

# THE PALMER CATHOLIC ACADEMY

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Headteacher: Mrs. A. Moise-Dixon

September 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all back to the start of the new academic year. I thank you as ever for your full support in helping our students return to the academy in full academy uniform and ready to learn. Your continued attention to maintaining these standards will be invaluable as we help our young people in achieving our high expectations of behaviour, dress and learning.

To update you on examinations, you will be aware in the press that there has been a significant change to grades as part of the reformed GCSEs. In the new GCSE system there has been some volatility but overall GCSE pass rates have remained stable. In light of this, we are delighted with our results again which means that on our Basics measure we have increased by 23% in the last two years (national average 2%) from 57% A\*-C English and Maths to 80% A\*-C English and Maths. We are of course very proud of our students. I commend students, staff and families for the work that was done in partnership to achieve these results. They are as follows:

<b>GCSE Results</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
7+ (2018) / A*-A (2017-2015)	27.2%	19%	18.8%	14.8%
5+ A*-C including English/Maths	76%	72%	60.4%	54%
Basics 4+ English/Maths	80%	79%	68%	57%

In addition, the new measures that schools are now judged by from September 2018 also saw us perform favourably. 89% of students gained a grade C or above in Core English and 84% of students gained a grade C or above in Core Maths.

Similarly, I ought to mention a number of subjects which achieved excellent A\*/A results, compared to national figures.

<b>GCSE</b>	<b>% Grade 7+</b>	
	<b>Academy</b>	<b>National</b>
Geography	39.7	24.2
Religious Education	35.0	30.1
Mathematics	31.0	15.8
French	31.3	24.3

We are pleased that our continued focus and drive on high expectations and aspirations alongside changes to our timetable and option choices have positively impacted on our students.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Form results**

The measures put in place over the past few years continue to improve on our overall AS/A level success. Last year our A Level VA score was +0.28 so that in terms of progress, we were the top Sixth Form provision in Redbridge for progress – a fantastic achievement! We are extremely proud of all of our students. Although we have experienced a drop in our top grades, we know that this is something that has been replicated nationally and in Redbridge.

<b><u>A Level Results</u></b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
A* - A	13.2%	21.9%	16.5%	17.4%
A* - B	35.3%	42.2%	40.4%	38.0%
A* - E	91%	99%	97.8%	98.0%

I now turn to other “housekeeping” matters.

## **School Fund**

As you know, schools across the country are in financially constrained times, just as many households are also experiencing. Each year, we rely on your generosity to support the academy in its developments. I am asking for a contribution of £60 per family. Your generosity allows so much to be achieved and adds significantly to the funds directly raised by the Governors. Of course, if you feel that you are in a position to contribute more, this would be very much appreciated. If on the other hand, your financial circumstances are such that you can afford less, then this will still be appreciated as all goes to the greater good of the students.

The Palmer Catholic Academy are encouraging parents/carers to pay online for trips/events and other products via our online payment system. If you are not yet registered you will soon be receiving your online link code and instructions of how to log in.

If you are already registered the event/trip or product will appear on your home page when you login to your online account.

## **Impero**

As a continued part of our safeguarding duty, we have to always look at our monitoring of our digital systems including emails and the use of our IT network by both students and staff. Parents/carers are to be aware that your child each academic year will be asked to sign a user agreement which guides the expected conduct of our students when using our IT systems and online. Please be aware that rigorous sanctions will be put in place to deal with any student who breaches this agreement and brings the safeguarding of our students and staff into jeopardy.

## **The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect. The GDPR is a piece of EU-wide legislation which replaced the Data Protection Act 1998 and is designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation, and make sure processing and storage procedures are consistent. As a public organisation, The Palmer Catholic Academy is committed to the protection of all personal and sensitive data for which it holds responsibility.

We already highly value and protect all of our student, parent and staff data and will continue to do so in the light of the new regulations. We need to hold personal information about your child on our computer systems and in paper records to help us with their educational needs. Please help to keep your child’s records up to date by informing us of any change of circumstances.

A policy is in place to ensure all staff and governors are aware of their responsibilities and outlines how the academy complies with the core principles of the GDPR. A copy of the policy is available on the academy's website together with a Privacy Notice for Parents and Carers.

### **Cashless System**

A reminder that the academy operates a cashless system. Please see our website for further details if you have not registered, alternatively, please contact Mrs Bovington, Finance Officer, as soon as possible.

The spending limit for each child to enable breakfast and lunch to be bought will be £3.50.

### **SIMS InTouch**

Effective communication with parents has always been of paramount importance to the academy. The academy uses a system called 'SIMS InTouch' to communicate with parents/carers electronically. The system enables the academy to securely send emails and text messages direct to parents/carers. The 'InTouch' system is used to communicate general information about the academy i.e. upcoming events, parent evenings, information evenings, Headteacher letters etc.

Parents do not need to register to use this system. However, you will only receive texts or emails if the academy has up to date contact data on our SIMS management information system.

### **SIMS Parent App**

We also offer parents/carers online access to a selected range of information about their child(ren) through the SIMS Parent app.

The app allows parents/carers to view attendance details, behaviour, parental consents and data collection sheets, student progress reports, student timetable and the academy diary. Parents are able to login securely to the app from a mobile device or computer. Detailed instructions on how to set up the app is available via the academy website.

**It is essential that we have up-to-date and accurate telephone numbers and email addresses for parents/carers. Please contact the main office if you are not sure what details we have on our system.**

**NB:** Please be assured that all contact details are held securely under the Data Protection Act and are subject to GDPR controls.

