



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne Academy

Information Pack – update for current parents

The information below is designed to serve as a reminder of important items to be observed while your child attends QEGS, and as a form of reference.

Attendance

It is clearly in the best interests of every student that they attend the academy regularly and hence we have a very high expectation of students' rate of attendance. It is a parental responsibility to ensure that students are at the academy on time, properly dressed, with the correct equipment and in a fit condition to learn. However, there may be very good reasons why your child cannot attend and we would ask you to inform us immediately should this situation arise.

If your son or daughter is ill, you are asked to contact the academy by phone, but also to provide a note when they return. Provided that the reason for absence falls within the regulations set down by the Department for Education, the absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. Absence that falls outside these regulations, or is not supported by a note, is deemed to be 'unauthorised' and will be recorded as such.

If an illness is likely to involve an absence for a more prolonged period, then you are at liberty to ask for work to be sent home. This is especially important in years of major public examinations. For such students every effort will be made to help them catch up on work missed.

The Department for Education have made amendments to the regulations with regard to school attendance. Previously, Headteachers were allowed to grant leave of absence during term time of up to 10 school days if the leave of absence application met the criteria set out by the Department for Education.

Since 1st September 2013, this has no longer been the case. Under new regulations, schools and academies are no longer allowed to authorise leave of absence for family holidays. **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for students during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

If you do need to apply for an exceptional leave of absence for your child during term time, please use the Leave of Absence Request Form. A copy of this form can be downloaded from our website (go to the "Parents" tab on the home page and click on "Letters & Forms" in the drop down menu). Please ensure that these forms are completed and handed in to Student Services AT LEAST two weeks before the date of the absence.

Any leave of absence taken without authorisation will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may be referred to Derbyshire's Education Welfare Service.

Overall, attendance at the academy is very good and we aim to work with all parents to ensure that it remains consistently high. Please be aware that rates of attendance are automatically requested by all potential employers and Further Education providers.

Academy Uniform

The uniform is available to purchase on-line: www.trutexmeir.com. Our uniform supplier also runs a mobile uniform shop, which is set up in the dining hall. Details of these visits, when organised, will be published on our website.

The overall standard of uniform remains very good. As ever, there are students who seek ways around our regulations. With that in mind, you will find an academy uniform list below. May we draw to your attention the following important considerations:

- 'Hoodies' should not be worn under an academy blazer.
- Visible body piercing, other than one stud in each ear, is not permitted. If your child wishes to have other piercings, please ensure that they are done at the start of the summer holiday, so that they are not worn at the academy.
- Extreme hairstyles and hair colours should be avoided.
- Black shoes of a plain style with low heels must be worn. No trainers, pumps, sandals or boots are permitted.
- All students must wear their House Tie.

Our uniform is an important part of the ethos of the academy and we depend upon parental support in this matter.

As we are now an academy, the decision on uniform now rests with our Governing Body, rather than with Derbyshire County Council. Governors have decided that this academy shall have a uniform which all students wear. It is designed to be sensible, free from extremes of variability of fashion, and reasonably priced, to suit the circumstances of every child. It is appropriate to the academy environment to be able easily to identify all students within the academy.

We encourage our students to take a pride in their appearance and to avoid extravagant, conspicuous or unusual hairstyles. Make-up is not appropriate. For security and safety reasons, we do not permit the wearing of jewellery, except for a single stud in each ear in the case of pierced ears. All other forms of visible body piercing are not permitted. Badges, other than those awarded by the academy, may not be worn in academy time. It is not permissible for students to substitute an outdoor or casual coat for a blazer for indoor wear at any time of the year. Outdoor clothes should be plain, warm and weatherproof.

Boys Uniform

Grey jacket with academy badge

Black trousers (black jeans are not allowed)

White shirt

House tie

Black v-neck sweater (optional) with academy badge

Black leather type shoes. No trainers, pumps, sandals or boots

Socks should be plain black or grey

A plain, warm, weather-proof outdoor coat (no hoodies)

For PE - black shorts, outdoor reversible games top, akoo polo shirt and sector hoodie. For health & safety reasons, a gum shield and shin pads must also be purchased. All sportswear except socks will incorporate the academy badge.

Girls Uniform

Grey jacket with academy badge

Black straight knee-length skirt (no pleats)

Black straight trousers (black jeans are not allowed)

White shirt

House tie

Black v-neck sweater (optional) with academy badge. No cardigans.

Black shoes of a plain style with low heels. No trainers, pumps, sandals or boots

Black tights, or black or grey socks

A plain, warm, weather-proof outdoor coat (no hoodies).

For PE - black court skort, akoo polo shirt and sector hoodie. For health & safety reasons, a gum shield and shin pads must also be purchased. All sportswear except socks will incorporate the academy badge.

