

December 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

Christmas – End of Term Letter

As the autumn term ends, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. As Christmas approaches and we take time to enjoy the festive season, we are reminded that we live through very challenging times. As we deal with a cost of living crisis and political uncertainty, it is important that we remember that communities need to support each other. When communities do work together, great things can happen. Droylsden Academy is part of your local community and we are here to support our students and families as we approach the difficult months ahead.

Tame River Educational Trust (TRET)

Our Mission

The Tame River Educational Trust formed earlier this year with a mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage by establishing great schools in which to learn, teach and belong. Our schools promote learning, develop character, value diversity and build cultural capital. By the age of 16, we aim for every student to progress to appropriately challenging post-16 studies or apprenticeships.

The Trust is ambitious to grow over the coming years with more schools likely to join. Regardless of socio-economic context or history, each school that joins our Trust will be committed to our three core educational purposes. This is because we are stronger together. We are here to make a real difference.

Our Core Educational Purposes

1. Our Trust will become known for imbuing in our learners, positive character traits and enquiring minds and for the talent and professionalism of our staff.
2. Through a cycle of creative self and peer improvement, any school with us for three years or more will be in the top 25% of similar schools nationally for the academic progress of its learners.
3. Students in our Trust will receive a distinctive trust-wide community and educational dividend in the form of 'Electives' starting with Year 7. Significant additional opportunities will be made available to our students in the arts, sport and outdoor education.

Ofsted Success – Droylsden Academy is 'Feeling Good'

The Academy underwent an unannounced Section 8 *Ofsted* Inspection earlier this term. A Section 8 Inspection is not graded like a full Inspection and, in essence, was to check that, following our last Inspection in September 2017, Droylsden Academy was still a Good School.

We were incredibly pleased with the outcome of the Inspection with His Majesty's Inspectors confirming that Droylsden Academy is, indeed, a Good School.

The report detailed that:

- Pupils are proud to attend Droylsden Academy;



- Pupils are happy and accepting of each other's differences ... our school is a place where they can be themselves;
- Pupils feel safe in school ... there is always someone that they can talk to;
- Bullying is rare and when it does happen it is dealt with quickly;
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic achievement are high ... pupils rise to these standards;
- Pupils behave well and work hard ... they are well prepared for life in modern Britain;
- Pupils are expected to develop their character and confidence ... they develop leadership skills;
- Pupils benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs;
- There is a carefully designed, broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum ... thought has gone into the knowledge that students must learn;
- Teachers are successful in helping pupils to deepen their understanding of ideas and concepts across the curriculum ... teachers think carefully about how to teach new subject content ... effective support helps pupils remember more over time;
- Continuous training and development is prioritised;
- Teachers receive quality information about pupils with SEND.... teachers use effective strategies to adapt learning for these pupils;
- Teachers prioritise the development of pupils' subject-specific vocabulary ... they also encourage a love of reading;
- An extensive programme of pastoral support and life lessons ensures that pupils learn about healthy relationships and the wider world;
- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates this school ... there are effective systems in place to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Staff and students are quite rightly proud of the comments made by the Inspectors and we are looking forward to the continuing development of our school. We would also like to thank our parents and carers for the contribution you make to the Academy.

Stunning 2022 academic success at Droylsden Academy and in the Tame River Educational Trust

On the back of our excellent *Ofsted* Report, news came in at the end of November from *Ofsted's* National Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) that the overall academic progress made by our students in the Class of 2022 is "Significantly Above the National". This success was achieved by the Class of 2022 in English, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Science, Humanities and in the subjects which contribute to what is called 'The Open Element' - in the Arts & Sports, Food, Technology, Art and ICT. Our partner school in the Tame River Educational Trust, Mossley Hollins High School, also achieved remarkable success in 2022, as its academic performance was also reported as "Significantly Above the National".

Each one of the 'numbers' reported in the ISDR nationally is a real student with a real opportunity for a better life. This is great news for our students and reward for the hard work of the Class of 2022.

Open Evening 2022

Our annual Open Evening took place in September when we invited Year 5 and 6 pupils from local primary schools, along with their families and other members of the community, to visit our school. Over 1000 people attended the evening and it was lovely to hear so many positive comments from our visitors. Around 300 students gave up their time to attend the Open Evening and help staff with displays, activities and performances. They were an absolute credit to their families, and to the Academy, and many of our visitors commented on how friendly, confident, polite and helpful our students were.

As you may be aware, the current Year 7 is full and oversubscribed and, for the fourth successive year, we have a waiting list of students who wish to join us. Early Indications are that the Academy will be a popular choice again in 2023.



Student Attendance

It is very pleasing to report, as we learned to live with Covid-19, that the school's attendance figures were in the top 20% of the country in 2021 (the latest national reported data) when compared to schools with similar contexts. Persistent absence (students absent for 10% or more in the year) was amongst the very lowest in the country in that year when compared to schools with similar contexts. This is fabulous news as it is strong attendance to school and hard work that makes all the difference. Thank you to our families and to our outstanding Attendance Team.

