



The Valley Leadership Academy Executive Principal Newsflash

Remembrance

Before I reflect on Academy life and the challenges we all face, I would like to ensure we note that the Academy will be observing the 2 minute silence this Wednesday. My grandad served in WW2 as a tank driver in Africa. It was only late in his life did he reflect on the time and events that he had been part of. These were not with pride but only of friends and colleagues who had not made it back with him. I am sure there are many personal stories you have of lives affected by sacrifice in the name of protecting our country. The Bacup cenotaph is inscribed with the words

‘They died that we may live in peace’

Whilst times are challenging currently, I hope we all never experience what the generations before us had to give so that we could have ‘peace’.

Half Term 2

As you may be aware, last term I posted a Newsflash update weekly on the Academy website. I will continue to do the same this term but with a revised format and layout. From next week I will be using SWAY which will be a slightly more interactive format. You will still be able to access this from the Academy website. You will receive an e-mail link each week via text, twitter and our new App. I hope the revised version is easy to view and allows information to be read more easily from mobile devices.

Each week’s newsletter will also focus on one or two key areas in a little more detail. This week’s focus is homework. As adults we will have memories of completing homework from our school days (or homework detention!). As parents, we have a key role in supporting our children to complete homework and allowing them the space and time to do so. Our children have missed out on learning time during lock down and we are doing all we can to support them; homework forms a significant part of this.

To help parents, we have provided more detail about how homework is set and the type of work for students to complete. If your child ever says they have ‘no homework’ please challenge them!

If your child is in Year 11, you should see them working / studying / revising for 10 hours per week – ‘The TVLA 10’. Encourage them to plan their time and have a day off.

Staying safe

As we cannot fail to know, we are currently living in extremely testing times. I have been consistently sharing with parents via the weekly Newsflash our steps to ensure we reduce risk as much as possible. It is understandable that parents across the country are concerned about COVID. I have two children at university currently whom I think of constantly. I would just reiterate that as an Academy we continue to follow government guidance fully in relation to reducing risk. Each week we share our 'staying safe together' strategies with students during form time and assemblies. In relation to these we must note our Academy non-negotiables.

1. A face covering has been an expected part of uniform all term. Please contact us if your child has a medical reason we have not already been informed of. As per government regulations all students **MUST** wear face masks in communal areas (corridors, canteen, toilets, indoor spaces outside of lessons) and whilst travelling on public transport. We advise students to wear masks in lessons but this is optional.
2. All students are expected to wash/sanitise their hands on each entry into the Academy and any new space.
3. Students are located in year group bubbles. They stay in this bubble for all lessons and social times. They cannot cross bubbles.
4. Students are encouraged to maintain 'space' from each other as much as possible

Please contact us if you have any issues relating to COVID 19. There is a parent's guide on the Academy website.



Attendance Matters – Every day counts

As we have continued to note attendance is a key factor in determining academic success. This term we are aiming for 94%. Any tutor group over 97% will be entered into a prize draw at the end of the week. We will also be starting our 'Tutor group Premiership' which has a series of activities and rewards built in for the best form and individuals each week.

Appearance Matters

I have consistently highlighted my expectations on uniform last half-term. As per my last Newsflash next I would like to highlight to parents that these will be enforced stringently after half-term.

- False Eye lashes CANNOT be worn.
- No Make-Up.
- ONE pair of plain studs. ALL other and additional piercings must be removed before entry.
- NO TRAINERS.
- PE kit should only be worn on PE days,

There will be a uniform check on entry to the Academy every day this half-term. Students will be expected to correct the above immediately. If they do not they will receive learning separate from all other students until corrected. Many parents are reporting that students have the full uniform but are choosing not to wear it or are just pushing their luck a little. Please contact us if uniform is an issue, we will be as understanding as possible. It is impossible for us to validate a student's claim of 'my mum is getting them at the weekend'

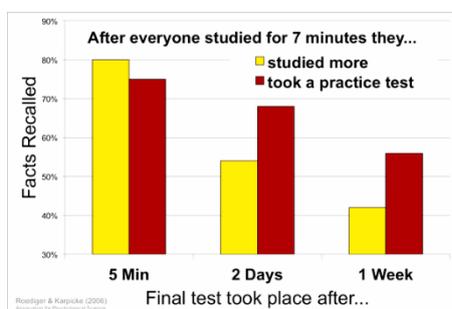
Hard Work Matters - New Groups

At the end of the first half-term all our students completed assessments in each area. Using the information from these assessments alongside feedback from teachers, we have regrouped the students this half-term. This may mean that students have new form teachers and teachers for some lessons. Timetables were given to students in year 7 and 8 at the start of the half term. Students in years 9-11 will move groups in the week beginning the 16th November. We will be consistently reviewing your child's progress and where necessary we may move groups to ensure they have the best chance of success. I would note that movement is almost always as a result of hard work or a lack of it.

