







Dudley Academies Trust: Summer Newsletter 2021

Message from the Chief Executive

As we near the end of this academic year, we can only reflect on what has been an unprecedented time. The Autumn Term started so well and then we limped towards Christmas as more and more learners and staff fell victim to Covid-19. As cases rose exponentially, it was not surprising that the country was once again locked down. In January, we responded quickly to the 'new normal' and moved into full distance learning mode. Our teachers rapidly developed new skills in order to deliver recorded and live lessons. Learners adapted so well to these new requirements and our leaders and support staff set up our secondary schools as testing centres to facilitate the return to face to face learning in March. All of these changes were supported by the Trust's central team. Our strong sense of community undoubtedly enabled us to navigate these very difficult months and the support of our parents and carers has been greatly appreciated.

Once again, there were no examinations in the summer term but, unlike 2020, a new system of teacher assessed grades and centre assessed grades was launched in our secondary schools. With very little notice, teachers and learners had to respond to the Department for Education's requirements to produce evidence of a range of assessments in every examination subject. This was incredibly challenging and it is clear that formal examinations would have been easier to cope with. Nevertheless, our learners and teachers worked incredibly hard demonstrating real determination to achieve the best that they could. We now await the final validation of our centres' grades and we are proud of the improvement that all academies have made in such difficult circumstances. We are confident that we will have much to celebrate in August, and already our Year 10 le arners are working incredibly hard to get off to a head start in September. They are certainly 'Dreaming big' and their efforts should be very well rewarded by excellent examination results next year.



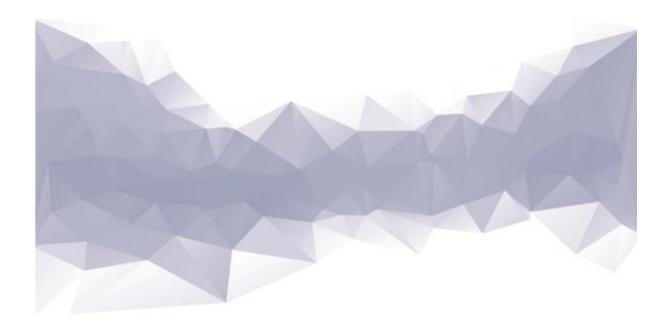
1 - Jo Higgins, Chief Executive

Our strong sense of community undoubtedly enabled us to navigate these very difficult months and the support of our parents and carers has been greatly appreciated.

In our primary, Blowers Green, there was a similar situation as Year 6 pupils rose to the challenge of their formal assessments so that their teachers could finalise their scores. Our primary pupils have also worked so hard, supported by their dedicated teachers and support staff. Year 5 pupils are already preparing themselves for their final year and our current Year 6 pupils are excited about the prospect of joining their secondary schools in September.

As we look forward to the new academic year, we face the exciting prospect of shaping the next phase of our strategic plan. This will be launched in January 2022 and run until August 2025. When we reflect on our journey since the Trust was formed in September 2017, it is clear that so much has been achieved: we have invested in our estates to ensure that our learners are proud to attend their schools. Their behaviour is first class, they wear their uniform with pride and many are keen to take up prominent leadership roles and to be an active force in their school communities. Our learners clearly embody our five core values and they are supported by a dedicated team of leaders, teachers, support staff and governors. We have a great foundation on which to build for the future and we look forward to hearing your ideas as we consult with all stakeholders about the further development of our eight strategic priorities. Early next term we will inform you about how you can contribute your views and ideas about the future of our Trust.

Dreaming big



Where are our learners now?

Lorden Norhana from St James Academy to Dudley Sixth

Lorden was one of St James Academy's top achievers in 2020. He left with Grade 9's in almost all of his subjects including: Mathematics, English Language, English Literature and Triple Science. To our delight, Lorden continues to challenge himself and has continued on the path of success achieving 'A' grades in Biology, Chemistry and Maths in his A-Levels at Dudley Sixth. He is looking forward to studying at either 'Keele University' or the 'University of Bristol'. Keep making us proud Lorden!



