



EXCEL ACADEMY NEWS



www.excelacademy.info

May 2017



Here we are again at the end of another busy half term!

Although the first half of the summer term tends to be the shortest in weeks it is certainly one of the busiest. Examinations are now taking place or fast approaching for all year groups. There is, of course, a particular focus on Year 11 and those important GCSE and BTEC Examinations.

In school the pressure has been building on students and staff preparing for those exams. Year 11 have been revising in earnest. The effort put in by the students and the fact that all our staff go the extra mile for their students, has been reflected in the attendance at Period 6 revision lessons taking place after school. To support students at this important time we have also had a session on 'mindfulness' and dealing with exam anxiety. Students have been offered sessions on dealing with stress which can arise during these important times. I

would like to thank all the parents/carers of children sitting exams for all their support.

During this half term there has also been a PSHE flexi morning focusing on Pride and Respect – with all students receiving guidance on how to respond to certain situations in the Academy. All we ask is that students are respectful and follow the Excel rules. If they do not then they need to respond in a respectful manner. The level of maturity that the students displayed during the sessions was impressive; for me it felt like evidence of the Excel way – students listening, taking on board the advice given and then using that advice to deal with everyday scenarios which arise. It was also evidence of my belief that if you have high expectations of what students can do, and you treat them with respect, then they will always excel.

I did ask for your views regarding a ban on mobile phones and support for a ban was overwhelming. A few issues were raised and as a consequence, we will consider a ban on the use of mobile phones next academic year throughout the academy day. Students will be able to leave their phones in their locker or at reception. If they wish they can keep them on their person but phones should not be seen out or in use during the academy day.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and the coming half term break.

Mr Bishop - Principal



The Excel Academy
Milton Road
Sneyd Green
SOT ST1 6LG Tel: 01782 882700
www.excelacademy.info



HOY Updates!



Year 7 have had an inspirational talk with Tom Davis, a former Commonwealth and British Judo Champion (now an athlete mentor) who came to talk about his life and how he succeeded in his sport. An excellent talk with lots of questions asked by Year 7.



Year 8 have had another successful half term. They had a visit from Judo Champion, Tom Davis, and I was really impressed with the calibre and the quality of the questions that the students were asking him. Students showed genuine interest and enthusiasm and I was very proud!

Stoke City Football Club also came to visit Year 7 in an assembly to talk about a sponsored Penalty Shoot Out. Students have all been given Sponsor Forms and this will take place on 06 June. Many prizes are up for grabs; from gym bags to a VIP day out at BET365 Stadium with a framed, signed football shirt! Money raised will be split between the Academy and the Stoke City Community Trust.

Finally we had a bit of an inter-form football competition! The winners were the team playing under the name of local 'legends' Crewe - however, more importantly, they raised £40 for Dougie Mac! Huge well done Year 8!

With the Alton Towers Rewards Trip on the horizon, I wish every student a successful last half term before Summer!



Year 9 have had an eventful half term. During our meeting with the Student Executives, a concern was raised where students felt they needed more help and support in learning how to revise and prepare for exams. The Academy invited Elevate Education in to deliver a session on ways to revise and prepare for exams, which students felt was very helpful. Ray Douglas came in to the Academy to talk to students about the dangers of knife crime, gangs, and why we need to respect each other - although this was hard hitting, it was a moving presentation. Year 9 are currently preparing applications to be part of the Prefect body. This means that we can further help Year 6 transition, and also support the Year 11 and 10 Prefects during their examination period.



What a wonderful term to be Head of Year 10! I was immensely proud of the young people turning in to young adults as they took on the highly important job of becoming a Prefect and wonderful role models for the Academy. During the process I believe there are many more of our young ambassadors in the making who will hopefully apply and join the prefect body next term in another special assembly. Maturity it seems is the word that best describes Year 10 students as they continue to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning and grades. 13 months to go until they are in the 'hot seats' of exams! Work Experience will have been completed by the time you read this and again I'm sure our Academy will have been represented to the highest standards.



The Year 11 students now find themselves well and truly in the thick of exam season, and have been issued with bespoke weekly timetables to suit their needs. We have been fortunate to be able to offer revision sessions before each examination, where key staff members offer last minute hints, tips and guidance for their imminent exam. There will also be some revision sessions on offer during the Half Term break, for which letters have been sent out.

