

September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Welcome to the new academic year**

I hope you have had an enjoyable summer. It has been really pleasing to see pupils back in school this week looking smart and ready to learn. We believe that a partnership between school and home is vital in providing pupils with the very best learning experiences, so we are looking forward to working with you this year. This letter details some important pieces of information for the start of this academic year.

### **Introducing our Heads of Year and the Pastoral Team:**

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Head of Year</b>	<b>Pastoral Support</b>	<b>Head of Key Stage</b>
7	Ms Bradshaw	Ms Cox	Mrs Wheeler
8	Mr Haynes		
9	Ms Richardson	Ms Pilgrim	Ms Morris
10	Ms Welch-Moore		
11	Ms Skett	Mrs Lewis	Mrs Pates
Post 16	Mr Pountney		

**Assistant Principal Pastoral Lead:** Mrs Israel

Your child's Head of Year will be a point of contact for support, encouraging positive choices and intentional excellence, supported by tutors, class teachers and the wider academy teams.

**Our Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Ms Cole

### **Student Expectations**

It is an academy priority to create a positive, respectful, and focused atmosphere conducive to learning and individual growth.

### **Rewards:**

Students are rewarded in a variety of ways to ensure that all students can access praise and recognition for their individual efforts. The main categories of rewards are attendance, character, and progress.

For attendance, there are weekly, half-termly, termly and annual rewards with a focus on students being present. Our 'In to Win' programme recognises the exceptional circumstances where absence cannot be avoided, however, encourages good and improved attendance for all. Medical evidence

often suggests that children can attend school with mild illnesses but if you are unsure, the NHS provide guidance here: [Link: Is my child too ill for school?](#)

Students with excellent or improved attendance will receive regular rewards and be entered into prize draws or, when combined with Grace Points, invited to exclusive events too.

Additionally, students are rewarded for showing good character in lessons and around the academy. Students can achieve gold stars for going above and beyond in the classroom, demonstrating their intentional excellence. The gold stars build over time to be used in the academy 'Grace Shop' for student-chosen reward items. Students are also recognised using our 'Character Cards' when they show excellent character around the academy; these cards give them entries into prize draws for bigger rewards and there are unlimited entries.

In addition, we recognise students' individual progress and efforts, whether it be through certificates in assemblies, trips, events, rewards items and vouchers or otherwise. Our rewards programme is vast and varied so that everyone can and will be rewarded.

### Grace Points / Stamp System:

Students who meet the expectations in a lesson will receive a subject stamp and 0 points – this demonstrates a positive lesson overall. Where students go above and beyond, they will receive a gold star and 1 positive point will be applied to the system. We encourage parents to check the student planner daily to celebrate these successes.

Where students' behaviour is not meeting expectations, teachers will apply the behaviour pathway and it could lead to negative behaviour points, detentions or removal from lessons.

We hope to see many students accessing positive subject stamps or gold stars.

### Uniform:

It has been fantastic to see so many students looking smart since their arrival last week. You can find our uniform policy on our website: <https://darlaston-graceacademy.org.uk/useful-info/uniform/>



#### Acceptable examples of plain black shoes and Trousers/Skirt:



Plain Black School Shoes



Tailored School Trousers



Skirt to the knee or below with black opaque tights



#### Not Acceptable Shoes and Trousers/Skirts



All black shoes only, no embellishments



Trainers are not acceptable in any form



No leggings or tight trousers, or jeans



No tight skirts and not acceptable if above the knee

## Our Grace Character Values

At Grace Academy Darlaston, ***our vision is to develop well educated, considerate and caring citizens with a strong sense of values who will succeed in and contribute to modern society.*** Our Personal Development and Character Curriculum is well embedded in all aspects of academy life, with an aim to ensure that our students know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive way.

Grace Academy has a unique Christian ethos based upon our **five shared values:**

- Grace
- Respect
- Integrity
- Potential
- Excellence.

We believe that all of our students and staff have the limitless potential to succeed; and with a positive attitude of mutual respect, genuine integrity and amazing grace, they can strive for intentional excellence. At Grace Academy our aim is for everyone to work together to demonstrate our Christian ethos through our shared values.

## Parking

Thank you for your support in keeping our car park and local area safe. We have a large car park on site but this can become very busy, therefore, if you are not able to access the car park and cannot walk or use public transport, we ask that you do not park on double yellow lines and are mindful of the local residents.

Please drive safely on the roads around the academy and be aware of young people and local residents crossing the roads. When turning into our car park, please be mindful that students will likely be crossing the vehicle entrance and exit as they walk to access the pedestrian gate.

## Parent Communications

One of our biggest forms of communication on a day-to-day basis is the student planner. You can see students' lesson stamps, attendance, homework and any detentions in their planner every day.

We will keep you up to date with key information through emails for the most part but you can also find updates on our website and social media platforms.

Website: <https://darlaston-graceacademy.org.uk/>

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/graceacademydarlaston/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/graceacademydarlaston/?locale=en_GB)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/graceacademydarlastongad/>

Twitter: <https://x.com/GADarlaston/>

Please note that our social media site's private/direct message are not monitored at all times and we would ask that you phone or email with any queries. Please also ensure we have up to date telephone numbers and contact details for telephone calls and emergencies in particular.

## Enrichment+

Please [click here](#) to see our wide-ranging Enrichment+ programme. Enrichment+ is our extra-curricular activities offer. All activities are free to students but some have limited spaces so students are encouraged to sign up with the lead member of staff as soon as they can. If you or your child have any queries, please email reception or the department/staff member directly.

### **Dates for your diary**

- **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September** – SEND Parents' Event
- **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September** – Late start for students
- **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September** – Open Evening (for current Year 6s) at 6pm
- **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October** – Year 11 Revision Workshops (during the school day)
- **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October** – SEND Parental Twilight Session
- **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October** – Year 11 Tutor Evening and Post 16 Open Evening
- **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> / Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>** – Year 11 Geography Fieldwork
- **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October** – academy closed for INSET

Please note, we have numerous internal events, workshops and activities for students throughout the term too.

**Half Term is from 28<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November, returning to the academy on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November.**

I am looking forward to the term ahead and working closely with you to ensure students at Grace Academy Darlaston thrive.

Yours faithfully



**Henry Holland**  
**Principal**