2 - Lorden, Trust and St James Academy Student Leader in 2020.

Rachel and Joshua Noot from St James Academy to Dudley Sixth

Our amazing St James Academy's twins have made us super proud after their first year at Dudley Sixth. Josh is currently studying Mathematics, History and Politics. He achieved 'A' grades this year. We are exceptionally proud of his achievement, and we are delighted to know that his love for mathematics is still strong following his GCSE Grade 9 while at St James Academy. Rachel is currently studying Criminology, Film Studies and History. Rachel has relished her experience this year and describes her first year as 'interesting in the way it has opened her eyes to new experiences'. Rachel has also maintained some of her special friendship bonds with her old friends from St James Academy.

Chandni Lotia from St James Academy to Dudley Sixth

Chandni has made a strong start despite the challenges with the pandemic. She hasn't stopped 'Dreaming Big'. She is currently studying Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. She has high aspirations of going forward to study medicine at The University of Birmingham. Chandiarrived in the UK less than 10 years ago with very little proficiency in English. She rapidly learnt English and improved her fluency and proficiency levels. As a result, she achieved really well in her GCSEs across her subjects while at St James Academy.

Kyle Salmon from St James Academy to Dudley College of Technology

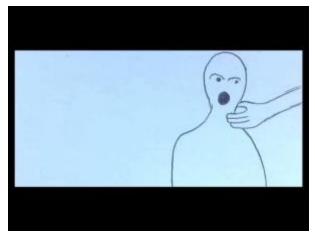
Kyle was one of our student presidents at St James Academy. He has progressed on to amazing things. Kyle has a part time job; he is studying Media and is predicted an A*. Kyle has continued to challenge himself as a young adult to be the best version of himself. We are excited to see what the future holds for Kyle. Keep 'Dreaming big'.



3 - Kyle, Trust and St James Academy Student Leader in 2020.

Eve Wilmot from Pegasus Academy to Dudley College of Technology

Eve Wilmot was a previous learner from Pegasus Academy who went on to study Level 3 Extended Diploma Art and Design with our sponsor, Dudley College of Technology. We are extremely proud that Eve's work was published as part of ArtsFest 2021. Her animated work was entitled 'Panic' with an extract stating "Panic attacks suck. Simple as. They are humiliating and painful. For me my breathing speeds up and my heartbeat becomes all I can hear." Congratulations Eve. We are pleased to see that you have continued to 'Dream Big' and show such passion regarding such relatable and important aspects of life. Take a moment to watch Eve Wilmot original animation and discover more about our sponsor's Extended Art and Desing at Evolve https://artsfest.dudleycol.ac.uk/extended-art-and-design-evolve/.



4 - <u>Eve Wilmot original animation</u>

Farewell to Year 11

We look forward to seeing our Year 11 learners on results day, Thursday 12th August 2021. Our Teacher Assessed Grades process was rigorous and robust to ensure our learners achieve the examination grades that they deserve. We want all our learners to continue to 'Dream Big' and progress on to positive destinations. Each academy will provide information relating to arrangements for results day. Don't forget to check our social media channels in order to keep up to date with all the latest results day information. We also hope to feature our 2021 Year 11 learners within the 'Where are learners are now?' section of next year's Trust newsletters.



5 - Year 11 at Beacon Hill Academy 2021.



6 - Year 11 at St James Academy 2021.

Best Wishes Year 6

We are delighted that 98% of learners from Blowers Green Primary will transition from Year 6 into Year 7 at Dudley Academies Trust. Having a cross phase Trust enables us to provide the very best support to our young people when they transition to their new secondary school. We appreciate the past two academic years have been turbulent for our young people and are dedicated to ensuring the best support is in place to meet their needs. Our secondary academy summer schools will take

place during the week commencing Monday 2nd August 2021. During this time, we hope to meet as many of our new Year 7 learners as possible. Our secondary academies are also running summer school for other year groups. Please check the Parents & Carers > Summer School area of your academy website for further information.

