

August 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to formally welcome you as parents/carers to our learning community at Droylsden Academy. As Co-Headteachers, we are looking forward to working in partnership with you and your child across the next 5 years and would like to take this opportunity to provide further information about the routines, standards and protocols which are essential to every child and adult in our school community so that you and your child can feel ready and prepared for September.

We hope that our Induction Evening and Transition Days in July have already given you an insight into what to expect and into what we call **The Droylsden Way** which is built upon our **core values**:

#### **Politeness**

- We treat every person as we would want to be treated
- We are respectful, polite and courteous at all times
- We are considerate towards our environment and we look after our community
- We help others at all times

#### **Hard work**

- We never give up
- We remain positive so that we have the strength to persevere with even the hardest work
- We do what it takes, for as long as it takes

#### **Honesty**

- We are true to ourselves and others and we do not make excuses
- We look to ourselves to see what needs to be done

The vast majority of our students live by these values and their hard work pays off – this was evident in July at our annual Achievement Evening where over 350 students collected awards and it is evident every year when we celebrate our Year 11 students collecting their GCSE results and embarking on the next exciting phases of their lives.

However, just like every other school in the country, we still see some students who are capable of achieving *even more* and this is almost always because they did not develop great learning habits. This is one of the many reasons why Year 7 is so important and why we need your support in making sure that your child is ready to succeed this September and beyond. We all know how complex life beyond school is and we need to make sure that our students have the necessary knowledge, character and qualifications to thrive – a successful Year 7 is a fantastic next step on this journey.

Where students do not achieve, the statistics and research clearly show that this is not simply a matter of ‘not being clever enough’. A wide range of factors influence educational achievement and we spoke about some of these at Induction Evening, with the importance of a strong home school partnership being our main focus. This is the foundation on which we build and it is this partnership that gives young people the best chance of developing the learning habits they need to succeed. At Droylsden Academy, we cannot and do not accept that only some of our students can go on to succeed and we are sure that you will feel exactly the same about this.



Therefore, it is vitally important that we instil these learning habits at a young age so that, by the time students opt for their GCSEs and then sit their final examinations in Year 11, our students are strong, independent learners who can shine and thrive, even when under pressure.

### **What do we mean by great learning habits?**

Many things have changed in education since we were at school but the habits that define success have not. Sadly, across the country there are still too many students who do not arrive at school ready to learn. Some students answer back and question the teacher's decision in class, whilst others are trying to learn. Some students have an attendance rate below 92% and some are regularly late for school in the morning. Some students miss homework deadlines for no good reason. These are the students who do not succeed at school and it is exactly the same with the small minority of students at Droylsden Academy who exhibit these negative habits.

So why are some students like this? What is stopping them from being great learners? As with any habit, these behaviours have been picked up and developed over time and, once ingrained, they are harder to change. Perhaps just to be nice or for an easier life at home and in school, excuses have been made for these students for too long and we may have come to accept the excuses that these students make for themselves. At Droylsden Academy we care too much to let this happen and, rather than making excuses for bad habits, we aim to instil the right ones.

### **These are the 6 habits that we will insist on, day in and day out:**

#### **1. Be on time:**

We insist on punctuality to school and to each and every lesson. School begins at 8.30am prompt each day. Every child will be registered (without fail) at the start of the day and will be considered late if they arrive after 8.30am. After Life Skills and Character (Form Time) or Assembly, lessons begin at 8.45am and lateness to lessons will also not be tolerated. Please support this by keeping to bed-times and allowing preparation time in the morning before school. Attendance at school is vital. Children should attend 100% of the time. Anything below 96% would be a serious cause for concern as progress slows, learning suffers and well-being is adversely affected. Our Attendance Team will begin to work with families over the summer where attendance has been a concern at primary school.

#### **2. Take pride in uniform:**

We will insist on a perfect uniform: not *nearly* perfect but perfect. This is because we want children at Droylsden Academy to be proud of themselves and proud of their school. Top buttons should be fastened at all times; shirts should be tucked in; ties should be worn correctly; socks and shoes should be of the right colour (no trainers); jewellery is not permitted at all; there should be no extreme hairstyles. Evidence suggests that strong habits around uniform and pride in appearance lead to better behaviour and help to instil great learning habits.

#### **3. Be equipped for the day:**

We will insist that every child brings: an appropriate school bag; pencil case; planner; the correct exercise books for each day; homework books and text-books (where relevant) to every lesson. At first you could help by packing bags with your child but you should expect them to check their timetable each evening and learn for themselves very quickly. Each pencil case should always have in it as a minimum: one working pen, pencil, ruler and rubber.



Mrs G Arnold – Co-Headteacher – Droylsden Academy

Mr E Mayell – Co-Headteacher – Droylsden Academy

Mr P Wilson – Chief Executive – Tame River Educational Trust

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#### **4. Complete all homework:**

Homework is a vitally important aspect of our curriculum and we will insist on all homework being completed on time, neatly and with pride. Students receive a homework planner in September and this will be used to record homework and to allow you to monitor what work has been set. You will also have access to Google Classroom, an online tool that will allow you to see what homework has been set each day. Completing homework on time is a Great Learning Habit and students are rewarded for doing so with a PRIDE Point for Deadlines.

