



Headteacher : Dr Simon Letman BA, MA, EdD
Deputy Head : Nicola Shelley

16th September 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

The new term has started very well and we are delighted with the very positive attitude the students are demonstrating. New Year 7 students appear to have settled quickly into their routine, showing how effective this year's transition process was.

The whole atmosphere in the Academy is incredibly up-beat following another outstanding set of GCSE examination results this summer. Our outgoing students matched last year's percentage of A*-C grades including Maths and English, and, using 'Progress 8', the government's new key performance measure, outperformed the 2015 cohort. These results now very firmly establish us as one of the best performing schools in this part of East Anglia.

Just to put this in context, 73% of Holbrook Academy students achieved both maths and English at a grade C or above. This figure puts us fifth in the entire county, which lists 42 secondary school settings. This is a remarkable achievement and one we are all very proud of. It is testament to the work that staff and parents put in and, of course, to the students themselves. Our Attainment 8 figure of 53.5 points ranks us as the 6th best performing school in the county under this new government performance measure.

There are a number of routine issues I would like to seek your support with at the moment.

For the most part, our uniform regulations are being adhered to. We are very pleased with the smart appearance of Year 11 students now that all of them are wearing black sweaters, shirts and ties. However, there are still some issues and I have written to Year 11 parents about this separately.

Lower down the school, the major issue is still the definition of school 'trousers' for girls. Skinny jeans and close fitting leggings are not acceptable. Trousers should be loose fitting. Where there are issues, you will receive text messages notifying you of the problem and asking you to rectify the issue within a reasonable timescale. We would welcome your backing with this as we try to ensure that our students maintain the very highest standards of appearance.

Secondly, I would like to remind all parents that they should not drive onto the site in the mornings or afternoons to drop off and pick up their children. A large number of parents are ignoring this rule and the situation has now become quite dangerous. We have a very small area for buses to operate in and they need to do this safely without cars getting in the way. Students should be dropped off site and should walk into school via the designated routes. Please consult the front office if you are unsure about this.

Our new CCTV system went live on 12th September and I have spoken to all students about why we have chosen to install the facility. We anticipate better site security and increased safety of students through its installation as well as a reduction of damage in the corridors. The Academy's policy in relation to the management of the system is fully compliant with all

relevant guidance and legislation and all images taken by the Academy will be used in a manner respectful of Data Protection Principles. If you would like more information about our image use policy then please contact me.

Please note that we have changed the date for our PD Day in the Spring term. This will now be Friday 31st March 2017 which means that students will return to the Academy after the Christmas holiday on Wednesday 4th January 2017.

In an endeavour to improve the email system for parents to communicate with the Academy, we have introduced a new Parents' email which we are asking you to use instead of the 'office@..' address. The new email is parents@holbrookacademy.org

Students in years 10 and 11 are preparing for the Bar Mock Trial; a competition in which students take on the roles of barristers and witnesses and present their case against teams from other schools. First; they have to become familiar with the case; then, they will battle it out at Ipswich Crown Court on November 19th, in front of real judges.

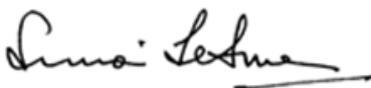
Their performance will be judged by Circuit Judges, and senior barristers. Last year Holbrook Academy came second in the local heat ...this year we are aiming for first place.

This is an exceptionally busy term and there is a great deal going on. We are holding our Year 11 information evening next Thursday evening starting at 7:00pm in the Community Room and this is an excellent opportunity to listen to Senior Staff talking about the key issues in this, the crucial GCSE year.

Two other forthcoming events for your diary are Open Morning on Wednesday 5th October and Open Evening on Thursday 6th October. Both of these events are usually very well-attended and offer an opportunity for existing and prospective parents to 'see us as we are'. We expect record attendance this year given the tremendously strong reputation we have established not only in the local area but in the wider South Suffolk community too. Please do come along.

Once again I would like to thank you all for the part you play in the success of our students and of the academy more generally.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Letman', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Simon Letman