Welcome Year 7

We are very excited to welcome our new Year 7 learners across the Trust in September 2021. Each secondary academy has shared information and guidance to parents and carers about the transition phase from Year 6 into Year 7. Below is a welcome provided by a current Year 7 learner Joe from Pegasus Academy. I am sure that Year 7 learners from across the Trust will agree with Joe's viewpoint. We take pride in all that we offer and ensure every secondary school has the same culture, curriculum and standards. Please check our academy websites under the 'Why Choose Us?' alongside the 'Parents & Carers' tab for all of the latest information on transition. Take the opportunity to meet our learners or tour our schools.

"Hello Year 6! Your move to year 7 and a new school is near. Now while you are probably nervous, you really should not be because Pegasus Academy is a welcoming secondary school that eradicates all of your worries and fears.

Within Pegasus Academy I have been pushed to achieve better than I ever thought I could.

On our first day at Pegasus Academy, I was very nervous but excited to explore and create new memories at a new school. As we entered the classroom, we met our new teacher. She was just as thrilled to realise that she had the best class in the entire year group. She gave us a tour of the school so that we knew where to go. Although Covid 19 has been tough, this school brightens life up.

As time has flown, we moved on to Silent Movies, my favourite topic of the academic year. Our experience through the topic of Silent Movies contained lots of humour and entertainment. On the topic of lessons, the range of lessons in the school is immense, from maths and L4L (Literacy 4 Life) to catering and music.

Within Pegasus Academy I have been pushed to achieve better than I ever thought I could and due to this I have achieved 100 merits and high grades on all my tests with high standards in a peaceful learning environment. The learning environment is perfect because all learners are well behaved and extremely good at every subject that they participate in.

In conclusion, Pegasus Academy is an amazing school and I highly recommend you choose this as your secondary school."- Joe H, Year 7



7 - Joe H, Year 7 at Pegasus Academy

Introducing our Primary Branding

'Discover more' lies at the heart of the Trust brand and has endless possibilities for using the symbolism of journeys to capture the many facets of learners' educational experience, whatever their age. Whilst there should be a strong relationship between secondary and primary phases, it is very important for primary schools to have their own distinct and relevant design. The Dudley Academies Trust brand lends itself well to being appropriately adapted in order to reflect the characteristics of our primary schools. Above all, central to our strategic priority of developing an aspirant culture, it is vitally important that our brand conveys sophistication, whatever phase it represents. We are therefore, delighted to confirm that we have now developed our primary phase of the Trust branding. We have four founding colours which represent our secondary schools and they are captured in the Trust logo. You will notice that our four primary phase colours are a little softer.

We are excited to share with you the primary version of our Trust's values as represented in Blowers Green Primary. As you will see, their chosen colour is green. For completeness, we have also presented our secondary phase branding.



8 - Trust Primary Values

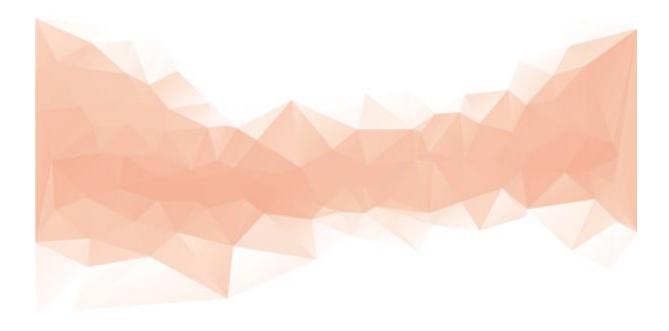


9 - Trust Secondary Values



10 - Trust Colour Palette

Rewarding effort



Pearson National Teaching Awards

We are extremely proud of Beacon Hill Academy which has been recognised nationally by 'Pearson National Teaching Awards' for 'Excellence in Education'. The award, titled "The 2021 Lockdown Hero Award for Learner & Community Support" is a testament to the academy's work during national Covid-19 lockdowns, both academically and socially. The academy was quick to react, swiftly putting into place a high-quality distance learning programme through the academy website and Microsoft Teams. As time moved forwards, the academy developed more dynamic teaching approaches, creating a blend of pre-recorded teacher voiceover lessons and live face-to-face lessons through Microsoft Teams and other Online Learning Platforms such as Hegarty Maths, CENTURY Tech, GCSE Pod and more. The academy also felt that it was important to regularly reward learners for this work. As 'Rewarding effort' is one of the Trust core values and underpins everything at Beacon Hill Academy, a huge variety of rewards were awarded during the lockdown periods. Discover more via Express & Star: "Black Country school receives award for its response to pandemic".



