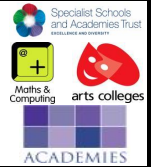




# Park Hall Academy

## Principal's End of Year Letter



Tuesday, 20 July 2010



Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s) & Students,

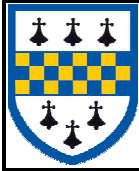
As I write this letter the sun is out, the sky is blue and the students are actively engaged in our end of term learning enrichment activities. This builds on another fantastic term which I hope you have already read about in the latest edition of Park Hall's *Chronicle* which was delivered by 'student post' earlier in the week. This shows some of the recent highlights of life at Park Hall which have culminated in our School Improvement Partner's report confirming that we have had another year of massive improvement. The report graded our care, guidance and support together with the ethos and atmosphere (including behaviour and student attitudes) in the Academy as "very good." We are all obviously delighted at receiving this positive judgement and it recognises the hard work and dedication that staff and students have put in to making Park Hall an even better place for our young people. We have now firmly crossed our fingers and hope that this positive view is reflected in the summer results.

This good news and the superb end of term activities is a lovely end to my first year as Principal at Park Hall. It has been a truly amazing year which I have thoroughly enjoyed. It has been full of hard work and has been a massive learning experience for me as I have begun to get to know the Park Hall community. This has been tremendously enjoyable, as has seeing the Academy further improve – which we look forward to continuing.

With all this in mind, my thoughts have already begun to turn to September and making sure that Park Hall offers an even better start to life for its students. We are currently developing a Shared Values and Rights and Responsibilities Statement for students, staff and parent(s)/carer(s). This work will be continued next year with everyone having a chance to contribute to defining exactly what we stand for at Park Hall. It is clear that we all share some core values of wanting the best possible education for our students. Putting it simply, this means our students turning up on time, being good and nice and working hard - as well as having fun in their learning.

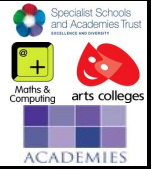
In order to encourage this as well as continuing to improve the quality of learning and teaching next year, along with the other North Solihull Secondary Schools we will be looking to support students to continue to develop good attendance and punctuality. **We have agreed that the minimum attendance figure for every student should be 94% during the next academic year.** This is because we know that if attendance falls below this figure (equivalent to half a day off per week), then student attainment and progress worsens in the vast majority of cases. Additionally, if students were to take this attendance pattern into their adult lives and work, we know that their employers would not take kindly to it! To promote this, we will write to the parent(s)/carers of all children, who fail to reach this modest benchmark, twice during the year. All secondary schools in North Solihull have set the same minimum standards for 2010-11. We have also agreed on a coordinated approach towards attendance in general and you should be receiving a letter from Local Authority's Senior Welfare Officer to explain this. The main features involve the following:

- Students who have **15 unauthorised absences (sessions, not days) in a 12 week period will be referred to the Education Welfare Service**, and the Education Welfare Officer will make contact with the families.
- We will support the **issuing of a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter to the parent(s)/carer(s) of students who have 20 unauthorised absences in a 12 week period.**
- We will support the serving of a **Fixed Penalty Fine to the parent(s)/carer(s) of students who have a further 5 unauthorised absences within an agreed period.**
- Holidays in term-time must be authorised by the Academy. If they aren't, they will count as unauthorised absences. **A 2-week holiday, that is unauthorised, counts as 20 sessions and will trigger a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter.** When deciding whether to authorise a holiday, along with all schools in North Solihull, we will use the official 'holiday calculator.' This allocates points on the basis of when the holiday is planned for; the student's attendance level; how close the proposed holiday is to end of Key Stage 3 or end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE) examinations; and whether holiday leave has already been taken in the current academic year. If a request has more than the baseline points then it will not be authorised. As such, we



# Park Hall Academy

## Principal's End of Year Letter



strongly urge parent(s)/carer(s) who are considering taking a holiday during term time to discuss this with us and complete the official holiday request forms before booking it.

- We will continue to hold formal 'late gates' and consequent sanctions to encourage students to turn up to the Academy on time.

You will also be aware that we have consulted widely on what our Academy Uniform will be from next year. In September we will have a uniform that marries the 'old with the new'. After the consultation with students, parent(s)/carer(s), staff and Governors we have designed a uniform that reflects the high standards of Park Hall whilst recognising that we have started a new journey as the Academy. Please see the separate document in this mailing about uniform for more details of this, but in the meantime I would like to remind you about the Academy's expectations towards uniform for the next academic year.

- A new style tie has been designed to be worn with the traditional shirt and blazer recognising each student's allegiance to the House that they belong to. We spent a long time discussing ideas with all parties and we now look forward to having a tie that each student will wear with pride.
- Students should wear **black shoes** (not boots, trainers or 'casual' footwear) with the new uniform. Parent(s)/Carer(s) who intend to buy new footwear over the holidays should ensure that it conforms with this expectation
- A new boys and girls PE kit has been designed which will be provided free of charge to all students at the Academy in September. We expect that all students will wear this in their PE lessons.
- We understand that many students wish to vary their appearance in the school holidays and we support this individuality. However, we do ask that they respect the uniform code upon their return. Hairstyles must not be extreme in style or colour. Colour must be of a natural tone. Braiding must not carry heavy beading. **Any piercings carried out throughout the holiday should be done at an early enough stage to be removed before the first day back. This includes all piercings other than a single pair of either sleepers or studs worn in the earlobe.**

We therefore expect each student to wear the uniform correctly and we ask that parent(s)/ carer(s) support us in this expectation. Students should be aware of the consequences of not wearing their uniform correctly. Next year will see a particular focus on this area as we are proud to be members of Park Hall Academy and as such, we expect our students to reflect the same level of pride. **Upon our return in September, any breaches of the uniform code may result in students giving up their social time, spending time in internal exclusion or being sent home to change.**

We know that the vast majority of parent(s)/carer(s) and students ensure that the basics of good attendance, punctuality and uniform are maintained and we hope that you can support us in making sure that this is the case for everyone. If you are experiencing problems in meeting these targets and expectations, then please contact your Head of House. They are there to help and if they cannot solve the problem with you, they will be able to put you in touch with someone who can!

As this letter goes to press, we are looking forward to the end of term Sport and Activity Day and hearing more about our Year 10s on their work experience programme. We hope that it will continue to be a fantastic last week of what has proven to be a superb year at Park Hall. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank the staff, the students and our parent(s)/carer(s) for their continued support in making Park Hall an ever better school and wish everyone a restful and enjoyable holiday period – we all deserve it! We look forward to seeing everyone again in September and remind you that students should return on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September (Year 7 & 12 at 8.50am and Years 8 to 11 and 13 at 11.10am) to begin what we hope will be another great Park Hall year.

Yours sincerely

Tony Morrison  
Principal