

20<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Christmas Greetings!

The end of term is now upon us! It remains for me to acknowledge and thank you – the parents and carers – for your ongoing support and commitment in working with us to ensure that we continue to dream big, recognise the individual and provide a quality of education that enables our students to learn, grow and achieve.

We continue on this journey and I'm delighted to share that the autumn term – always the longest and most challenging – has been successfully navigated with much to celebrate.

Details of the many trips, visits and opportunities we have completed this term, including the amazing end of term Christmas Panto "Cinderbeauty" on Monday, are shared on our Twitter feed: @Oak\_Academy – do please consider following us to be kept informed of the many achievements our students make each week. I'm delighted to share that following student demand, a revamped newsletter will be drafted in January, with students themselves taking a lead role in the content, design and production process. They look forward to reporting back to you early next year!

In the meantime, I'd like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention work that goes on 'behind the scenes' to create the positive learning environment we enjoy as a community.

Academic achievement is the result of many things, not least personal development. Provision at Oak remains a notable strength with positive feedback from students and parents regarding our Learning for Life curriculum and the way in which we are highlighting and providing support to address the growing number of students with mental health and well-being concerns – a recognised area of need nationally.

This support has had a positive impact on attendance such that Oak students are more resilient regarding their health – attending more regularly and 'soldiering on' through coughs and colds. My sincere thanks to you as parents/carers for your support – a day missed is a day of learning missed and we appreciate your commitment in ensuring your son/daughter's attendance is the best it can possibly be.

Similarly, our culture of High Expectations now translates into a positive rewards system across the academy. We have seen a real-terms reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions and going into the Christmas break, these are currently at their lowest level. This is in part due to new systems in place, but more to do with the change in attitude of students and staff to promote and protect 'disruption free learning.' This is now the norm and an immediate benefit is that we have been able to reduce the need of a structured 'isolation' room and protocol, because the demand has fallen, introducing a fixed period of 'Learn and Achieve' instead. This involves 2 hours of literacy and numeracy based learning and includes a detention so that social time is missed. Students have responded positively to

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this change and numbers of repeat offenders (who are now receiving additional support) are in single figures.

Quite simply, your resolve as parents/carers to promote our shared High Expectations is helping us to continue to raise standards and provide a quality of education that our students deserve – thank you.

At the heart of this is my belief in the power of ‘unconditional positive regard.’ This has been a development focus of the last two terms and all members of our community are aware of what this means and why it is so important.

‘Unconditional positive regard’ is the belief that the behaviour may be unwanted, but never the individual. All people are fundamentally ‘good’ and support is given to help correct a behaviour, without labelling or judging the person concerned. I am utterly proud of all Oak students and value the richness and diversity that they bring to each day – this is the reason I went into teaching.

At the same time, being able to recognise the positives when things do go wrong provides an immediate platform for healthy discussion. In this way we have worked with a number of students and their parents to provide support that now enables them to access their curriculum and enjoy success within our community.

This has been achieved through the hard work of everyone, and I would like to thank Mrs Biles and her Inclusion Team in particular for the commitment and determination they have given – it really has enabled students to make positive choices in all things: attendance, appearance, attitude and achievement.

As this term draws to a close, we say thank you and good bye to two teachers who are moving to new appointments. Mrs Cheeseman takes up a new role at another local school and Mrs Porter leaves us to continue her Teaching and Learning work at Poole High. Both have been valued and committed members of staff and I wish them the very best for the future.

I am delighted to share that Mr Remmer has been successfully appointed as Oak’s new Teaching and Learning Lead, taking up this role from January. This will involve a period of transition and he will retain his existing role of Head of Year 10 as we look to recruit a suitable replacement.

For me, the Christmas break is always a period of reflection. As we look back over the last 15 academic weeks, human nature dictates we will forget what was said but not how we were made to feel. I feel privileged to be the Principal of Oak and proud that we continue to improve the outcomes and well-being of the students in our care.

I hope that your experience this term has been a positive one, and would like to wish you all a peaceful and much deserved break with your family and loved ones this Christmas.

I look forward to welcoming you back on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2020!

Yours sincerely



Richard Burgas  
Principal  
Oak Academy