



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

15<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write at the end of another very busy term. As ever, it has also been a long and exhausting one and I know that all staff and students are looking forward to a well-earned rest over Christmas.

There are a number of things I would like to draw your attention to at this point in the year.

As far as Year 11 students are concerned this is a very important time. A full programme of mock GCSE examinations will take place after the holiday and it is essential that they are fully prepared for this challenge. Students have been given plenty of advice from their teachers about how to organise the revision process and I would be grateful if you could monitor at home what they are doing and provide them with all the support and encouragement they need to be successful.

There is another mock exam programme in March involving the core subjects which gives students the opportunity to show us how much they have improved in the interim and these results will be a much more accurate indicator of what they are likely to produce in the summer exams themselves.

As we are fast approaching the time of making New Year resolutions, I would ask you once again to support us in our efforts to ensure that students comply with the current Academy Uniform Policy, which is published on our website. We would ask that you have another look at the policy, particularly in respect of girls' leggings, 'bomber jackets' and the wearing of non-uniform hoodies.

Regrettably, there has been some 'slippage' in standards since the new uniform was launched in September and this mainly applies to students in Year 10. On their return in January, all students can expect very close scrutiny from their tutors and those who do not comply with the regulations run the risk of being sent home. We now have a stock of used skirts and trousers in the main office and those in breach of the code will be required to wear school items until they have obtained their own correct items.

Every year we conduct a cycle of internal reviews to ensure that our standards remain high and we remain on-track to become an outstanding school. This term we have been looking at behaviour within the Academy, both in classrooms during lessons and around the site more generally. The review has involved lesson observations, learning walks, policy reviews, data analysis and in-depth interviews with staff and students.

A number of Governors have been involved in these activities and we have engaged the services of a number of external specialists too. The evidence we have collected is in the process of being analysed and it is clear that a number of changes will need to be made to our current policies to ensure that students' behaviour is of the highest standard at all times.

During the review, particular concerns have been raised by the students themselves about a minority of individuals, mainly in Year 8 and 9, who exhibit anti-social behaviours and are generally disrespectful to staff. These students can expect us to take a tougher line in January as we work to improve their general attitude. This will include a wider range of sanctions and an isolation room for those whose bad behaviour affects the learning of others. I hope I can count on your support as we work to ensure that the Holbrook experience for all students, in all respects, remains the best in the County.

Rehearsals for our 2018 production of 'Grease' are well underway and we are on course to deliver another musical spectacular in February. Once again, we are working with our local primary schools and their Year 6 students will be involved in the production. Because of this, and the large cast, tickets are likely to be in very high demand and we anticipate that they will sell out very quickly. Tickets for the four evening shows from 6<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> February will go on sale in early January and I would advise you to put a reminder note in your diary in order to avoid disappointment.

Our new cashless system has proved very popular with students and parents. Could I please remind you to check the state of your account over the holiday and ensure that there is sufficient credit on the account for the start of next term.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy and restful Christmas and New Year and a reminder that students return to school on **Wednesday 3rd January** (week 1).

Yours sincerely

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

Dr Simon Letman