Hairstyles: No extreme hairstyles. Hair must not be cut too short, or cut with tramlines or patterns. Heads must not be shaved either fully or in part. In certain lessons, long hair must be tied back for safety reasons. Dyed hair - only full head or highlights in **natural** hair colours. No blocks of colour.

Make-Up: Make-up and nail varnish should be discreet.

Jewellery: No jewellery except for one plain stud in the lobe of each ear, in the case of pierced ears. NO other piercings are allowed. A wrist watch may be worn.

School Bags: Bags should be practical and large enough to hold an A4 folder. No handbags.

Equipment: Pen (black or blue ink), pencil, eraser, ruler, scientific calculator, protractor, pair of compasses. Aprons for practical subjects are available to hire or purchase from the relevant department. Small earphones (such as those that come with mobile phones) for plugging into a PC to access video/audio tutorials, listening work in Music/MFL, etc are recommended.

ALL clothing must be clearly marked with the student's name.

Although the PE hoodie may not be worn generally around the academy, it may be worn during residential trips.

We firmly believe a smart and appropriate uniform improves the discipline and reputation of the academy and we hope to receive your full support in maintaining the academy's expectations with regard to uniform.

Student Access Cards

Our students are issued with their own access card, to enable them to gain access through the doors around the academy, as well as to operate the photocopiers. There is no charge for the first issue of this card. However, all lost or damaged cards will incur a charge of **£5** for each replacement.

Relationships and Sex Education

Government legislation on the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in schools and academies has given parents the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme, except that which is part of the National Curriculum for Science. This right has been operative from September 1994. **If you do wish to withdraw your child from the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education, please contact your child's Student Progress Leader.**

Relationships and Sex Education Policy is drafted in a manner that encourages "young people to have regard for moral considerations and the value of family life". It also emphasises each individual's responsibility and the need for respect and tolerance within relationships. The Relationships and Sex Education Policy is available on request for parents to read.

Whilst in Science it is compulsory to teach the biological aspects of reproduction as a part of the National Curriculum, there is a much wider scope for Relationships and Sex Education within the Wellbeing Programme of the academy. Areas where there is a right of withdrawal are shown in bold.

All Years consider:

- Developing an awareness of positive character traits such as confidence, self-esteem, respect, and tolerance for others.
- British values, and those of others, in relation to Relationships and Sex Education. With each year exploring these in different contexts.
- Bullying.

In addition:

Year 7

- Addressing bullying as an issue in a new school/academy.
- Exploring British Values with regard to how we treat ourselves and each other [including considering prejudice and discrimination].

Year 8

- Considering some of the complexities of developing positive friendships.
- The importance of emotional awareness in relationships.
- Thinking around loss and bereavement, handling being alone.
- Exploring British Values and parenting.
- Puberty, growth, changes in the body, body image.
- Intimacy and varying forms and levels of relationship.
- Challenging unacceptable language and behaviours in relationships including dealing with homophobia, gang culture, and extremism].

Year 9

- Considering the importance of resilience.
- Thinking around mental wellbeing in the context of relationships.
- Methods of contraception [including the condom, pill, and morning after pill] and contra-infection [STIs, what they are and how to avoid them].
- Pressures in relationships and learning how to avoid negative situations in the context of sexual relationships. Abstinence.
- Introduction to agencies, eg: GP, Family Planning Clinics, STI clinics and their varying roles.
- Sex and the Law.
- Individual responsibility for decision making about sexual behaviours.

Year 10

- The importance of qualities such as kindness and love in relationships.

- Methods for preventing exploitation in a range of circumstances, including sexual exploitation and forced marriage.
- A detailed study on HIV/AIDs in relation to individual and societal concerns.
- Stress management as a means to improving relationships.

Year 11

- A more detailed study on the importance of being able to handle being alone. Stillness.
- The impact of excess and negative emotions on relationships [including a consideration of the effects of pornography].
- Love and care in family relationships [with a focus on parenting].
- Agencies [as in Year 9].

Homework

Our Homework Policy was implemented in September 2013, after being reviewed by the Governing Body.

This policy sets out clearly the responsibilities of teaching staff, students and parents. The policy itself can be found on the academy website and homework duration guidelines are shown below. This table explains how much homework your child can be expected to receive from each subject on a weekly basis. Please remember that the timetable is set over a two week period and so some homework tasks will be set to cover the maximum allowance over a fortnight.

If you have any queries regarding this policy, please contact the appropriate Progress Leader or Faculty Leader.