Knowledge Matters - Homework

Homework has been part of education for a very long time with students taking pieces of work home to work on whilst not in the classroom and therefore increasing the amount of time they spend studying throughout their academic life, but the benefits of homework go further than just increasing the amount of time students spend learning.

What is Self-quizzing?



Self-quizzing is, as the name suggests, a method of homework where students learn to test themselves on the key knowledge and concepts they need to be successful at school. A large amount of research has been done on the subject concluding that students who master and regularly use self-quizzing make significantly more progress than those who don't.

As the chart shows above, students who test themselves with a quiz after studying a topic, are able to retain that knowledge for a much longer time than those students who simply re-study or re-read the material. When students quiz themselves on the knowledge they have learnt, studies suggest

that much more of the information is stored in their long-term memory and in a world where students are expected to remember information for years before they sit their GCSE exams, having the knowledge that is key for success stored in their long term memory is vital.

So how do they do it? How do they self-quiz? Well one of the other advantages to self-quizzing is its simplicity. All it requires is access to the key knowledge, which as mentioned earlier has been provided in the way of our Knowledge Organisers.

- 1) First students read the key pieces of knowledge that have been identified by their teachers.
- 2) After they have done this a few times so that they are comfortable with information they should cover it or close their Knowledge Organiser.
- 3) Next, using their self-quizzing book they should write down as much of the knowledge as they can, entirely from memory, they should not look at the Knowledge Organiser at this point. The key tactic with self-quizzing is to practice getting the knowledge out of their heads and onto the page, the more they practice, the easier it is to access the information stored in their memory.
- 4) Finally, once they have written all they can remember, they should reopen the Knowledge Organiser and check their answers. This will provide the important feedback that they need to judge their accuracy. At this stage the students should correct any of their mistakes and add any missing information to their answers.

Getting into the habit of two Knowledge Organiser sessions per night will be of huge benefit.

What other forms of homework do we do?

Although the benefits of self-quizzing are there for all to see, we don't want to put all of our eggs in one basket and of course, we want to add some variety for our students to maintain their enthusiasm and drive to complete homework to the best of their ability. Below is a list of other methods of homework that your child will receive from school.

- Online learning platforms, such as Hegarty Maths.
- Past examination questions. These are used mainly for KS4 students and help them to prepare for the style of questions they will face in GCSE examinations.
- Extended writing questions. Some subjects require students to develop their extended writing skills in order to fully explain their answers to longer questions.

Remote learning

If a student is ill or has to spend time away from the Academy we want them to maintain learning as if they were in school. To do this we are providing work in a number of ways. I have highlighted these below

1. If there are a small number of students absent from a class, we will be delivering 'simultaneous' 'live' lessons. This means they join in with a lesson that is live in school.
2. If there are a number of students absent, they will be treated as a class and taught the curriculum by a specialist teacher.
3. If a student cannot get Teams access, we have produced a half-termly overview of each subject with 'lesson-by-lesson' links to materials and national OAK academy lessons.

4. All students have log-ins to a number of web based learning platforms. These include Hegarty Maths and Tassomai Science.
5. We have produced hard copy packs of work for all students who are having ICT issues at home.
6. Students in Years 7-9 have a Knowledge Organiser and a self-quizzing booklet. They are encouraged to use these everyday.

As you will see there is plenty to do even if the technology occasionally fails.

Parents Evenings

Due to the current lockdown we will be moving our parents evening to a virtual solution. This week parents in year 7 and 11 will receive letters on how to book appointments via our new system. We have chosen the system because of its flexibility in providing parents with a video call appointment at your convenience. We hope that the system provides flexibility for you. The appointments are viewable from a computer or mobile devices including smartphones.

Class Charts School App

We will also be launching our new Academy App this week. The App will provide parents with a real time view of your child's achievement and behaviour points. As we develop over time we hope this App will provide further information and a direct portal for accessing important communication.

Children in Need

This week we will be marking children in need with a series of fundraising events. One of these will be to try and create a large 20p Pudsey. If you are able to support this by sending in any spare 20p pieces you may have it would be much appreciated.

Year 11

I am delighted that so many of our Year 11 students took up the offer of half-term revision. We are well on our way to preparing for the Mock exams that will be coming up shortly – 30th November.

Our key message is that students should engage in ten hours of revision per week, in preparation for their mock exams. For most students attending a period 6 session will be an expectation this term. I have told students to just work on the basis that school finishes at 4pm every day. This would be one hour of the 10. This means we recommend all Year 11 are completing an extra hour each night.

