

19th July 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Standards and Expectations

I am writing to thank you for your continued support towards Smith's Wood Academy this academic year since my appointment at the end of February, and to inform you of our expectations for next academic year. As a school we are aware of the challenges that we face and are striving to improve as quickly as possible in order to become an Ofsted recognised 'Good' school. This will help your child to gain even higher/better qualifications and enjoy the best possible experiences during their schooling.

In moving the school forward I have worked with staff and students alike this year and our School Improvement Plan has two very clear aims;

1. DEVELOP ALL LEARNERS TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL
2. CREATE AN AMBITIOUS CULTURE OF ASPIRATION

This is what we all firmly believe in and will strive to achieve at all times.

Our new school ethos of '**Respectful, Resilient and Ambitious**' will permeate throughout everything we do and is a shared vision that every member of the school community can buy into. We will insist on the very highest standards for all of the students in our care at all times.

There are a number of aspects that I would like to draw your attention to as these are the areas we are constantly striving to improve upon and we will be having a greater focus on next academic year.

ATTENDANCE

School Attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life and is proven to be the single most important factor in achieving good grades.

Every pupil at this school, in line with the Government's expectations, is expected to maintain an attendance level of at least 96%. While it is appreciated that children are unwell from time to time and there can be exceptional circumstances for absences, please think carefully about taking your child out of school as persistent absence is proven to have a significant impact upon a child's educational attainment.

To give you an example of how your child's attendance can be affected please see the facts below.

- 90% attendance = 4 whole weeks off school
- 90% attendance across years 7 – 11 equates to half a year off school

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

Since September 2013 holidays in term time have no longer been authorised unless they are for exceptional circumstances. This is now government law in partnership with the DfE. As you can understand this hinders progress of students due to the time missed from lessons.

UNIFORM

At Smith's Wood we want to be proud of ourselves for being prepared for school and looking extremely smart and ready to learn. It is paramount that your child comes to school in the correct uniform. The uniform policy states that the following uniform must be worn. Failure to wear the correct uniform will result in students being in isolation away from the classroom.

Our uniform is:

Black school blazer with school badge.

Plain black V neck, long sleeved jumper. NO LOGOS.

Plain white shirt with buttoned collar.

Plain black tailored trousers or skirt.

Clip-on school tie - all students.

Tights or socks - plain colour only.

Sensible Shoes - black only. NO LOGOS.

No Boots or trainers of any description.

1 pair of stud earrings.

No facial piercings are allowed.

Further information around our uniform can be found on our website or by clicking the link below:

[Smith's Wood Academy Uniform Policy](#)

EQUIPMENT

It is also essential that all students have the correct equipment so they can learn. From September we will be having a reward based theme on students having essential things with them and our minimum expectation is that all students will always have a pen, pencil, ruler, and, in KS4, a maths set and calculator. All students will have a planner. Equally we expect this equipment to be carried in an appropriate school bag.

May I also remind you that it is school policy that, during school time, mobile phones are turned off. I understand the need for pupils to carry phones for their safety to and from school however on the school site it is not necessary for a mobile phone to be switched on.

HELP AND SUPPORT DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAY

If you believe a child is at risk of serious harm or in immediate danger you should call the Police (999) or Children's Services.

- For children living in Solihull refer to 0121 788 4300, or out of hours 0121 605 6060.
- For children living in Birmingham refer to 0121 303 1888, or out of hours 0121 675 4806.

If the concern is around mental health/ suicidal thoughts please contact the GP or go to A&E. Alternatively, parents or students can self-refer to the following services, both of whom have crisis lines if you need to talk to a professional urgently:

Solar (<https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/>)

Forward Thinking Birmingham (<https://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/>)

For other safeguarding issues or advice, there are a range of helplines listed on the school website under the safeguarding section:

<https://smithswood.co.uk/academy-life/safeguarding/>

RETURN TO SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER

We will welcome **Year 7 only** on Wednesday 6th September for their first full day with a prompt 8:30 start via the student entrance by the astro and they will finish at 3pm. On Thursday 7th September we are looking forward to welcoming all students back to school. **Year 7 will arrive for an 8:30 start** and **Years 8-11 will arrive for a 9am** start via the astro gate.

If you feel there is anything further we can do to support you or your child, or you would like to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact your child's Form Tutor or Achievement Leader regarding these matters.

I hope that you would agree that the school is evolving and improving in all areas since the recent Ofsted inspection. If we can continue to improve in the areas above we feel students will go on to do even better at Smith's Wood in the coming years and we want you as parents/guardians to work alongside us in securing the best possible future for your child.

I wish you a pleasant summer and look forward to working with you in the new academic year.

Yours sincerely,



Mr S.Huntington
Principal