

September 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you will be aware, we are not able to hold our annual open evening this year. This is a real shame as staff and students were looking forward to warmly welcoming you to our school. I hope that you have chance to read this letter and the accompanying information so that you can find out a little more about what life is like at Smith's Wood.

Whilst we may not be able to meet in person for an open evening, please be clear that we are only a phone call away. If you would like to talk to myself or another member of staff about what Smith's Wood can offer your child then please do get in touch.

My son has recently joined Year 7 at a school in Leicestershire; my daughter is in Year 9. As a parent I am aware of how big a decision it is when choosing your child's secondary school. It is, after-all, their future that we are preparing them for. All children are different and what suits one child may not suit another. It was for this reason that as a family we chose separate secondary schools for our children – we made our decision based on which school suited each child individually. I hope that this information pack provides you with the right information to help you choose the school that is the best fit for your child.

We are a family at Smith's Wood – our mantra is *better together*

It is important for you to realise that should your child join Smith's Wood Academy, they are in fact joining a bigger family of schools. This family being Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust (FMAT). The word 'family' is important to us at Smith's Wood. As we know, families come in all shapes and sizes, but what they all do is care for and look after one another; something that we always aim to do at Smith's Wood.

Our family of schools was established in 2014 by a dedicated group of leaders committed to enriching the lives of our students and transforming their futures. Hence our mission statement; **Enriching Lives; Transforming Futures**. This is what we work hard to do every day.

There are four schools within our Trust; Fairfax Academy, Bournville Academy, Erdington Academy and of course, Smith's Wood. In being part of the Trust we recognise and celebrate the individuality and diversity of each school, whilst all working towards and living by the same values and towards our common mission.

- Excellence** We strive for the highest quality to ensure excellent outcomes and personal achievements.
- Dedication** We believe there is dignity in hard work and effort.
- Ambition** We aim to be the best we can be, in all that we do.
- Integrity** We believe in openness, honesty and have a real sense of moral purpose.
- Tradition** We believe in good manners, courtesy and respect.

These things are incredibly important to us.

Working together as a Trust means that your child will benefit from the efforts of other adults; some of whom they may never meet. It also means that our students have access to a wide of enriching opportunities. These include;

- Trust-wide sporting events;
- Trust-wide arts events for example;
- and priority access to the sixth form at Fairfax Academy (when the time comes!)

We believe that for our students to reach their potential academically then they must access a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities in a structured and caring environment. It is incredibly important to us that each child is recognised as an individual and will have access to first-class care – this is because, above all, we want our students to be happy and safe.

Smith's Wood – then and now

Over the past couple of years, we have seen a real shift in students' attitudes towards school life and their approach to learning. Lessons are delivered to a high standard and are very much focused on preparing students to be 'experts' in all of the subjects that they study. An environment has also been created where 'teachers can teach and students can learn'. Academy leaders will not allow any lesson to be disrupted by poor behaviour – there are no exceptions.

You will no doubt be aware that OFSTED placed Smith's Wood into 'Special Measures' following an inspection in 2017. I am pleased to say that we were inspected in May 2019 and that the school was removed from 'Special Measures'. The inspection report is available online and I would encourage you to read this.

The inspection team determined that leadership and management in the Academy is 'good' and through this leadership it identified that rapid progress has been made. Smith's Wood is now a very different school.

In short, we are proud to be able offer your child;

- ✓ Fully staffed departments – not an easy achievement given the national recruitment crisis facing education;
- ✓ An environment where students feel safe and valued and where they can learn in classrooms free from poor behaviour;
- ✓ A house system that allows students to feel part of a family;
- ✓ A thriving programme of extra-curricular activity and rewards programme;
- ✓ A curriculum that has been carefully designed to maximise progress and achievement rates;
- ✓ High quality pastoral support – it is important to us that students achieve academically. Our first priority, however, is keeping our students safe and ensuring that they are happy and feel valued.

Over the next few months you will undoubtedly experience a mix of feelings regarding the move to secondary school. What you can be assured of is that we will work hard with you

and your children to ensure that the transition to Smith's Wood is as smooth as possible and that their years here are happy and productive ones.

Yours sincerely,

KCraig

Mrs Katy Craig

Head of Academy