The next step for Year 11 will involve an alteration to form groups. Based on the recent baseline assessments in core subjects – we now know where students need some extra support, in order to achieve success in either Maths, English, Science or History. Students will be grouped according to this data and will receive some intensive intervention in form time, from subject specialist form tutors. This is just another way in which we intend to support our Year 11, in the hope we can give them every opportunity come their exams in the summer.

In addition to this can I please note:

- We have issued students with a laptop for the duration of their studies unless they have chosen to use their own laptops.

- All students should have received their new log-on and passwords for TEAMS. This is the place where students will access work from teachers when away from the Academy.

Safeguarding

As we are increasingly exploring remote learning, we need to constantly ensure we are aware of safe behaviours on line. Unfortunately, not everyone who uses the internet or social media is a nice person and lots can be solely there to exploit children, even your child. Having an awareness and knowledge about what your child is doing, who they are interacting with is incredibly important.

Remember, you are the parent and you are in charge. Once your child is online, using social media sites or apps they are open to the entire world. This week's link is around 'catfishing'. This is when someone creates a fake account.

To go straight to the webpage all you need to do is click on this link <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/> and it will lead you to a world of answers.

Important dates

The Academy will close for the Christmas Holiday on Friday the 17th December. This will be a 1pm finish.

Please follow us on social media



@ValleyLAcademy

Part of our Online Relationships Series



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www.nationalonlinesafety.com

What you need to know about... CATFISHING



What is it?

'Catfishing'

Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to trick people into thinking they are somebody else. They assume a fake identity and go the extra mile to make their victim believe that they are exactly who they say they are. Catfishers make up life stories and use photographs of unsuspecting victims to create fake identities. They will share life experiences, jobs, friends, and photographs to their fake accounts.



Know the Risks

Build Relationships Fast

Catfishing can escalate very quickly. As someone executing a catfishing scam is looking to achieve a goal - whatever that may be - they are likely to want to get things moving as quickly as possible and may seem desperate or want to push a relationship without even meeting.

Fraud and Identity Theft

Catfishers are people who create fake identities and could be taking other people's photos and pretending to be them. It is common for fraudsters to post pictures stolen from social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram. Catfishers may try to limit chat to text-based messaging and anything involving video is likely to be shunned for fear of revealing their true identity.

Online Grooming

Catfishers can be anyone and target anyone of any age. They may target children and aim to lure them into a sexual relationship or trick them into sending nude or inappropriate images of themselves.

Requesting Money

Catfishers may also try to trick children out of money. After building up trust and developing an online relationship, a catfisher may use an elaborate story to request money urgently. They may ask for cash for a loan, money for travel, or some other form of payment.

How to respond

Offer support

Always encourage children to talk to a trusted adult about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online, particularly if someone they don't know has contacted them.

Report and block

Make sure that children are aware of how to report and block accounts on all platforms that they use. You can report fake accounts and block users to prevent them from viewing a child's profile.

Check with Google

If you are concerned that someone is using a child's photographs for their own benefit, use a Google image search to check. After uploading a photograph, use related images to see if anyone else is using photos that the child has previously shared online. If this is the case, report the user directly to the platform.

Report to authorities

If you suspect that a child has been the victim of any fraudulent, illegal or inappropriate activity, then you should immediately report it to the local police or authority.

Safety Tips

Set profiles to private

Go through children's security and privacy settings thoroughly to ensure that their online profiles are set to private. This means that only friends can see their profile and can contact them. It may also be a good idea to check through children's friends list with them and closely monitor their usage, especially if they are being secretive.

Be alert

In some cases, it's difficult to stop young people from talking to new people. In these circumstances, encourage children to be curious and ask lots of questions rather than rely on the information given in someone's online profile. Through the course of conversations, there may be inconsistencies with what is said and catfishers may be vague in response to specific questions about themselves.

Never meet

It's vital that children know never to arrange to meet up with people they meet online, and never to send money to them. Tell them to always speak to a trusted adult if they are being pressured into doing something they are not comfortable with.

Have honest conversations

Have regular and honest conversations with your child about what is safe to share with people online. Discuss the importance of keeping private information private and that anything that could identify them should not be shared online.

Our Expert Pete Badh



Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



Some examples of footwear the Academy deems as trainers and therefore not acceptable as school shoes.



At the start of term, I wrote to parents noting that as the Academy seemed to have allowed Black Air force one trainers last year, I would be allowing a window through to half-term of these are acceptable footwear. Please contact the Academy if parents are unable to provide footwear from the top list next half-term.