



DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL

An Aldridge Community Academy 

June 2019

Dear Parent/ Carer,

We are approaching the end of our final term in the academic year 2018/19.

I wrote to you earlier in the year to invite you to comment on proposed changes to the school day that we are considering for September 2019.

To reiterate, the proposed changes include a change to the structure of the school day:

School day 2019/20

8.45 – 9.10 Tutor time

9.10 – 10.10 Period 1

10.10 – 11.10 Period 2

11.10 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 12.30 Period 3

12.30 – 1.30 Period 4

1.30 – 2.15 Lunch (year 7 will be brought down at 1.25pm. A warning bell will sound at 2.10 and students will be expected to begin clearing at this point and moving to their last lesson. For Period 5 students and staff will be expected to be in lessons at 2.15pm)

2.15 – 3.15 Period 5

A number of parents responded and I have subsequently communicated with all of those parents, met with the school's parental forum and put the proposals to our LGC. The proposals have the backing of both of these groups and we will be implementing the new school day and the shift to a 2 year key stage 4 from September. We are confident that the new arrangements will enable us to carry on our journey of improvement and will enable us to provide students at Vale with a broad and balanced curriculum for longer.

Behaviour and attendance - we intend to raise the bar again in 2019/20 in terms of our expectations for student conduct, appearance and attendance and punctuality. Our behaviour policy is available for parents to view on the school website. A further letter and mini guide to behaviour at Darwen Vale will be sent out shortly to ensure that all parents and carers, and students are aware of our expectations for behaviour and attendance.

I would like to take the opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of the online tool; Class charts. We believe this has greatly improved communication between school and parents. Class charts is our vehicle for rewarding students, issuing sanctions and setting homework. If you haven't got the app yet or have any problems please contact school and speak to your Assistant Head of Year, or Mr Broderick for any technical issues.

In terms of attendance, we still need to see improvements for individuals and key groups. Attendance has improved from last year but it is still below national average and this is disappointing. Attendance is so important and perhaps the greatest influence on academic outcomes, even 95% attendance, a figure many might think is "good", actually means that the student has had 2 weeks absence from school.

Punctuality is equally important and the two go hand in hand. Next year any child who arrives at school after the register closes without good reason – this will be at 9.15am – will receive a U code. This is an unauthorised absence for the

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Darwen Vale High School is a member of the Aldridge Education family of schools.

Aldridge Education is registered in England & Wales number 05670663

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day. Any student who reaches 10 unauthorised sessions in a term, or 14 unauthorised sessions over 2 consecutive terms, is liable to receive a warning letter and subsequently a fixed penalty notice.

Finally, I wish to draw your attention to a number of changes in our uniform policy. Mr Smalley will go into more detail in his letter regarding behaviour but I would like to point out that from next year we have a new skirt that is compulsory. Our Darwen Vale skirt is available at Gray's (01254 51425), Whitaker's (01254 676047) or Snazzy's (01254 708245). When purchasing uniform the stockists staff will be aware of which skirt is the DVHS skirt. We have taken feedback from parents and students on this and the current skirt comes in a standard length. For some of our taller girls this can appear too short. The new skirt comes in three lengths and it is essential that you buy the correct length for your daughter. The skirt should be at knee length, and not under any circumstances be rolled up. Any student who is not wearing correct uniform will be sent home to change.

The run in to the Summer will see:

- The conclusion of the GCSE exam period on Monday 17th June. Year 11 will their prom on Friday 21st June
- Town sports day on 18th June
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award on the weekend of the 29th and 30th June
- Duke of Edinburgh Silver award on the weekend of the 14th July
- Induction days for our new year 7 students on the 3rd, 4th and 5th July with the induction evening for new parents taking place on the 3rd July. We have 210 year 7s joining us in year 7 in September. They will be our biggest year group and highlight our growing popularity as a result of the strides we are taking as a school.
- Summer dance performances will take place on the 10th and 11th July at 6.30 pm
- School sports day will take place on 12/07/19
- Activity day will be on the 18th July and students will be celebrating a successful year with visits to Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Alton Towers and Chester Zoo.

School will close to students at 12.10pm on Friday 19th July and will reopen at the usual time of 8.45am on Wednesday 4th September.

May I take this opportunity to express my hope that you have a great summer and look forward to seeing the students refreshed and ready to learn in September.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Little
Principal