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Headteacher:
Miss K Morris



Biddick
Academy

9th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the close of the autumn term, I can confirm that school will end as usual at **3:00pm on Friday 18th December 2020** and the start of the new term is **Monday 4th January 2021**.

We have had a very busy and challenging autumn term and I wish to thank you for your continued support and words of encouragement as we continue to operate in a changed environment that has become our way of living with COVID-19. I also want to thank all of our students who have adjusted to a changed world with such care and consideration for each other; the challenge has been great but all members of staff are proud of our students working together, in developing their resilience in re-engaging with learning to achieve their ambitions.

Usually, the final week of the autumn term marks a high point with the Academy coming together to celebrate the achievements of the year and look ahead to next year. This year is no different, albeit the Carol Service has moved online. I'd like to thank parents and carers who have supported our collection for the Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen and Salvation Army toy appeal, the donations have been overwhelming.

There have been many highlights this term and much to look forward to next term. At this point I'd like to share some information and ask for support with some small issues in order to have the best and most enjoyable end to this term and start in January.

Attendance

Daily attendance is always important, but perhaps more than ever at the moment, especially as we are still facing periods of remote learning. While this term has certainly been challenging, we are very proud of our students and the resilience they have shown to date. At the time of writing, our current overall Academy attendance is higher than at the same time the previous year. In fact, the attendance of every year group has improved.

The Academy also calculates 'pure attendance', this is attendance including those students who are absent due to COVID-19, for example those self-isolating, or 'bubbles' that are remote learning. While obviously lower, this overall figure is still pleasing and is above both the regional and national averages of secondary school attendance. As a result, can I please express our thanks to you for encouraging excellent habits for attendance. We will continue to work together in the New Year to ensure all students are maximising their learning potential.

Year 11

We have been most impressed with the maturity and positive attitude to learning demonstrated by our Year 11 students this year, both in school and via livestreamed lessons. Next term, our Year 11 students will be sitting mock examinations, these are an invaluable opportunity for students to practice the examination conditions they will experience in the final summer examinations. This year, we have moved mock examinations to **Monday 18th January 2021 - Tuesday 2nd February 2021**, to allow students longer to prepare and revise. Details of the timetable can be found on the Academy website <https://biddickacademy.com/curriculum/exam-information/>.

We are very aware that for some students, mock examinations can be a daunting experience, however they are an opportunity for students to show how well they are working and they enable both teachers and students to identify any areas for development in order to support students in achieving their potential.

Mock examinations also play an important role in preparing students for their final examinations, by equipping them with the skills needed to manage their revision time effectively. It is imperative that students try their very best and fully prepare for their mock examinations and we will ensure that students are thoroughly supported at this crucial time in their education.

There will be a number of revision sessions over the course of the mock examination period, and After School Learning will continue as normal therefore, I would encourage all students to attend as many sessions as possible in order to support their revision. Parents and carers of our Year 11 students will receive a letter upon our return to school in January outlining all of the details of the mock examinations, including the contingency plan in case students are required to self-isolate during the mock examination period. In the meantime, if you have any queries regarding the mock examinations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Year 9 Options

The New Year will be an important time for Year 9 students as they start the process of choosing their Key Stage 4 Options. Parents/carers and students will be provided with comprehensive information, advice and guidance so that they feel confident and prepared for making informed decisions at this important time. The list of key dates are below and if you have any questions about the process, please direct them to Mr Knowles at knowles.j@biddickacademy.com.

Date	Activity	Details
w/c 11 th January 2021	Curriculum Information booklets distributed to parents/carers and students	Physical and digital copies will be made available to provide both parents/carers and students with detailed information on all Options on offer
14 th January 2021	Virtual Options Evening	Virtual subject presentations will replace the traditional face-to-face Options Evening where information on all Options will be provided
28 th January 2021	Year 9 Parents' Evening	Opportunity for parents/carers and students to talk to teachers about Key Stage 4 Options courses and their progress in the subject to date
29 th January 2021	Provisional Options form deadline	Provisional (Practice) Options forms provide the Academy with information on course popularity to help plan the teaching groups required for September
8 th to 26 th February 2021	Virtual SLT link meetings with parents/carers and students	Bespoke one-on-one information, advice and guidance given to both parents/carers and students
5 th March 2021	Final Options form deadline	This will be distributed and completed electronically

End of Term

As I write this, it is ten days since any confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Academy. As families look forward to the festive period, the final days of this term are a time to be extra vigilant about social distancing. In order to keep your family and relatives safe over the festive period, the Academy will continue to contact any close contacts resulting from positive cases in the Academy, up to and including the 24th December. If you do need to contact the Academy to notify us of a positive COVID-19 result up to and including the 24th December, please telephone the main reception on 0191 5111600 between 10:00am and 11:00am.

Again, thank you for your support in helping us keep the Academy safe and as normal as possible. I wish you all a peaceful festive time and a very happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,



Miss K. Morris
Headteacher