11 - Pictured is learner Aaliyah Lewis, staff member Anneka Johnson, Principal Sukhjot Dhami, staff member Karl Quiney and learner, Kai Marsh.

CareerFit

It is important that our learners 'Dream big' as early as possible in order to progress to their desired post 16 destinations. Below are just some of the CareerFit activities that have taken place across the Trust:

- Our Senior Careers Officer for the Trust visited each secondary academy and conducted careers interviews with Year 10 learners.
- Employability and Soft Skills sessions for Years 7, 8 and 9 learners.
- Apprenticeships talks for Years 10 and 11.
- Stephen Seki Motivational Talks for Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Medical Mavericks for Years 9 and 10.
- Jobs in the 999 Sector for all your groups.
- Aspire to Higher Education: a 6 week programme for Year 9.

The Trust has also subscribed to Unifrog for our secondary learners. Unifrog brings all the available information into one single, impartial, user-friendly platform in order to help our learners make informed choices, and submit strong applications. Discover more about Unifrog https://www.unifrog.org/about.





12 - Quinn, Aaliyah and Thomas from Beacon Hill Academy. Winners of Thomas Dudley Ltd Employability Skills Talk Competition!

Attendance

We are delighted that despite a turbulent year for our young people, attendance in all our academies has remained consistent and strong. The majority of our schools are above the national average for attendance. Well done to all our academies for their hard work in ensuring attendance is a key focus enabling our learners to 'Dream big' and enjoy 'Learning that inspires'.

Attendance %	Number of Days Lost	Impact upon Your Child's Education
	Note! Outstanding attendence!	This gives your child the heat chance to obvieve their potential as statuted they have for the farmer with 100% ananomics achieve good progress.
	Great attendance! Fower than 6 days of absence in one scademic year. This is above the scattering elementance target.	
95 to 94.9%	Loss than 10 days of absence. The incrner is likely to schiese their targets and will be well prepared as they move through the seadony.	Secretice show that 69 1% of learners in the attendance bracket go on to achieve good program.
92 to 94.9%	Up to 15 days of absence. If attendance is in this category the learner will have had up to 3 weeks absence in the academy year.	According to statistics, only just over half (\$2,0%) of learners in this strend- ance bracket achieve good progress.
	The learner will have had up to 19 days of absence (up to 3 weeks and 4 days). Learners in the catagors may bill bested and it will be difficult for them to reach their passwers.	Attendance in this brocket is a major concern and should be addressed quickly. Only and over half (\$2.0%) of learners in this attendance bracket go on to achieve good progress.
<90%	Personally Absent The learner will have had more than 19 days of absence (more than 1 weeks and 4 days) over the academic year This is very poor attendance and the Educational Welfare Officer may become involved.	Poor attendance this is contentely worning Of those learners with belo- 90% attendance, only 35.6% are likely on achieve good progress.

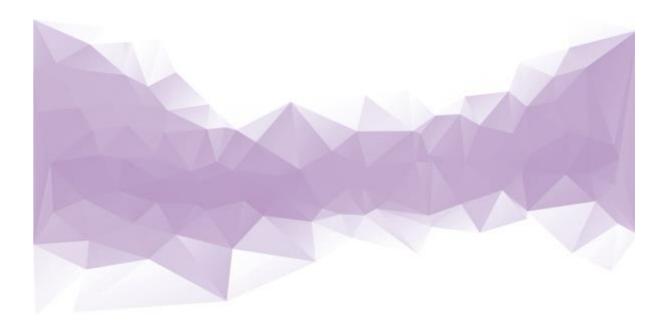
Dudley Performing Arts

At Pegasus Academy, Year 7 learners experienced an afternoon of live music when Dudley Performing Arts (DPA) visited the academy. During their visit they performed 'The History of the Electric Guitar'. This session involved a musical journey of the guitar, from 50s blues and Rock n Roll, right up to the modern day. It also included an overview of technological advancement relating to musical equipment. We are sure you will agree that it has been a while since many of us have experienced live music, so this was a really enjoyable experience for all of those involved.