#### **5. Work Hard - never be off-task:**

We will insist on focused learning in class. When a teacher has carefully planned a lesson and other students are trying so hard, there is nothing worse (you will remember) than a child or children being off task and disrupting learning for themselves and others. We expect students to show politeness by being a good audience – they do this by sitting up straight, facing the speaker and paying attention. When completing tasks, students must use the correct Learning Voice (Silence, a Soft Voice or a Projected Voice), work in the right team (Solo, Paired or Group) and work to the time limit.

#### **6. Be Polite - never answer back:**

Like a referee, school staff get most things right but will sometimes get things wrong; however, what is totally unacceptable is for a child to answer back or question a decision in front of the class. It stops others from learning and it undermines all respect for the adult. This is a very bad learning habit to get into. Great learners politely discuss concerns with the teacher after the lesson or at break/lunchtime.

#### **What can we do to help instil these habits?**

We believe in great learning at Droylsden Academy and so do the vast majority of our students and parents. While students need to take responsibility, families and staff in school can do a great deal to help by modelling these habits, insisting on them and rewarding young people for doing the right things. Instead of excusing bad learning habits, we can insist on great learning habits day in, day out with high expectations and no excuses.

Your child may already have very good learning habits. If so, they have nothing to worry about and, if they keep those habits as they move through adolescence, they can shine at our school. From the first day at Droylsden Academy, your child will be expected to pick up and keep to these 6 great learning habits. If they meet these expectations, they will be rewarded.

#### **Praise and Reward:**

To help students to pick up these 6 learning habits very quickly, we will teach them in class and we began this during Transition. We will also praise and reward those who demonstrate great habits using PRIDE points, positive postcards, letters and phone calls to parents and big termly and end of year rewards. We also run a whole school PRIDE Rewards Day in the summer term. These are the most enjoyable parts of what we do and we simply cannot wait to share these successes with you.

#### **What happens if students do not show these great learning habits?**

Our system of correction is very simple and we are counting on your support. If you are worried about it, the best way to avoid it is to make sure your child works hard to pick up the great learning habits and stick to them each and every day. We call this following the Droylsden Way.



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If any of the great learning habits are broken, the teacher will record this on our behaviour database and we will text/contact you to inform you that a 30-minute, one-hour or two-hour detention has been issued. The length of the detention will depend on the nature of the behaviour.

This may sound strict but it needs to be if it is to make a difference. The evidence from the UK and abroad suggests that the correction must be immediate (a detention one week later just does not work with children) and it must be specific to the problem.

We make no apologies for this strict, disciplined approach; it is there because we care too much to let learning be affected and because poor behaviour has no place in school.

Our belief is that this system is so simple and fair that any Year 7 student should not get a detention in the first place. If a detention is given, please do not see it as 'the end of the world'. Your child simply completes the detention and gets a totally fresh start the next day. Remember, we are trying to instil great learning habits; that is all. If your child fails to attend the detention, a more serious sanction will follow and the detention will still have to be completed. This will be the school's decision, not the parent's/carer's or child's. The law is clear that schools do not require parental consent to keep students for detention.

Please remember to explain to your child how important this is and please support the school if your child does get a detention. In this case, you may have to make different arrangements to get them home. Please do not blame us for this; rather discuss how inconvenienced this made you with your child. This will further help to develop great learning habits and consideration for you and the family. Your child must accept this responsibility if they are to grow into a responsible citizen.

### **Co-Curricular Activities and Character Development:**

At Droylsden Academy, we aim to educate our young people by providing them with a wealth of opportunities, both inside the classroom and beyond the classroom. Our ultimate goal is to enable all our students to develop a strong moral code so that they are able to take their place as active citizens, ready to contribute positively to their communities and the wider world around them.

We aim to ensure that our students develop into confident and compassionate young adults who are effective contributors to society, successful learners, and responsible citizens. We encourage our students to develop a commitment to serving others, to participate in a wide range of activities (both in and outside school), to develop the ability to lead others and, of course, the skills to effectively learn.

Evidence suggests that if children get involved in a school club, society, activity or team - which we term Electives - then they will grow much more attached to the school and the people in it and, as a result, will often do better in class. Taking part in Electives will also develop key character traits that will help them to succeed in later life. We expect all our Year 7 students to be involved in the wider life of our school as there are so many clubs and activities on offer at lunchtime and after school each day. Over the next 5 years there will be a whole range of opportunities to **lead, learn, serve and participate**.

### **Why have we written to you?**

As a new family to our school, we hope that you appreciate that we are trying to get the very best for all of our students. The staff and students work incredibly hard to continue to improve the school and to make it a community where all can succeed and be happy. We can achieve nothing as a school without your active support through a strong home-school partnership.



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If you have any questions or concerns please contact us as soon as possible so that we can work together to resolve any issues before the start of the new academic year.

We look forward to welcoming our new Year 7 students on **Wednesday 4th September at 8.30am** and working with you over the next 5 years; we wish you a very enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday.

Yours faithfully



Mr E Mayell  
Co-Headteacher



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Co-Headteacher



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