### **Medical Protocols**

Where there are a large number of children, from time to time some children become unwell. We have well-established practices and protocols to deal with such circumstances. However, children have, on an increasing number of occasions, caused considerable confusion by contacting their parents/carers by mobile phone, either before reporting to the medical room or whilst in the medical room. This proves to be unhelpful as parents/carers will often convey messages through their child to the welfare assistant and office staff. Accordingly, it is important that you remind your child that if he/she is ill they should report to the medical room but **not phone or text home using their mobile phone.**

If need be the welfare assistant will do this.

### **Student attendance – unauthorised absence**

As Headteacher, I believe that I apply a fair policy with regards to authorising a request for a child's leave of absence during term time. I gather as much information as I can and consider the facts. I do appreciate that the

majority of parents/carers support this policy and do not abuse it. The regulations state that the Headteacher may, **in exceptional circumstances**, grant a Leave of Absence in term time. It is also for the Headteacher to determine whether or not an absence would be an exceptional circumstance, **not the parent or carer**.

I have been instructed by the Local Authority that fixed penalty notices of £120 per parent, per child (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days) will apply in the following circumstances:

- Where a child does not regularly attend school
- Where an absence is unauthorised
- When a child is in a public place for the first five days of an exclusion.
- Absence due to family holidays/family celebrations.

I will continue to apply a fair policy where there is genuine need, which I consider to be an exceptional circumstance or a situation that requires special consideration. However, should the need arise I will also authorise the Local Authority to apply a fixed penalty notice.

### **Punctuality**

Attendance and punctuality are key to educational achievement. This term we will continue to rigorously enforce both our attendance and punctuality policies. Students must leave home in enough time to get to the academy.

We will accept exceptional circumstances but persistent lateness is unacceptable. Lateness has a profound effect on students' ability to settle quickly to their learning. Students will receive a 1 hour detention for lateness to the academy that is not supported by information provided from bus/train companies as the academy requests.

### **Photographing students**

As a result of academy based activities your child may be photographed. These may be used for internal displays and may feature in such publications as The Palmer Post and Brentwood Diocesan News. However, now and again outside agencies e.g. Department for Education (DfE), Educational Centres and the local press may wish to use photographs linked to the academy for promotional/demonstration or display purposes. They may also be used on the academy's website and social media accounts. **Should you not wish your child's photograph to be used for this purpose please write directly to me clearly indicating your wishes.**

### **Helpline**

The Helpline is an email facility that allows parents/carers to contact me directly, in confidence. The helpline is as follows:

[helpline@tpc.academy](mailto:helpline@tpc.academy)

**The helpline is not to be used for routine academy matters, which must be addressed through the normal and well-established procedures.**

**Similarly, InTouch is a service that the academy uses to pass information on to parents/carers. It should not be used as a means of communication with the academy.**

If you wish to email the academy for enquiries/routine matters please use: [office@tpc.academy](mailto:office@tpc.academy).

### **Behaviour in the community**

Students are expected to abide by the behaviour policy both inside and outside of the academy and, on the whole, the majority of our students do. Please reinforce with your child the importance of positive behaviour and polite manners to all in the local community, giving extra consideration to those who are elderly or with young children.

## **Student Safety – going home from the academy**

As you know I have senior staff at the gates, station and bus stop each evening. This helps ensure that the children disperse promptly and safely.

Please highlight the following with your child – regardless of age.

Students:

- Must take the first bus/train home at the end of the academy day
- Are not to frequent the local shops/food shops – they are to go straight home
- Must never accept a lift from a person not known to their parents/carers.

Should a student feel threatened in any way, he/she is to return immediately to the academy. There will be a receptionist on duty until 4.30pm in Bede Reception. The reality is that most staff and senior staff are in the academy until gone 5.00pm. However, there will be a nominated senior member of staff “on call” each evening. If students are seen in the local shops by a member of staff, a detention will be issued.

## **Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility**

If you are entitled to FSM, I have attached an information sheet that explains the entitlement to you. If you are entitled and are not registered, please do so as the funding will not only benefit your child but the academy as a whole.

**I also attach a registration form. You can complete and return to Mr N Islam, Director of Finance and Resources, at the academy to whom all queries may be directed.**

## **Lost Property**

If your child has misplaced any of their belongings, please ask them to check with lost property which is located in the Medical Room. Any items not claimed by 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018 will be given to charity.

## **Appointments**

During the course of the year, students may need to see a variety of medical professionals. As far as possible, we ask parents/carers to ensure these appointments take place outside of the academy day. However, where this is not possible, if your child has a medical appointment i.e. hospital, dentist or doctors, a note, together with a copy of the appointment letter, needs to be handed into Bede reception the day before the appointment.

If your child needs to leave the academy early for any other reason, this should be written in their planner and accompanied by a note.

## **Open Evening**

A reminder that we have a prospective parents’ evening on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 for any of you with children in Year 6 moving to Year 7 in September 2019. Details of the evening can be found on the website.

In addition to the above Open Evening, we will also be holding Open Mornings during the weeks commencing Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 where prospective parents are invited to visit the academy between 9.30am and 10.45am.

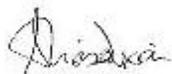
**Please note that these visits are by appointment only.** If you wish to make an appointment, please contact Mrs Bolton by telephone on 0208 590 3808 or via email at [jbolton@tpc.academy](mailto:jbolton@tpc.academy).

**Term Dates/Diary dates**

The term dates for 2018–19 are on our academy website. I attach another hard copy for retention and reference.

Diary dates for the autumn term are also available on the website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Moise-Dixon', written in a cursive style.

**A Moise-Dixon  
Headteacher**