

15 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: A Welcome from Birmingham Ormiston Academy to new Year 10 students

I am writing to welcome you and your child to Birmingham Ormiston Academy. Firstly, I hope that I find you and your family members in good health.

Secondly, I am glad of the opportunity this letter affords me to introduce myself to you. At the beginning of my tenure as Principal of BOA, I had hoped to write to you all during more auspicious circumstances. It is customary, as an academic year reaches its end, to reflect on the successes of current students at the academy – from academic achievement to the many wonderful showcases that capture our learners’ talents – and I would normally pass on my sincerest congratulations via a newsletter. I would also be writing to parents and carers of students who are about to join BOA in years 10 and 12, with details of information evenings and ‘meet and greets’ in June. This year, however, the Covid-19 outbreak has cast a long shadow and we are all learning to adjust to life under incredibly unfamiliar and unsettling circumstances.

Considering the challenges we face, I am grateful for my history with the academy. Having worked as a founding member of the Senior Leadership Team at BOA before my departure in 2018, I am incredibly excited to return and have the opportunity to lead an institution that provides its students with so many outstanding opportunities, both academically and creatively. As I am confident in my knowledge and understanding of the curriculum on offer at BOA, as well as the policies and practices of the academy, I can turn my attention to the immediate needs of our stakeholders. As parents and carers, you will want assurances that any gaps in learning will be quickly addressed in order for your children to achieve pleasing outcomes. As students, your children will want assurances that we have their best interests at heart and that they will not be disadvantaged by the impact of Covid-19 on their education. In addition, your children will want their experiences at BOA to mirror their expectations. In September, we will work hard to re-establish our sense of community and to nurture the talents of our students, who will be given the opportunities they deserve to demonstrate both their academic and creative abilities.

Year 10 Baseline Assessment:

Each year, before our new Year 10 students start with us, we arrange a sequence of progress tests (by GL Assessment) in the core subjects: English, Mathematics and Science. These tests provide us with baseline data, which not only enables a smooth transition into the academy but also helps us to identify any learning gaps or needs. To ensure that each new student’s first encounter with BOA and its staff members is not solely a series of progress tests, we also include an introduction to their chosen arts pathway.

This year, it is not wise to hold the Year 10 Induction Day ahead of the summer break, as there are still so many *unknowns* regarding the opening of schools and academies to larger cohorts of students. Not only is the health and safety of our students of paramount importance, I am also keen for learners to have an excellent first impression of life at BOA. As a result, we will carry out the baseline assessments in the new academic year. To help us obtain an up-to-date picture of our new learners’ current levels

of progress, we would be grateful if you could send your child's most recent Year 9 report to our Admissions team: admissions@boa-academy.co.uk

Thank you for your assistance with this.

Arrangements for September 2020:

We have been busy with preparations for the new academic year and it is my fervent wish that BOA will be open to all students in September. As previously stated, I will ensure the wellbeing of your child is at the forefront of my decision making. The first official day for new Year 10 students is Monday 7th September 2020. Students should arrive at BOA by 8.50am for a 9.00am start (unless we receive any further directives from the Department for Education to operate a reduced academy day). We will also ensure that new Year 10 students are immersed in an exciting project during their first week and they will work alongside industry practitioners to prepare work for a showcase. Under normal circumstances, this showcase would take place in BOA Theatre on the Friday of the first week, with parents and carers invited to see their children's endeavours. Whereas this may be difficult to organise this year, due to the social distancing guidelines currently in place, we are committed to organising an engaging first week for your child. We have recently negotiated an exciting partnership with Birmingham Repertory Theatre, which is located in Centenary Square in the centre of Birmingham. We will have full use of their rehearsal spaces, the main stage and its 1000-seat auditorium. Not only will this partnership enable us to utilise additional spaces across the city centre – should rules regarding social distancing still be in place in September – but we will also be able to coordinate the new Year 10 showcase. If we are not able to invite parents and carers to the venue, we will ensure our Post-16 Broadcast students film and live-stream the event over social media.

We plan to make use of Birmingham Repertory Theatre throughout the Autumn term, which will offer many exciting opportunities to students at BOA. To maximise on space, we will also use the rehearsal rooms and main stage of The Old Repertory Theatre, which is located behind Grand Central in the city centre and is the Academy's second campus. As a result, if social distancing rules are still in place in September, I am confident that we will be able to accommodate our students and continue to offer enriching learning opportunities.

Summer projects:

In preparation for life at BOA, we will be publishing details of summer projects for new students to complete for their chosen arts pathway. Subject leaders are busy planning projects for new Year 10 and new Year 12 to complete ahead of their arrival at the Academy, and this work will either feed into the first term's work or be an excellent way for students to showcase their considerable talents. I look forward to not only sharing the stimuli for the summer projects with you but to viewing the submissions in September. I am confident this work will be both engaging and enriching, and will give all prospective students a 'taster' of the subject specialisms they have applied for at BOA. I will send out details in due course.

Uniform:

I am passing on information regarding the uniform our students are asked to wear when attending lessons on site at BOA. We outsource our uniform to Sportswear International Ltd and details of our uniform have been enclosed and can also be found on our website, using the following link:

<http://www.boa-academy.co.uk/page/?title=School+Uniform&pid=1072>

I have also enclosed a letter from Mr Pitt (Assistant Principal: Pastoral Care) that provides details of all compulsory uniform for students in Key Stage 4.

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 : @ImagineBOA

 : www.facebook.com/imagineBOA

Please note: We would prefer for parents and carers to arrange home delivery for all BOA uniform, rather than selecting the *school delivery* service.

In addition, I will ensure subject leaders (or directors, as they are known at BOA) of the arts pathway courses send out details of any specialist kit that students will be required to wear or use, particularly for the Musical Theatre and Dance pathways. The *Essential Kit Lists* will be sent out to you shortly.

Year 10 Options:

Thank you for such a speedy response to the *Year 10 GCSE Options* information that was sent out to you in May 2020. I am pleased to confirm we have received responses from all parents and their children. Mr Penn (Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards) has written to you separately to confirm your child's GCSE option choices.

The Academy Week:

Under normal circumstances, the timings of the Academy week are as follows:

Monday: 8.50am to 4.15pm
Tuesday: 8.50am to 4.15pm
Wednesday: 8.50am to 4.15pm
Thursday: 8.50am to 4.15pm
Friday: 8.50am to 2.00pm

We will write to you if – following any new directive from the Department for Education – we make any temporary changes to the timings of the Academy week.

And finally...

I apologise that my first communication with you has been rather detailed. I would like to end my letter by looking forward to the time when I can meet with you at the academy, to welcome you and your child to BOA. I will ensure that a 'meet and greet' event is arranged at the start of the new academic year - as long as it is safe to organise larger public gatherings, of course – as it is unlikely we will be able to meet ahead of the summer break. Until then, I wish you all well.

If you have any queries, please contact me on the email address at the bottom of this letter.

Yours truly,



Alistair Chattaway
Principal

Enc. BOA Uniform Letter 2020