



26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family are safe and well and that your child is enjoying a restful summer.

Whilst the current period of time remains uncertain in so many ways for us all I am delighted to be able to write to you as the incoming Executive Principal at The Valley Leadership Academy.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in the near future to outline the plans I have for The Valley students and our role in the community. I am hoping to provide a number of opportunities to virtually meet in the coming weeks to speak to you and answer any questions that you may have.

In advance of any virtual meetings I would like to briefly note that my belief is that every community deserves a great school. A great school is one that where every student feels safe, happy and secure but is unapologetic about expecting the highest standards of conduct, behaviour and attendance from all of its students. It is a school that believes every student can achieve the very highest standards and accepts nothing less than this belief from all involved. A great school is one that develops polite, thoughtful and kind young adults through opportunities and experiences they would not get anywhere else. I am confident that with your unswerving support these simple elements can form the cornerstone of The Valley becoming the great school we are all aiming for. I look forward to sharing with you the detail of how we will experience these together in the coming weeks.

## Reopening

There is an obvious first hurdle for us all before we can tackle the above. As you will be aware the government recently published its guidance for schools on full reopening for **all children** from September 2020. You may also have seen very recent changes in the advice to school regarding Face Masks. Please be reassured that I have been working closely with Mr Larkin over the past few months to ensure that we are prepared for September and the reopening of the Academy. You will also be reassured that all our reopening plans have been subject to additional scrutiny, support and approval from our Trust. I will shortly be providing a guide for parents which provides detailed information on how school will need to operate in September. It is fair to say at this point however that school will need to feel and operate differently to ensure we all stay safe. I would like to pre-empt the reopening information with a few operational details.

All students will be returning to the Academy on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September**. There will be slightly different timings to the first day to ensure that all our students meet the new staff and are informed of how the Academy will operate differently to ensure we all stay safe. We would ask that students only arrive at The Academy at allocated times.



Year group	Arrival	Entrance
7	8.30 to 8.45 am	Student entrance
8	9.00 to 9.15 am	Student Entrance
9	9.30 to 9.45 am	New Dining Hall entrance
10	10.00 to 10.15 am	New Dining Hall entrance
11	10.30 to 10.45 am	New Dining Hall entrance

**From Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup>** special arrangements to ensure that all students arrive and leave as safely as possible will be in operation.

- To reduce crowding on entering, students will arrive and leave at staggered timings and using different entrances. Students will be allowed to wait for friends or gather in groups.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Leaving (if no intervention)</u>	<u>Entrance/Exit</u>
7	Between 8.25 and 8.35 am	3.00pm (2.30 on a Wednesday)	Student Entrance
8	Between 8.35 and 8.45 am	2.55pm (2.25 on a Wednesday)	Student Entrance
9	Between 8.35 and 8.45 am	2.55pm (2.25 on a Wednesday)	Dining Room
10	Between 8.25 and 8.35 am	3.00pm (2.30 on a Wednesday)	Dining Room
11	Between 8.25 and 8.35 am	3.00pm (2.30 on a Wednesday)	Dining Room

- Where families have siblings, students should arrive at the designated time for the younger sibling.
- Once school students arrive, they will be met in the dining room by their Head of Year and Form Tutor.

### **Uniform**

- All students will be expected to wear the full uniform.
  - The school now has a new uniform supplier called Stevensons ([www.stevensons.co.uk](http://www.stevensons.co.uk)).
  - It is noted that the current pandemic has caused a slight delay on the arrival of new blazers. We are hopeful this will be resolved by the 1<sup>st</sup> September. If this remains an issue a revised uniform policy will operate where blazers will remain optional until the arrival of new stock.
  - I would also highlight that shoes must be plain, black, traditional in style and have a flat sole. They should be a plain design with no logos, decorative buckles, coloured laces or stitching. Boots, trainers, plimsolls, canvas or suede shoes are not permitted. If you can't polish it, it probably isn't an acceptable school shoe.
  - Can I also note that any false nails, eyelashes and extreme hair styles need to be addressed before the return.

### **Summer Learning**

Finally, and most importantly schools are places of learning. The past few months have seen a great many changes to how learning has been undertaken. Whilst I am yet to meet you, I can only applaud and thank all of you for trying to ensure that learning continues. I know the Academy has spent a great deal of time sending

resources and planning online learning. I am also aware that the Academy has already sent an optional work pack for the summer period for new Year 7 pupils. As we prepare for the return, I would strongly recommend that students revisit the work packs to complete or simply refresh themselves. I would also suggest the resources below as a point of reference to get back into school mode.

<https://www.thenational.academy/information-for-parents-pupils>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Whilst the current circumstances make this still an uncertain time for us all, I am personally excited to meet the students at The Valley and start the exciting work in the next phase of the schools journey.

Regards

A. O'Brien  
Executive Principal.