

July 2024

Dear Families

This has been an extraordinary year for our Trust, and I want to thank you for your unwavering support of our staff and the encouragement you've given your children. Reflecting on my long career, I can confidently say that this has been one of the best years that I can remember. Both staff and students have been fantastic, and your support has been incredible. As we near the end of this academic year and look forward to September, there are a few important things to discuss.

First and foremost, it is crucial for all students to attend school regularly. This has become even more important after the disruptions caused by Covid. Starting in September, we will be implementing new processes to better support our students. This includes hiring additional staff to help with attendance tracking, first-day calls, and, when necessary, working with external agencies.

Supporting our children as they progress in their school careers is our top priority. Taking holidays during school time is a national issue that negatively affects students' grades. This practice needs to stop to ensure our students do not fall behind. The Department for Education is introducing new guidelines on school attendance and issuing penalty notices for absences. We are legally required to follow this legislation, which takes effect on August 19, 2024, it will ensure consistent use of penalty notices across England. If you haven't already been updated on this by your school, they will be writing shortly.

While most changes post-Covid have been positive, we have noticed an increase in instances where our staff have experienced rudeness and aggressive behaviour toward them from some family members. This is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. We are now working with the local authority and the police to ensure these incidents are reported and followed up. Such incidents, though rare, cause significant distress to our staff. We understand that some processes can be frustrating, but our staff are here to help and need your support. Our Trust has always taken pride in listening to you, solving any problems, and ensuring that our young people are given the best opportunities that life can afford them. Please work with us so we can continue this good work.

As we return to the basics of school life in September, it's important for all students to adhere to school uniform policies, maintain excellent attendance and punctuality, and exhibit appropriate behaviour. I want our students to be proud to be part of the Shireland Trust. I certainly am! We are a growing group of schools across the Black Country brought together by common values and a sense of geographical belonging. As I write this letter, on Black Country Day - July 14th - I am reminded that we are proud of who we are, and we hold our heads high. This is all I expect from our young people, and I know that you'll support me in this when they return in September for the new academic year.

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Our staff and I care deeply about our students, and the best way to support their progress is to work with us on ensuring we all try and get the very best outcomes for them.

Thank you for your continued support. Have a wonderful summer break, and we look forward to seeing everyone back in September.

Sir Mark Grundy
CEO
Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust

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