Homework Duration Guidance:

Key Stage 3

Year 7		Year 8		Year 9	
Subject	Homework	Subject	Homework	Subject	Homework
English	60 mins	English	60 mins	English	90 mins
Maths	30 mins	Maths	60 to 90 mins	Maths	30 to 60 mins
Science	30 mins	Science	30 mins	Science	60 to 120 mins
Technology	30 mins	Technology	30 mins	Technology	30 mins
ICT	30 mins	ICT	30 mins	ICT	30 mins
RS	30 mins	RS	30 mins	RS	30 mins
Art	30 mins	Art	30 mins	Art	30 mins
Geography	30 mins	Geography	30 mins	Geography	30 mins
History	30 mins	History	30 mins	History	30 mins
Single Language	30 mins	Single Language	30 mins	Single Language	30 mins
Dual Language	60 mins	Dual Language	60 mins	Dual Language	60 mins
Music	none	Music	30 mins	Music	30 mins
Dance/Drama	none	Dance/Drama	none	Dance/Drama	none
Weekly Total	390 mins	Weekly Total	450 to 480 minutes max	Weekly Total	480 to 570 minutes max

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, particularly in Year 11, some of the time allocated for homework will be used for self-supported study.

Year 10		Year 11	
Subject	Homework	Subject	Homework
English	120 mins	English	240 mins
Maths	Up to 60 mins	Maths	Up to 60 mins
Science	Up to 180 mins	Science	Up to 180 mins
RS	30 mins	RS	30 mins
Optional Courses	90 mins x 4	Optional Courses	60 to 150 mins x 4
Weekly Total	Up to 750 minutes max	Weekly Total	Up to 1110 minutes max

Faculty Leaders will help ensure subject work demands, in particular Centre Assessed Units, are carefully calendared, to ensure that student workloads are manageable and subject conflicts are minimised.

Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, the time allocated for homework will also include self-supported study and, where possible, supervised study time.

Year 12: 240 minutes per week, per course. Total (based on 4xAS courses): 960 minutes (**16 hours**)

Year 13: 300 minutes per week, per course. Total (based on either 3 or 4 A2 courses): 900 to 1200 minutes (**15-20 hours**)

Mobile Technology

We encourage the use of mobile technologies as an aid to teaching and learning. Feedback suggests that they can be very useful for access to the internet for research purposes, assessment for learning, and a range of other interactive activities. In lessons where mobile technology has been used, the teachers have made it explicit to the students that they can only use the device as directed. So far comments from staff and students have been very positive about their use.

Following a successful trial period, we now encourage the use of mobile devices in lessons at QEGS where staff decide it will benefit student learning. We aim to use software and applications that are freely available via the Internet and are not platform specific. Students will be allowed to use their phones, tablets and any other similar devices to enhance learning in the classroom. There will be strict rules on the usage in lessons, with the emphasis on the individual teacher instructing when it is appropriate to use the device. It is important to make clear, therefore, that if a student does not follow instructions on usage, they will be asked to turn the device off and work without it.

The QEGS Wi-Fi provides filtered access to the Internet, allowing a great range of learning activities, including internet research, e-mail, surveys and additional dynamic activities. As part of the QEGS community, all students are given their own email account and suite of online office applications free via Microsoft Office 365 and are encouraged to use them in their school work. They will receive an introduction to these packages in their Computing lessons in September 2015. Please note that there is no requirement to bring a mobile device to the academy and, as with any device brought

into QEGS, we cannot be held responsible for breakages, theft or losses. We would, therefore, advise that you investigate insuring devices against such losses or damage.

When students are not under direct instruction from a member of staff, they must keep mobile phones/electronic devices in a bag or pocket to avoid confiscation. In an emergency situation, and if directed to do so by a member of staff, students may call parents from Student Services and should not use their own mobile phone. If a phone or electronic device is seen by a member of staff, it will be confiscated and taken to Student Services for collection at 3.55pm. During each term, if students are seen using a mobile phone/electronic device without permission on more than one occasion, it will be placed in the safe at Student Services for collection by parents at their earliest convenience.

Public Examination Rules

For those students sitting public examinations, the policy on mobile devices published by the Joint Council for Qualifications is very clear. No mobile phones, iPods, mp3/4 players, products with an electronic communication/storage device or digital facility, are allowed in the examination room. The possession of unauthorised items is an infringement of regulations and could result in disqualification. Candidates are advised that any electronic device, whether they intend to use it or not, should not be in their possession during a public exam.

Thank you for your co-operation with regard to mobile technology in the academy.

Communications Protocol

We are continually striving to develop and improve **how** and **what** we communicate with parents, carers and the wider community.

