

The Harefield Academy

Achievement through Active Learning

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Headteacher: Tash Moriarty BA PGCE



3rd April 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you are all looking forward to the Easter break and hopefully some sunny spring weather! Students finish school on Thursday 4th April at 3pm and return on Tuesday 23rd April for a normal 8.45am start.

We have had a very busy and highly positive term at The Harefield Academy during which time we have had so many wonderful achievements to celebrate. Our Presentation Evening continues to be a rewarding and memorable evening through which we are reminded of the many incredible achievements of our talented and values driven students. We have continued to celebrate this success at the Jack Petchey Awards evening where our students and staff were acknowledged for their wonderful contributions to school life. During both of these events it was also wonderful to see our confident students performing so beautifully and providing the entertainment through dance and music.

We are very proud of the success of our Year 11 football team who progressed to the English Schools' Football Association semi-final narrowly missing out on a place in the final.

It has been wonderful to see such positive engagement in the auditions for our forthcoming school production and we hope to welcome as many of you as possible to enjoy 'The Greatest Showman Revisited' in the summer term.

We have recently enjoyed a number of additional transition events as we welcome new families to our community who will join us in September, either in Year 7 or Year 12. It is wonderful to see so many new families from both Harefield and beyond reporting such excitement about the start of their journey in our fantastic school community.

We have seen a great response to Attendance Rewards Week across The Academy this week. In addition to this and the year group attendance competitions that are running, more students than ever are being rewarded for Improved Attendance on Class Charts. Please be reminded that improving attendance is a whole school priority and full information on the expected standard of sustaining 97% attendance for all students can be found on the Attendance Policy on the website. To avoid disappointment, please refer to the guidance in this policy on why approval for holidays in term time will be declined and the need for attendance to be on or above the 97% threshold for us to approve sporting or filming activities.

Due to the overwhelmingly positive student response to Double Rewards Week in January and as a result of student feedback, we are now holding this once a term. The Double Rewards Week for the summer term is in the week commencing 29th April; please do encourage your child to take up this opportunity to double their Class Charts merits!

The summer term is always very busy with our Years 11 and 13 students finally reaching the stage where their hard work is put to the test in the exam season. We are delighted to see such exceptionally positive

outcomes being predicted by teachers and hope very much that our students can mirror this success in their final exams. Year 11 students will be expected to be in school full time until Friday 24th May. After the half-term break lessons will continue and students are very welcome to come in to all timetabled lessons. However, as many subjects will have finished their exams, students can just come in for their scheduled exams. We have an exciting leaver's assembly planned on Thursday 23rd May at 13:30 where the students will have the opportunity to celebrate their time in Key Stage Three and Four at The Harefield Academy. After this event there will be time for students to get their shirts signed and sign any leaver's books. However, as students are required to wear full school uniform for exams (without writing on) we would advise students to bring old shirts. **All Year 11's are expected to be in school as normal on Friday 24th May.**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents and carers of the extensive revision and intervention programme available over the Easter holidays and beyond for Years 10-13 and would encourage you to promote full attendance at these key classes. We are very lucky to have such dedicated staff willing to support the students' ongoing revision in the holidays and would advocate taking full advantage.

Please find a copy of the programme for Easter and the remainder of the year on the school website in the Extended Learning Programme section under the Learning & Curriculum tab. The sessions will allow students to get ahead with their learning and help to prepare them for the up and coming exams through a wide range of activities with sessions focusing on improving students subject knowledge and examination technique. Students should be reminded of the need to schedule their revision so that they are managing their time effectively and balancing the necessary hard work that is needed to be successful with good sleep patterns, healthy eating and family time.

The following links may be of use in supporting your child to manage exam stress effectively:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-exam-time/?mc_cid=9a9a546e44&mc_eid=938d027e5f

In addition to fantastic improvements in exam results that we expect to see this summer, I am delighted to also report that we have seen a significant reduction in the overall incidents of negative behaviours and exclusions in our school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support working in partnership with us to see such a tremendous transformation and hope that we can continue to work together so effectively to raise the bar further. Unfortunately, the area where improvements have been less positive is in mobile phone use in school. We have had a recent spike in sanctions for students having phones out during the school day. Linking to our whole school priorities of safeguarding and high expectations of attitudes to learning, we have a no mobile phone policy in school. The Ladder of Consequence details 'use of/or visible mobile phone or headphones' as a C3 sanction and it is our policy for staff to confiscate mobile phones or headphones if seen in school. Where a student has one of these items confiscated they will be taken to reception and locked away for safe keeping and a parent/carer will be contacted to collect from reception. If students do not comply with this, in line with the system, the non-compliance will be addressed as a C5-6 sanction. Students all have access to their own locker, where such possessions should be locked away at the start of the day. Please speak with your child and encourage them to use this facility, or keep mobile phones turned off in a bag until the end of the school day.

As we look forward to rising temperatures in the summer term, please be advised that non-blazer days will be advertised to students in Tutor Time and via the plasma screens around the school building in

the morning. Unless this information is provided, students should continue to wear their blazers around the school building. We have decided that, apart from those students taking part in internal and external exams, blazers will not be a compulsory part of the uniform in the final half-term of each year, from May half-term. At times where blazers are not a compulsory part of the school uniform, students must ensure that expectations are upheld in relation to all other aspects of uniform and equipment, which includes lanyards.

Please be reminded that to avoid interruptions to learning, students are not permitted to leave the room during lessons to get water (unless they have a medical pass). Please encourage your child to bring a refillable bottle to school, that they can fill up with water before school and at break/lunch time, so that they can keep hydrated throughout the day.

You will know from previous communications that we have spent a considerable time investing in plans to join a Multi Academy Trust. I would like to thank you for your patience in this matter during which time it has been difficult to provide updates in the absence of surety. Our reasons for pursuing this pathway have been to ensure that as a small school we are well protected and supported, financially and educationally, by a larger Trust. Schools are no longer able to open as Single Academy Trusts as it is widely believed that working as part of a group of schools ensures a higher quality of collaboration and a sharing of key services. We have been in support of this direction of travel but equally have been steadfast in our resolve to ensure that the Trust we join is absolutely the right fit, enabling us to conduct our day to day business in the ways we recognise to be best for our students by facilitating additional layers of support and resources where they are most needed. Regrettably the first Trust we pursued did not measure up as the best fit and as such we have been well supported by the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner in steering towards a far more suitable Trust. I am delighted to report that this has now progressed swiftly and we intend to be a part of a very successful and established Trust in the early stages of the 2019/20 academic year. I will of course update you all with far more detail as this becomes appropriate.

In the meantime, thank you as always for your ongoing support and I wish you and your families a wonderful Easter break.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tash Moriarty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tash Moriarty
Headteacher