14 - Dudley Performing Arts at Pegasus Academy.

Leading together



Reimagining the curriculum

We were delighted to attend and present at the Local Authority, Dudley Metropolitain Borough Council (DMBC's) virtual conference in May. The conference was entitled 'Re-imagining the curriculum' and included sessions from the primary phase, the secondary phase and representation from Ofsted. Dudley Academies Trust delivered a session entitled 'Re-imagining language across the curriculum' which explored:

- The implementation of 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' (Education Endowment Foundation) prioritising disciplinary literacy.
- Developing a culture of reading in our primary phase.
- How we use Doug Lemov's 'Reading Reconsidered' to develop the practice of our English teachers.
- How the 'Bedrock Vocabulary' Learning Platform and our 'Word Consciousness' strategy are supporting our learners.

The session was delivered by our Chief Executive, Lead Director of Mathematics and Director of English. We were delighted that colleagues and learners from across the Trust participated in vide os which contributed to the session. Please take a moment to watch these videos; the links are provided below. Thank you to all those involved.



15 - Blowers Green Primary - Developing a Culture of Reading



16 - Secondary: Bedrock Vocabulary at Pegasus Academy

Working with West Midlands Police

During week commencing 21st June 2021, The Link Academy worked in partnership with West Midlands Police in order to promote good citizenship. This was also an excellent opportunity for our learners to 'Discover more' about careers within the police force. We are proud of our learners who embraced the experience of having officers onsite at the academy. Our learners clearly benefited from this experience, and we look forward to developing our partnership with Community Officers.

Dudley Art Teachers Network

Pegasus Academy has been collaborating with other educational establishments such as Birmingham City University and the University of Wolverhampton. The collaboration has enabled bespoke training sessions for higher education PGCE learners. We are delighted that this has in turn resulted in the final stages of establishing a Dudley Art Teachers Network across the borough.

Weduc

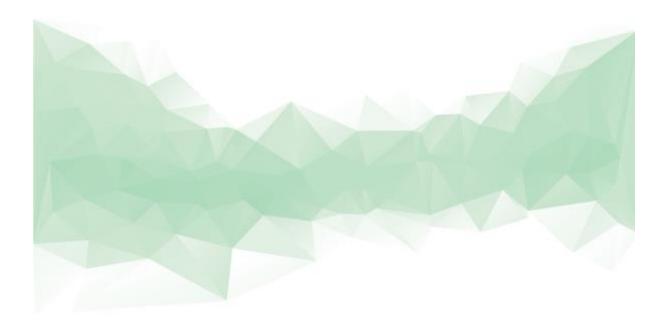
Weduc is our new parent and carer engagement app for all academies within our Trust. The app enables us and you to manage home learning, consolidate communications and increase parental engagement. To help us ensure you are always up to date with important news, key dates and your child's performance, please ensure you have installed and logged in to the Weduc app. If you require

assistance in accessing the app or have lost your enrolment code, please contact your academy directly.



17 - Weduc FAQ

Respecting each other and our world



Primary Happy Minds Project

In June, Blowers Green Primary's School Council introduced the 'Happy Minds Project' to pupils. The project enables the academy to provide additional support to pupils so that they can share any worries or concerns they may have. This was particularly important given the pandemic. Pupils in Key Stage 2 designed a 'fix it box'. This enabled pupils to share their concerns and thoughts

anonymously. Staff would then discuss the various topics in class in order to support and reassure pupils. The academy also gifted each class in Early Years and Key Stage 1 a worry monster. The worry monster, as pictured, is used during circle time to encourage the children to talk about their concerns openly and safely. Each class worked together to give their worry monster a name. The school councillors would like to thank everyone who entered the competition to name the worry monsters and choosing a winner was extremely hard!

