



Thornhill Academy

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

Dear Parent/Carer ,

In September I will be joining Thornhill Academy as head teacher whilst the Trust appoints a replacement for Mr Redford. I have for a few years worked closely with Mr Redford as a fellow head teacher within our fantastic Academy Trust, I am honoured to be asked to support and lead Thornhill Academy in the coming months and I am very much looking forward to working with you and your child and supporting the school with its school improvement journey.

There are a number of things I feel you need to be fully aware of before we return to school in September. I apologise for the length of this letter, but I feel it is really important to share this information with you. A copy of this letter will be on the school website for you to reference in the coming weeks leading up to our return to school in September.

Any parents or carers who would like to come into school to meet with myself or Mr Inman, our Trust Director of Education in person, in the new school year, should contact the school office during the first week back in September, to arrange a mutually convenient appointment time.

SEND

Mrs Neeson will be holding a meeting on the evening of 23rd September, to discuss our vision for students with SEND moving forward. Further details of this will be shared with parents in September.

Changes to the Pastoral system

September will see a significant change within our pastoral support systems. This will involve moving from a pastoral house system which consisted of three houses lead by teaching members of staff, to a year group system with 5 distinct year groups, each with their own non-teaching Head of Year. This will add significant capacity in terms of pastoral support and will mean a greater accessibility for parents and students to these key pastoral leaders during the course of the day, something which is clearly limited when these roles are filled by teaching members of staff who have curriculum commitments. In addition, we believe that teaching staff should be able to fully focus on teaching and learning. When pastoral roles are fulfilled by teaching members of staff it reduces not just the time they can devote to teaching and learning, but also the time they are available to do this. We feel that their expertise should be used to fully focus on the best academic outcomes of students.

As previously, your child's form tutors will remain their number one point of call on a daily basis and they will remain with them throughout their time with us. Students will meet their new Head of Year in assemblies during the first day back in September.



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Uniform

We will again be closely focussing on the standard of uniform. The pandemic led to us softening our approach to this, but we feel that it is important at the start of the new academic year to return to our previous standards with regards to this. It is therefore vital that all pupils have full school uniform, including correct school shoes ready for the start of the new term.

Can I therefore request that you ensure your child is dressed in accordance with the **uniform policy which can be found on our website, click [here](#).**

Our school uniform suppliers (The School Outfit - Little Gems) have informed us that they are well stocked and can take orders over the internet and the telephone. All orders can then be either picked up by appointment or delivered.

Please note that as we change from House Groups to Year Groups it no longer matters which coloured blazer badge you purchase. These will gradually be phased out as we move to our new branding in September 2022. Please be assured that as this happens your child's existing uniform will continue to be acceptable, we do not wish families to face unnecessary financial burdens. Newly branded uniform will only be required as your child grows out of the uniform they have.

If you have any uniform which your family no longer requires, please feel free to send it into our reception office, as we can always make use of it.

Start of the school year

We have already contacted you with regards to Covid testing arrangements for the start of the academic year. If you have not previously given consent for testing of your child and would like to consent to this, please use the link below.

[Thornhill Academy - NHS Test & Trace consent form for COVID-19 testing](#)

You will be sent the date and time we need your child to attend school for this testing towards the middle of August. Following the first set of Covid testing, students will return to school for the academic year 2021/22 at the following times:

- Year 7 – Wednesday 8th September at 8.40am
- Year 11 – Wednesday 8th September at 10.00am
- Years 8 – 10 – Thursday 9th September at 8.40am.

The second set of Covid testing will be done on the day your child returns to school only if you have given consent for this. Please refer to the Covid letter previously sent out on our website for further information, this can be found [here](#).

It is essential that pupils arrive promptly to school and absence is rare, so that we can maximise the learning time of all students in school.

Timing of the school day

Unless further Covid restrictions dictate otherwise, from September 2021, we will revert to a school day of 8.40am – 2.45pm for all students.



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Staffing

There will be a number of changes to staffing over the summer. Those staff who will not be rejoining us in September, we wish them well in whatever they move onto and we hope that they will remember Thornhill Academy and its staff and students with fondness and good memories. For those staff joining us, we are very much looking forward to the skill sets and previous experience they bring which will no doubt enrich our school and support our journey of school improvement. Details of the full staff changes can be found on the school website.

Assessment

At the end of the last academic year, you will have received a report which contained information about your child's progress in terms of their attitude to learning. In addition, Key Stage 4 pupils were given an indication of their current GCSE grade based upon the content of the course completed to date. We appreciate that this may have given you a limited picture of the progress of your child. Various assessments have taken place across subjects in both Key Stage 3 and 4 to ensure teachers know how best to support pupils. Please be assured that much is being done to ensure all students' gaps in knowledge due to the pandemic are being bridged, this will be a prime focus in the new school year.

ParentPay

For September we are introducing a more convenient way to pay for school meals, trips, after school clubs and much more online, using a secure service called ParentPay. We encourage all families to sign up to ParentPay using the activation details shared in the letter issued in July. From September there will be minimal opportunity for students to use cash as we move towards making the school a cash-free environment. Please see the ParentPay section of our website for more details.

As a school, we are very much looking forward to working with our entire school community on our return in September. May I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer.

Kind regards

Sue Hamilton
Head Teacher