At present we have a range of methods to hand and we convey certain information in particular ways. We are also reviewing and trialling new methods of communication. The table below provides a helpful summary of what you can expect to receive and how the information will be communicated in 2015-16:

Mode / Method & Purpose	Detail and examples	Additional Information
<p>Groupcall Email</p> <p>Detailed Information</p> <p>Copy to Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to whole parent body or particular year groups • Emails to parents and/or students direct • Attachments can include letters and reply slips • Reminders for exams and revision sessions • Short-notice information (weather, academy closures, late buses) 	<p>We have 92% of parent email addresses. We are increasingly finding that, for speed, convenience and reliability, parents welcome information being sent to their 'Inbox'. This is clearly a more sustainable way to send letters home too. Please ensure that we have the correct and preferred email addresses.</p>
<p>Groupcall Text Message</p> <p>Urgent Message</p> <p>Reminders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminders for exams and revision sessions • Short-notice information (weather, academy closures, late buses) 	<p>For concise reminder and short-notice information, we find the text message service very effective. Please ensure that we have the correct mobile numbers for parents and carers.</p>

<p>NEW QEGS Twitter</p> <p>Publicise & Promote Events & Successes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to useful websites and opportunities for students/parents • Reminder information • Success stories and achievements 	<p>We are in the very early stages of investigating and testing the value and function of Twitter for the academy.</p>
<p>Website Information Portal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles and newsletters • Academy Information • Student access to academy-based resources 'Intranet' • Copies of 'whole academy' letters • Academy Calendar • Exam and Revision Calendars 	<p>All whole academy or whole year group letters sent home by QEGS are uploaded onto the academy website. In addition to essential academy policies, there are also useful links to associated services, newsletters, news articles, access to the appointment making tool for Parents' Consultations, and the online homework diary.</p>
<p>Direct Email</p> <p>Communicate with individual Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual staff and parent communication 	<p>Staff and/or parents may prefer to communicate with individuals via email. We hope to acknowledge all email queries within 48 hours (this may extend during the holiday periods).</p>
<p>Telephone</p> <p>To speak to Pastoral Team & Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual staff and parent communication • Absence monitoring 	<p>All subject departments and pastoral teams have a telephone extension and answerphone service. Reception will transfer calls to the relevant areas. We hope to acknowledge all telephone queries within 48hrs (in term time).</p>
<p>Face to Face Discussions & Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' Consultations • Review Days • Yr 5 and Yr 6 Open Evening • Yr 9 Options Evening • Yr 11 Sixth Form Evening 	<p>Face-to-face meetings and discussions are crucial and attendance by parents and students is vital.</p>
<p>Surveys & Feedback</p> <p>To help inform our development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Evaluations • Student Surveys • Parent Surveys 	<p>This is an area which has really grown. We will be continuously asking for feedback on specific developments and issues applicable in each academic year. We always need high levels of participation for the information to be reliable.</p>
<p>Hard Copies of Letters</p> <p>(In conjunction with website & Groupcall attachments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental information: trips, events, study classes • Termly reviews and important messages from Headteacher • Revision timetables • Exam Timetables 	<p>We are aiming to cease sending hard copies of letters home with students and instead will make more use of the Groupcall email functionality. Each whole academy letter is also available via the website. Text message reminders may at times be used to follow up a letter. If a hard copy letter is preferred, please inform us via your child's Progress Leader.</p>

<p>Planners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student’s notes for recording of homework • Form Tutor and Subject staff messages • Academy Information 	<p>Please regularly check your child’s planner and use as a method to communicate with staff via written notes. The planner has lots of useful information and resource pages for each subject.</p>
<p>Student Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current working at grades/points and target grades/points • Aspects of learning descriptors • Written comments (depending on report) • Exam Results and forthcoming examinations 	<p>Interim reports (grades/points and descriptors) are issued at various times of the year. Written reports are issued at a relevant point within a Key Stage. Year 10 and 11 external examination results are now issued with student reports, along with details of forthcoming examination entries.</p>
<p>Written and oral Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will receive written and oral feedback that provides them with specific “next steps”, ie: how to improve their work, every three weeks (or subject equivalent) • Student work will be formally assessed using points/levels/grades at least once per half term 	<p>Students will receive regular feedback which will clearly identify how they can improve their work, and time in lessons will be given so that students can act on this. Teacher feedback will be written in green. Self and peer assessment comments, and work improved as a result of feedback, will be written in red.</p>
<p>Online Homework Diary</p> <p>For parents & students to access homework details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff in all subjects will record homework via the ‘online’ function 	<p>Parents and students can subscribe and will receive email reminders of deadlines and details to ensure homework can be completed on time and in good detail.</p>

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers and we appreciate that effective communication is a crucial factor in ensuring our students achieve their best and are safe and happy at QEGS. We will work continually on this aim and look forward to receiving your support.

Thank you in anticipation of your future support.