

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to begin this letter by offering my thanks to you for supporting myself and staff at the Academy during the course of this academic year, particularly since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak.

For all of us this has been a time like no other. We have had to charter our way through previously uncharted waters and, at times, have had very little to guide us. The trust that you have placed in us to look after your children, whether that be the children of key workers that we have taught since the beginning of lockdown or our Year 10 students that we welcomed back to school in June, has been heartening. The support that you have given us: thanks when a member of staff has called home, a short email to ask after staff, your contributions to our community foodbank to give but a few examples, have made such a difference during this time. It reminds me why I am proud to work in the Smith's Wood Community. Thank you.

Despite, a very strange latter part to the year we have had another fantastic year at Smith's Wood. Key highlights to celebrate include;

- Our House system has quickly become an established part of life at Smith's Wood. Pankhurst House is in the lead currently – we await our virtual sports day results to confirm final positions! We have seen record numbers of students engaging in House competitions; a truly phenomenal effort. Many students are well on their way to being awarded their first half-colour (to be worn on their blazer lapel), in recognition of their contribution to their House.
- The House Participation Leaders (HPLs) have worked hard this year to encourage all students to participate and to contribute to the work of their House. Each HPL also provides additional support and engagement opportunities for students in the following areas; anti-bullying, charity work, LBGTQ+ and Young Carers. We are proud of the work they have done in these areas. The adults have been brilliantly supported by the Anti-Bullying and Well-being Student Ambassadors – they are making a real difference.
- Our whole school attendance has been excellent. In fact, this year, we recorded the highest attendance that we have seen for 14 years! I recently wrote to hundreds of parents to let them know that their child had gained a NBA (Never Been Absent) lapel badge. This is a brilliant achievement! Increasingly students are really making the connection between great attendance and great exam results.
- We continue to excel in sport. Our key achievements this year include; Year 7 boys cross-country Borough relays runners-up; Year 7 girls cross-country relays North Solihull winners; Year 8 boys football team won the Birmingham Cup; Year 9 girls badminton team won North Solihull tournament and represented our district in the regional finals; Year 8/9 girls basketball team won the Borough championships; Year 9/10 boys basketball team reached the Borough final; Year 9/10 mixed trampolining team won

the North Solihull event; Year 11 boys cross-country Borough relays runners-up; Year 11 boys basketball team reached the Borough final and the Year 11 boys football team advanced to the Birmingham Cup quarter finals. Not bad for a shorter academic year than usual!

A special mention must go to Year 11 student, Ann-Marie Lewis, who has competed in every cross-country league race for 5 years!

- We welcome record numbers in to Year 7 this September – we are very proud that so many want to come and be part of our school.
- Most importantly, we have a lovely school full of amazing young people.

The list above is not an exhaustive list but indicates that we are in a great position and we look forward to a very bright future for all of our school community. September represents, in many ways, a new beginning for us and we will make the most of it. We know that we have headroom to grow and improve; one of the things we do best at Smith's Wood Academy is to be reflective practitioners – always seeking to improve and do things better next time.

### Key updates for next academic year:

In readiness for next year we have made some slight changes to our pastoral leadership.

Year Group	Excellence Leader	Deputy Excellence Leader
7	Miss Butcher	Mrs Simmonds
8	Mr Collins	Mrs Craddock
9	Mr O'Connor	Mrs Hewson
10	Mr Barber	Mrs Elliott
11	Mr Rose	Mrs Cronin

Our House Participation Leaders (HPLs) for 2020-21 are:

House	House Participation Leader	Responsibility
Hawking	Miss Bayliss	Anti-Bullying
Luther King	Miss Wilson	Charity and Community
Pankhurst	Miss Howe	LGBTQ+
Parks	Miss Bartlett	Young Carers

**Academy Uniform** – I think we are the best dressed school in the area! Our children take pride in wearing their uniform as they know how important it is to dress appropriately for school, just as we would in the workplace. As a reminder;

- All students must wear the Academy tie and blazer.
- All students must wear a white collared school shirt – short or long sleeve are both acceptable.
- Girls must wear the Academy trousers or Academy skirt. Skirts may be worn with short or knee length socks in black or white or tights that are either black or skin-coloured.

- Boys must wear smart black tailored trousers.
- Shoes must be black and polish-able and must not have any decoration.
- All students must carry an Academy school bag. This should be free from damage and graffiti. Students should bring to school the equipment that they will need for the day. Their pencil case should include writing pens (blue or black), green writing pen(s), pencils, rubber and a pencil sharpener.

Please be reminded that hair should not be cut in an unusual fashion and boy's hair must be cut no shorter than a grade 2. Students are not permitted to dye their hair unless it is dyed in a natural hair colour. Visible or heavy make-up is not permitted and students may only wear a wrist watch and a pair of small metal stud earring.

**Ethos** - From September we will be launching a new ethos to ensure behaviour at Smith's Wood is always excellent. Every member of our community will follow three steps; connect, respect, excel. This will ensure everyone feels a part of the school, approaches situations with positivity and calmness and achieves excellence. To do this we will be focusing on starting the year with the highest expectations and ensuring this is maintained, by supporting all students to achieve this. We look forward to everyone connecting, respecting and excelling in September.

**September start** - Just as the last few months have been unusual, the return to school in September will also look different to previous years. In order to keep our community safe, a number of measures will be in place. I have included with this letter detailed information to let you and your child(ren) know what these changes will be. It is important that you take the time to read these and talk through with your child(ren) the changes that are in place so that they are as prepared as they can be for September.

I do hope that you and your family are able to enjoy some time together over the summer. I am very proud of all we have achieved together over the last year and I am very excited about the new academic year and all it will bring.

This school is a great place to be and I have every confidence that it will go from strength to strength if we keep working together. Thankfully we seem to be emerging from the challenges of COVID-19 and we look forward to a brighter academic year for 2020-21.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs K Craig

**Head of Academy**



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