

12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

I would like to update you on the staffing situation at Smestow School. As you know, there were some challenges for us earlier this year with a number of posts being vacant and us requiring the use of supply staff. We have been committed to a policy of only appointing good and outstanding staff, and a number of new teachers and support staff joined us after the Easter Holiday. I am delighted to hear students and staff talking so positively about their impact in school. Every day, students are sharing with me the fantastic lessons that they are having with all our staff. You will also be pleased to hear that we have been very successful and working hard to ensure we are fully staffed for September also so that next academic year gets off to a flying start!

You may be aware that Mrs Lawrence will be leaving Smestow School at the end of the academic year. Mrs Lawrence has been a highly dedicated and successful member of our team at Smestow for 4 years, first as Deputy Head teacher and then as Head of School. We are extremely grateful to Mrs Lawrence for the excellent hard work she has put into ensuring our students have the best possible education, I know she will be sadly missed.

The Governors and Academy Trust have appointed our new Head of School who will take up post from 1st September 2019. Mr James Till is a very experienced senior leader who has worked for much of his career in good/outstanding schools. He has a very clear vision for Smestow to rapidly become an outstanding school and the pedigree to be able to lead us to achieving this. Over the course of the last few weeks of term, Mr Till will be in school meeting staff and students ready to begin with us at the start of the next academic year.

On another note, we would like to consult you on a couple of proposals for next academic year. Please find below information regarding two consultations: mobile telephone use and refining our school day. We would be very grateful if you have any comments regarding either of these to email [enquiries@smestow.org](mailto:enquiries@smestow.org) using the subject heading MOBILE PHONE or TIMES OF DAY by Friday 28th June.

### **Mobile Telephone Parent Consultation: June 2019**

We are committed to providing a positive learning environment for all students. With this in mind, we are considering how best to approach student use of mobile phones during the Academy. This consultation follows discussions with a number of parents and staff who have expressed their concerns about the use of mobile phones both within and outside of the Academy. We are considering a blanket ban on mobile phones being used or seen on Academy premises at all times following a growing number of concerns around student concentration / learning, student and staff working relationships and safeguarding. You will also be aware that recently both DfE and OFSTED have raised concerns about the use of mobile phones in schools more widely across England supported by a study from the London School of Economics which found that test scores of students in schools which banned mobile phones improved by over 6%.

We believe that by banning mobile phones we would:

- enable students to fully concentrate in lessons, free from the disruptions that technology can bring.
- promote an environment where students would be free of the influences of social media, for a significant time during their day, therefore promoting positive mental health.

- free students from the sometimes careless things other people can say or share, therefore eliminating a potential way of our students being bullied at the Academy.
- promote our students making even better progress, in line with the LSE research above.
- promote students' positive social skills and experiences, enabling conversation.
- ensure that conflicts between students and staff over mobile phones are eliminated.
- keep children safe from inappropriate use of social media within the Academy, especially where students are not of the age to access platforms. We hope this would support parents in this difficult task.

**Please note we are NOT considering banning students bringing phones to school.** Phones would be away in bags and switched off during the whole of the Academy day, including breaks and lunch, but still be available beyond the Academy day when parents may wish to contact their children. In emergency situations parents and children would be able to contact each other through the Academy reception. Should the decision be made to implement a ban we would expect all parents to support the decision and the sanctions which would be used to enforce the decision. These would likely range from confiscating a phone for the period of an Academy day, to enforcing a total ban on having a phone in school and requiring parents to collect confiscated phones.

### **Refining Times of the School Day Consultation: June 2019**

We took the decision to move to a new timetable in February and would like to thank parents for your support in doing this as it proved very successful. However, we were restricted in a couple of areas due to the time of year and, at the time, you will recall we stated that we would like to refine our school day for September 2019. Therefore, please find below a proposal for the school day from 01/09/19.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday		Wednesday
<b>Academy Opens</b>	<b>8.00 am*</b> <i>Please note that staff are on-site but formal supervision does not begin until 08:30</i>	
<b>Form Time</b>	08.40 – 09:10	No Form Time today, straight to Period 1
<b>Period 1</b>	09:10 – 10:10	08:40 -09:40
<b>Period 2/BRUNCH</b>	<b>KS3:</b> 10:10 – 10:30 Brunch 10:30 – 11:30 Period 2	<b>KS3:</b> 09:40 -10:00 Brunch 10:00 – 11:00 Period 2
	<b>KS4:</b> 10:10 – 11:10 Period 2 11:10 – 11:30 BRUNCH	<b>KS4:</b> 09:40 – 10:40 Period 2 10:40 – 11:00 Brunch
<b>Period 3</b>	11:30 – 12:30	11:00 – 12:00
<b>Period 4/LUNCH</b>	<b>KS3:</b> 12:30 – 13:00 Lunch 13:00 – 14:00 Period 4	<b>KS3:</b> 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch 12:30 – 13:30 Period 4
	<b>KS4:</b> 12:30 – 13:30 Period 4 13:30 – 14:00 Lunch	<b>KS4:</b> 12:00 – 13:00 Period 4 13:00 – 13:30 Lunch
<b>Period 5</b>	14:00 – 15:00	13:30 – 14:30
<b>Enrichment and Intervention</b>	3.00 – 4.00 pm (NB No Enrichment on Fridays)	The academy finishes at 14:30 on Wednesday for staff training and meetings

This proposal addresses the concern of the late lunch for KS4 by bringing this forward. In addition, by finishing half an hour earlier on Wednesday we can operate an extended CPD/Meeting time for staff, leaving them free to undertake more enrichment opportunities for students after school on other days, this is very effective in other schools locally. You will note that although our end of day is 10 minutes earlier than current, no lesson time has been lost, we are maintaining this at the full DfE recommendation of 25 hours per week.

We would be very grateful if you would share your views on either our Mobile Phone or Times of the Day consultations please email [enquiries@smestow.org](mailto:enquiries@smestow.org) using the subject heading MOBILE PHONE or TIMES OF DAY by Friday 28th June. The outcome of the consultations will be shared shortly after the deadline date.

Best regards

Georgina Lahiri  
Chair of Governors

Kerry Inscker  
Executive Headteacher UWMAT