Similar activities have taken place across our secondary academies such as at The Link Academy. Learners designed Mindfulness posters in order to encourage learners in classrooms. We are delighted to confirm that these posters are now on display around the school.



18 - Rainbow Monster



19 - Ronaldo Monster



20 - Rosie Monster



21 - Bob Monster



Celebrating the Euros

Academies across the Trust have been celebrating the England football team making it to the final of the Euros. For England, it was the first men's major tournament final since 1966 - what an achievement! On Wednesday 7th July 2021, England beat Denmark 2-1 during the semi-final and in celebration, The Link Academy invited learners and staff to wear an England (or Italy) football shirt to school on Friday 9th July 2021. Pictured are the Senior Leadership Team welcoming learners on the gate alongside some of our learners from The Link Academy. Although we did not win the Euros, we were all extremely proud of the England Team who demonstrated our core values throughout the year and inspired our young people.



23 - Senior Leadership Team at The Link Academy.



24 - Learners and Staff at The Link Academy.



Fstates Feature

All five academies were awarded Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) grants in 2020/21 for a range of estates improvement work: roofing replacement, heating replacement and fire safety compliance. Over £5 million of improvements are being made. Work commenced in October 2020 and some projects are almost completed. Projects included:

- The first Dudley Academies Trust 'Aspire Centre' at St James Academy is complete and occupied by leaners from across our secondary academies.
- Roof replacement at Pegasus Academy, St James Academy and The Link Academy. This
 included fully compliant lightning protection, Grade A acoustic ceilings and new Thorlux
 smart LEF light fittings.
- Replacement heating and domestic water systems and lighting protection works at Blowers Green Primary.
- Heating system replacement at Beacon Hill Academy.
- Electrical works at The Link Academy.
- New Entry Systems to The Link Academy, Pegasus Academy and Beacon Hill Academy.

We must acknowledge the incredible work of our site management teams. Colleagues have played a vital role in ensuring our estates remain safe, clean and conducive to the learning environment.



26 - Estates works at Beacon Hill Academy.



27 - Estates works at Pegasus Academy.



28 - Estates works at Pegasus Academy.

Thank a Teacher Day

We were delighted to see so many positive messages on national Thank a Teacher Day on 4th July 2021. Learners and staff from across Trust celebrated in a variety of ways. Our Chief Executive, provided the following message of thanks to staff across the Trust "Not only have we seen the quality of teaching preserved as we switched to remote learning, but you have done everything possible to support the wellbeing of our learners and each other through some very difficult times". At St James Academy, learners were busy designing cards which were donated by Daler Rowney and Elephant Academy Online Art Education. The academy also invited Mary Stevens Hospice Ice Cream Tricycle to the school as part of their mission to say Thank You!



29 - Mary Stevens Ice Cream Truck at St James Academy.



30 - Thank a Teacher Cards at St James Academy.



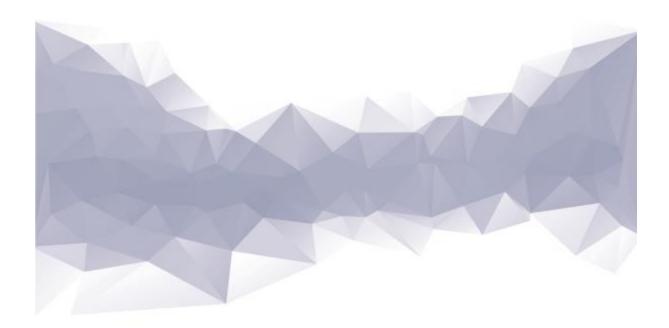
31 - Cards and backdrop donated by Daler Rowney and Elephant Academy Online Art Education.



32 - Thank a Teacher at The Link Academy.



