further develop our outstanding record of students gaining places at the top Russell Group Universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, to study subjects such as medicine, law and history.

Plans for the transformation of the buildings are progressing well and we remain on schedule to open a brilliant facility that, coupled with our results that sit in the top 10% of providers nationally, will open a genuinely outstanding Post 16 provision for the Year 11s right across the locality.

It is so pleasing that the support last year from all our families for us to join The GORSE Academies Trust is bringing such an incredible dividend into our community.

POLICE ADVICE ON KNIFE CRIME

The media has been highlighting incidents of knife crime and while it is mercifully rare in schools, the memories of events in a Leeds school a few years ago are still a powerful reminder that this is never a matter on which we can be complacent.

In the context of the media interest the Police have asked that I share an information [leaflet](#) about knife crime with our families and I am pleased to commend it to you. If this is a matter about which you wish to talk to someone in the academy please contact our Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Spink; she will be pleased to help.

DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTING STUDENTS BY CAR

If you are dropping students off by car at the start of the day, and choosing to do so inside the academy drive, can I ask that you please pull your car to the north end of the site beside the Maths block before allowing anyone to get out of your car? This will leave both the entrance and the area around the buses free from standing cars which will significantly improve the safety of pedestrians. If you are collecting students outside school at the end of the day, can I ask that you do so with your engine off so that we cause as little impact on air quality for our neighbours as possible? Thank you for your attention to both these matters.

STAFF CHANGES

I have very much valued the work of Miss Brierley as Head of Year 9; she has been doing an exemplary job. However, following a change in her personal circumstances, she has asked to step down from this role. I am grateful to Mr Dodds who will step across from his role in Languages to lead Year 9 until the end of next term. Miss Brierley will take on Mr Dodds' tutor group.

We bid farewell to Mr Ash and Miss Joshi, both of whom are taking a break from the classroom. We thank them both for their service to our community and wish them well.

EASTER HOLIDAYS

While it is most unusual to have an Easter break without the Easter festival within it, we close today and re-open on Monday 15th April. The following two weeks both have just four school days to accommodate the bank holidays for Good Friday and Easter Monday. These broken weeks mean that it is crucial that our examination candidates take every opportunity to maintain their momentum in revision; that said, I wish you all a happy, safe and peaceful school holiday.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C Walsh", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
Principal