

The Harefield Academy

Achievement through Active Learning

Northwood Way, Harefield, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB9 6ET

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Headteacher: Tash Hurtado BA PGCE



Dear Parents/Carers,

Many thanks to all the parents who completed our parent survey, we really value your input and support. We look carefully at these questionnaires to help us to plan for a positive student experience at The Academy and to support us in making further improvements to our provision. With the move to Google forms we were able to gain feedback from four times as many parents/carers, giving us a much more reliable indicator of views. There will be another opportunity for you to complete the survey at the Academic Review Meetings later in the school year.

The information on computer access at home was useful. Where possible we have provided students who currently are unable to access a computer at home, with a reconditioned school laptop and where students do not have access to the Internet we have applied for a Wi-Fi dongle and supplied these to families. Should you not have computer access and you did not complete the survey, please get in touch with your child's Head of Year so that we can support students, in the event of a lock down or self-isolation due to Covid -19.

The wider survey feedback we received was very positive with 99% of parents/carers commenting that their Child feels safe at The Harefield Academy and over 92% of parents/carers positively supporting the view that:

- My child is happy at this school
- The school makes sure students are well behaved
- The school informs me about my child's progress
- The teaching is good at this school
- The School deals effectively with bullying
- When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly

A concern was raised by one parent about the shorter breaks and staggered start and end time to the school day. This has been necessary to support us with reopening to all students and to ensure that we comply with Covid safety and maximise the space at break and lunch so that year group bubbles are not mixing. This change to the school times is not fixed in this format and we will update you of any changes we can make to this to support families in future communications. Schools have had to address government guidelines in the way that works best in their context. We constantly liaise with all local schools to improve and ensure we have considered the full breadth of options available to us in meeting government criteria and keeping your children safe. Many schools are less fortunate in their options given they have more students and a smaller site. I am pleased to report that through our robust approach to managing risk, we have had no confirmed cases of Covid 19 in our school community since our return in September. We have therefore managed to avoid sending bubble home to self-isolate, minimising any further disruption to education. Whilst we appreciate there is some inevitability to the fact we may still see a confirmed case, our diligent



approach has ensured we have not seen the disruption so far evidenced in many other educational establishments.

A small number of parents were unsure of how we support student's wider development. Our careers program is comprehensive. Many Year 11 students have already had one to one meetings with the careers advisor, this will happen for all Year 11 students before February half term. Over the last academic year we were working to increase the number of trips available to all students. Due to the current Covid-19 situation a few trips have had to be cancelled or rescheduled but we certainly intend to reintroduce a range of enrichment trips as soon as restrictions allow. We are delighted to announce the start of the extra-curricular program. We still need to retain year group bubbles and as such you will see we have had to allocate certain clubs to certain year groups. These will vary throughout the year, and as soon as we are able to offer more, we will ensure that we do so. We will also have several Virtual clubs held on Google classroom to support more students being able to engage with the clubs. Please see the attached schedule which will start from the 12th October 2020.

A few parents were disappointed that we were not able to offer video lessons during lock down before the Summer. We unfortunately did not have the infrastructure to do this, with the sudden onset of Coronavirus and lockdown in March. Whilst we would have been able to implement Zoom classes, there were a significant number of safeguarding concerns raised about this via education forums. With the safety of all students our primary concern it would not have been appropriate to use this vehicle for delivering lessons in the absence of such assurances. Indeed, through the period of lockdown we are aware that such safeguarding concerns increased where this technology was being used for virtual teaching. The broad advice was that unless such technology had already been established in a school as part of its provision, it should not be introduced at haste when schools went into lockdown. We did, however, set to work immediately on exploring alternate technology to support virtual teaching for future use in the event of a second or partial lockdown and I am delighted to say that we are have trained all staff and addressed all safeguarding and security protocols ready to use Google Meet for virtual teaching should this become necessary.

In addition to the remote learning set through class charts, we did successfully re-open on rota basis for all students in Years 10 and 12 from early June in line with government recommendations. We also ran a successful summer catch up program for students in Years 8 – 11 for Maths and Food Technology. As you will have seen in the letter from Mrs. Williams, we have now set up and trained all staff and students on the use of Google classrooms. It is through this medium, that if a child is self-isolating due to Covid – 19 staff will set work for students and should there be a local lock down we will be able to offer video lessons through google meet. Further information on this will be shared with you over the next few weeks.

We are fortunate to have a strong teaching staff in all curriculum areas across the Academy and it was great to see that most parents agreed with that within the Survey. To consistently ensure that we have high quality teaching across the Academy we have a supportive observation and learning walk program where middle and senior leaders observe lessons to ensure that our high standards are replicated across the Academy and for all lessons. We also

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have a comprehensive CPD program to support staff in staying up to date with current educational changes and to consistently train staff on effective teaching and learning. Should you have any concerns about the teaching in any lessons please see the link [here](#) to our key staff list on the website who you can contact if you have any questions.

There were questions raised about our Special Educational Needs Department, which is led at the Academy by Mrs. Monaghan, Assistant Headteacher and Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator. Where students are identified as having a Special Educational Need they are supported by a range of approaches at The Academy. Our teaching strategy also routinely encompasses elements of the SCERTS program, (Social, Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support). This supports all students and is designed to develop student independence and remove barriers to learning. It has particular benefit to students with autistic spectrum disorder, social and emotional issues and those with speech, language, and communication needs. In addition to this all lessons are designed to be universally supportive of students with dyslexia. These two measures mean that many of our students with learning differences are automatically catered for in every lesson. To supplement this we have withdrawal lessons for; students where issues around literacy and numeracy require more bespoke input, students have English as an additional language, students need regular therapeutic input as directed by external providers such as the Speech and Language Therapist, Hearing Specialist Teacher, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist. Other students may be supported in their learning using assistive technology such as a laptop/Alphasmart or reading pen.

As per my letter sent out about target grades and Academic review meetings which you can access [here](#). We would like to invite parents in to meet with teachers in a socially distanced meeting, following all Covid Safe guidelines, if this is your individual preference. However, we will also be offering Google Meet appointments, for those parents who would prefer a virtual meeting. As such we would request your support in letting us know in advance which option you are likely to prefer so that we can plan for these evenings. We are planning the Academic Review meetings for the weeks shown below. Please can you follow this link <https://forms.gle/LiF8thobQdkCwuh69> and complete the Google form for your preference of a face to face meeting or virtual meeting. If you cannot access the Google form, please email your child's Head of Year who can update your preferences.

Many thanks again to all who have completed the survey. We are encouraged by the overwhelming positivity expressed and grateful for the many supportive comments from our parents/carers. Where we have received specific concerns or queries, we will be using this to continue to improve the educational provision that we offer to your children.

Yours sincerely

Helen Timmins
Deputy Headteacher