Learning that inspires



AWS GetIT Winners 2021

We would like to say congratulations to our Year 8 learners at St James Academy for winning the national AWS GetIT competition 2021. AWS GetIT is a fully funded programme delivered in partnership with Amazon Web Services. GetIT aims to encourage girls to consider a career in tech and challenge gender stereotypes within the industry. The programme sees groups of learners designing an app that makes real, tangible social change possible within their school or local community. It is such a fantastic achievement, and we are extremely proud.



34 - Year 8 Winners at St James Academy

Duke of Edinburgh

Learners across the Trust have taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh award. For Pegasus Academy, the aim of the expedition was to create a 'vlog' style video based around the learners' moods at various stages during the expedition; this was based on a variety of themes, including the environment and wildlife they encountered. Learners not only had to pitch their own tents, cook their own meals using a Trangia, and navigate over a 2-day period, but they also had to carry everything they needed in their packs. Congratulations to all our learners across the Trust who participated in the Duke of Edinburgh award. This award truly helps young people to build a life-long belief in themselves and to discovertalents they never knew they had.



35 - DofE at Beacon Hill Academy.



36 - DofE at Beacon Hill Academy.



37 - DofE at Beacon Hill Academy.



38 - DofE at Pegasus Academy.



39 - DofE at Pegasus Academy.

Above and Beyond

As some parents and carers may be aware, during September, the Trust extends the academy day for all Year 11 learners. This is known as our Upgrade Mission. The Upgrade Mission is an initiative that has been designed to support all of our Year 11 learners and prepare them for their forthcoming GCSE examinations. We are very proud of the impact Upgrade sessions have on improving our learners' grades. We are also delighted to confirm that at St James Academy, Year 7 learners have experienced their own version of Upgrade! During these sessions, Year 7 learners focussed on further improving English and Mathematics skills.

In addition to Upgrade, Year 10 Learners at St James Academy have participated in '8:00am SMASH Sessions' at their academy and inspirational 'Master Sessions' at our sponsor, Dudley College of Technology. SMASH Sessions were available to learners during the mock examinations period and included breakfast, sprint revision sessions with staff and self-study groups. At our sponsor, learners participated in inspiring English and Mathematics master sessions. Well done to all those learners involved in Upgrade, SMASH and Master Sessions. Learners truly embraced the experience and went above and beyond in their studies. Thank you to all those involved in arranging the sessions. For additional information regarding our Upgrade Mission for Year 11, please visit the Why Choose Us > Upgrade Mission area of the academy websites.



40 - Year 10 learners from St James Academy at Dudley College of Technology



41 - Year 10 learners from St James Academy during breakfast sessions.



42 - Year 7 learners from St James Academy during Upgrade.

Sports Days

Throughout July, our secondary academies held their annual Sports Days for Years 7 to 10. All learners who participated in these events were fantastic and demonstrated such determination and teamwork. Congratulations to all our secondary winners! Blowers Green Primary are set to hold their Sports Day on Monday 19th July 2021. Good luck to all of our primary learners!



43 - Sports Days at St James Academy



44 - Sports Days at Pegasus Academy



45 - Sports Days at Beacon Hill Academy.

Relationships & Health/ Sex Education

Thank you to all our parents and carers that took part in the Relationships & Health Education (primary) and Relationships & Sex Education (secondary) parent and carer consultation. Parents/carers input has been vital in helping us shape a curriculum that supports children as they grow and develop and helps keep them safe. Our new curriculum was introduced in the classroom during the summer term and will be fully embedded in the new academic year.

Additional information

Contact Tracing over the Summer

As per the Step 4 of the government roadmap out of lockdown, which is expected to take place on 19th July 2021, close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. You may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts.

From 16th August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old together with any one who has received double vaccination, will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Further information relating to the reopening of our academies will be provided in preparation for September. Please continue to visit our websites under the COVID-19 Tab for any additional updates.

Contact us

For any further information relating to this newsletter please contact info@dudleyacademiestrust.org.uk. We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer break.