However, we are very concerned with the attendance of a minority of students in the current Year 11 and a minority of students in other year groups. We are very clear that such absence will affect student well-being, academic progress and future life-chances. By far the most significant risk to young people is the possible long-term damaging effects on their future life chances of missing vital learning and we continue to do all we can to support our students in this respect. To allow curriculum continuity when students return from a period of absence, they must access and complete missed work via Google Classrooms. We need the active and positive support of parents to ensure they work constructively with the school to make that happen.

The Wider Co-Curriculum – Developing Character

I hope that you find the time to read the weekly Newsflash each Friday. I am incredibly proud of the achievements and efforts of our students and I am immensely grateful for the time given by so many staff to ensure that our students develop those important character traits of *learning, leadership, service and participation*. Autumn highlights include:

- Another very successful Futures' Evening. Older students were able to speak to representatives from local colleges, universities, employers and training providers. The evening allowed students to receive high-quality advice and guidance about options open to them when they leave school.
- Our Combined Cadet Force (Army CCF) continues to grow and we have pleasing numbers of students taking part in the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Students from our CCF and other Student Leaders led a very moving Remembrance Day Service.
- Our busy physical education curriculum has continued with students continuing to excel in a range of sports including football, trampolining, table tennis, basketball and volleyball.
- We have great news, hot off the press, that our Year 11 Boys Football Team have reached the 5th round of the English Schools' Cup. The team has progressed to the final 64, from a starting point of over 600 teams from across the country. They now face Rivington and Blackrod High School from Bolton in a home tie. Well done and good luck!
- The 'Choir of the Year' competition allowed our youngest students to show off their vocal talents whilst competing against each other. Congratulations to 7R who were the worthy winners with their superb performance of "Wonderwall" by Oasis.
- Members of the Droylsden Academy Debating Union continue to meet each week. In November the Union welcomed Local Magistrates to their session and they ran a mock cyber-bullying trial which was based on real life events.
- January 2023 will be a very exciting month for the Performing Arts department. On Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th and Friday 27th, students will perform Footloose - The Musical. Students have been working tirelessly since the beginning of the academic year to prepare for these performances. Tickets are now available from Student Services priced £4 for adults, £3 for concessions and under 5 years are free.
- Stunning Art, Photography and Textiles work is showcased each week in the Newsflash. Likewise, the culinary flair shown in our Food and Nutrition department and the creative work that we are seeing from students in Design and Technology is incredible.



- October marked Black History Month. Students studied the achievements of the black community, celebrated their contributions to the UK and learnt about the important black historical figures who helped make Britain what it is today. Later in the term, students took part in Anti-Bullying Week, with a group of students producing a hard-hitting film about the misery caused by bullying and actions that can be taken to support victims.
- Students have taken part in a wide range of educational visits and fieldtrips.
- School Council and Student Ambassadors continue to canvass students across the Academy for their views and opinions about teaching and learning, what they enjoy, what can be improved and the future development of the school.
- Students have learnt about important topics through Life Skills. Students have covered a wide range of diverse topics, including issues around mental health, substance misuse, bullying, safe use of the internet and why homophobia and racism have no place in British Society.
- Christmas Jumper Day takes place on Friday 16th December. Students and staff, for a small £1 donation, are encouraged to wear a festive jumper with all proceeds going to our very worthy House Charities; *Reuben's Retreat*, *Mustard Tree*, *The Anthony Seddon Fund* and *When You Wish Upon a Star*.
- Don't forget that our annual Christmas Concert takes place on Wednesday 14th December.

Christmas Holidays and the Spring Term:

The Academy will close for the Christmas holiday on Friday 16th December at 12.00 noon.

The Academy will reopen to students for the spring term on **Wednesday 4th January 2023**. All students are expected in their classrooms by **8.30am**. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late and there will be a series of escalating consequences for persistent lateness or absence.

Whilst we appreciate that children often wish to let school friends see their Christmas presents, especially electronic devices such as mobile phones and smart watches, please remind your child of Academy policy. This clearly states that such items should be left at home where possible, and under no circumstances should they be seen or heard in the school building as they distract from learning. Furthermore, please support school in upholding our high expectations and avoid sending your child to school with piercings, false nails or extreme hairstyles in the new year.

If your child cycles to school, please can I urge you to ensure that they wear a safety helmet. School insists that, for their own safety, all students cycling to and from school must wear appropriate head protection.

Our staff will be working with staff from our partner school, Mossley Hollins High School, on the INSET day on Tuesday 3rd January. This is the day before students return for the spring term. This INSET day will be used to further develop our curriculum. The day will also allow staff from both schools to access training related to our Teacher Gold Standard and some staff to embark on the Highly Effective Teacher Pathway.

I wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. Enjoy the holiday period as you spend time with your family and friends. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Wilson
Headteacher

