



August 30th 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your families have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break and had the opportunity to make use of the plentiful good weather. This week staff will be welcoming back students from year 12 who are joining us in the sixth form and also helping our new year 8 students settle into school.

We look forward to welcoming all students back into school at
8.40 on Monday 3rd September for the first full day of term.

There are a number of matters I would like to draw to your attention.

Public Examination Results

Students, parents and staff have been celebrating some outstanding examination results from our year 14 and year 12 students. It is always a pleasure to see students delighted with the rewards for all their hard work. For example, in Year 14 Thomas McAvoy got A grades in Business and IT A'level and a starred Distinction in Travel and Tourism, while in Year 12 Goda Baldauskite got 13 GCSE equivalent passes at B grade or above include A* in Science, English, Maths, History and Finance.

Overall the results have consolidated the strong improvement from 2018 which saw Breda Academy rise 35 places in the performance tables. We were particularly pleased to see the that success rate for our students on free school meals practically doubled this year.

Becoming a Pivotal School

Teaching and learning is at the heart of what we do at Breda academy as a community of life-long learners. Last April we became the first Northern Ireland school to work with an organisation called Pivotal to develop our policy and practice around behaviour for learning. A number of other schools have followed us in this. Staff have been trained and have piloted a variety of Pivotal approaches. Our school routines have been adapted in the light of that training.

At Breda we have built our expectations around three simple core rules

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Polite**
- **Be ready**

Other elements of our Pivotal approach involve **consistent calm adult behaviour, following relentless routines and focussing attention on the best behaviour.** In particular, we are developing and extending the recognition for good effort and positive behaviour through our recognition and rewards systems.



The Pivotal approaches dovetail with other work we have been doing around **restorative practice**, which again you may have heard about in other similar schools to ours. Where a student's behaviour impedes their own or others' learning staff will follow a system of stepped sanctions which also embody a restorative approach. This uses key questions to help the student reflect on and understand their own behaviour so as to help change it in the future. Alongside this, poor behaviour will continue to incur consequences (including suspensions) particularly if it puts others' safety, well-being or learning at risk.

Some of these points are summarised in the student planner pages and Breda Academy Home School Partnership of which two copies are printed on pages 29-32 of the student planner.

Please

- read through these with your child and
- sign both copies of the home school partnership.

Form tutors will be taking one copy to retain in school.

School Day

I'd like to confirm the school day and lesson timings this year. All lessons are now 35 minutes long with 43 periods in the week.

Students must be in school from

- 8.40 am to 3.00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and
- 8.40 am to 2.25 pm on Monday and Thursday

Please note that

- The school day starts with lesson 1 at 8.40 followed by lesson 2 at 9.15.
- Form tutor registration and assemblies now take place at 9.50 before break at 10.05.
- First Lunch (year 8, year 12, year 13 and year 14) is during period 6 (12.05 to 12.40)
- Second lunch (years 9, 10 and 11) is during period 7 (12.40 to 1.15)

Although the day starts five minutes later than last year it is **extremely important that students are on time and go straight to lesson 1**. Latecomers will be missing lesson time and risk disrupting others' learning with their late arrival.

Punctuality is a fundamental attribute – indeed a courtesy – in life and in the world of work. We appreciate your support in ensuring your children develop and maintain it.

Health and Safety – Energy Drinks and Mobile phones

As you will be aware, there has been much publicity and changes to the law regarding the sale of high energy drinks to young people. These measures recognise the hazards to health and concentration of such drinks, hazards that teachers have known and understood for some time. It is timely to remind you that the only drink students are allowed to bring into school is water and that other drinks are liable to be confiscated. The canteen runs a breakfast service in the morning which we would encourage students to make use of.

While mobile phones have the advantage of helping students and parents stay in contact on the way to and from school, the increasing capacity of modern smart phones presents its own health and safety challenges. In particular, I would remind parents and students unauthorised recording of images or video in school is forbidden for safeguarding reasons. Therefore, mobile phones must be kept out of sight in an **inside** pocket in school. This is to eliminate the risk of any accidental recording from a phone kept in a top blazer pocket. Mobile phones are liable to be confiscated for the duration of a lesson, or longer, if these expectations are not followed.

Yours faithfully



MD Munro – Principal