I would also like to make Parents/Carers aware of the excellent support materials available via the Academy website, offering support on last minute revision tips and dealing with the stress of the pressurised situation that exam season brings.

With all eyes on the examinations, it's good to be able to offer a couple of distractions in the form of our Leavers Assembly which is scheduled for Friday 26 May in the afternoon. The main event, however, is the Leavers Prom, which is again taking place at the Moat House on Festival Park. We have arranged it for Friday 23 June, and I know many students are going to great lengths to make sure it is an enjoyable and memorable event for all.

Finally, could I thank everyone for the support they have offered the Year 11 students and staff as students move in to their final chapters of their Excel stories.

Best wishes!

Mr Kelsall - Vice Principal

Year 11 Final GCSE Examination Arrangements



Year 11 have now started their final examinations that will demonstrate their most important and recent achievements to date. The Academy has provided your child with a range of revision strategies, revision lessons as well as a Home Personalised Exam Timetable Planner to support them in their preparation for their exams, and we hope they plan their time well to ensure they achieve the best they can. Please use the Excel website to find the 'Home Personalised Exam Timetable' template, found under the 'Student' tab and then click 'Exams' from the left side menu. Here you will also find guidance on students sitting external examinations which your child should be familiar with.

From Monday 15 May, and every Monday from this point, your child will be issued with a personalised timetable for the week. This will clearly show examinations, revision classes or regular lessons they will be required to attend. Students are aware that their attendance to the Academy is compulsory (as usual) until the dates below. After the dates below, students are only required to attend the Academy when there is an examination or a planned revision session.

X Band – Friday 16 June – after the Physics exam

L Band – Tuesday 13 June - after the Maths exam

It is vitally important that your child is familiar with the Exam timetable mentioned above, because there are a number of early morning revision sessions that start at 8am (for example Maths on Wednesday 24 May). If students are not required for an 8am revision session, they should arrive at the Academy at the usual time. Morning exams will always start at 9am, whereas afternoon exams may start at slightly different times and finish later than 3pm.

In addition to materials and checklists provided by your child's subject teachers, below are our top tips and websites for your child to use.

Subject	Top tip/Website
English	www.litcharts.com
Maths	www.pixl.org.uk
Geography	www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize , Gojimo app, topic checklists provided
History	Revision packs, www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize , www.youtube.com
Spanish	www.vocabexpress.co.uk
PE	www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize / W drive
Science	www.tassomai.com

All of the staff at the Academy hope that your child prepares well for their exams and achieves the grades they have been working hard for over the last 5 years.

Academy Examinations: May/June/July 2017

In May, June and July, Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 will be sitting end of year examinations. For some students this will be the first time that they have to face an extended period of examinations and the first time that you will be supporting them through this process. I therefore think it would be useful to outline some details for you. The following year groups will be sitting their End of Year exams during the dates shown below:

Year Group:	Exams Begin Week Commencing:
Year 07	19 June 2017
Year 08	19 June 2017
Year 09	26 June 2017
Year 10	15 May 2017

As this is a new experience for the students, they will be prepared for the examination period in two ways; faculties will be undertaking revision with the students in the build up to the examinations and students will be fully briefed on the structure of the exams and what they need to revise. Revision materials will be given to students where appropriate.

The results of these examinations will provide information on how well each student is progressing in all subjects and will help to determine which set your child will be taught in next year. These examinations will also form your child's end of year subject grade. The Full Examination Timetable will be available on our website.

Mr Graham - Attendance



The Importance of Daily Attendance

As we approach the final half-term of the academic year, we find ourselves very close to our Government set target for 'expected attendance'. With that news, The Excel Academy would like to thank all of those students who have consistently attended the Academy day-in, day-out; it is a fantastic achievement and one which will reap rewards as each of you close in on your GCSE exams, be that next year, or in years to come.

Excellent attendance directly links to good GCSE outcomes. There is no better preparation than to be in with our staff each day, building excellent learning and progress that allows high achievement and successes.

Hopefully, the better weather and lighter days will bring an end to the bugs and coughs, and we can all enjoy a final half-term and run in to the Summer break. An important half-term still to complete, however, and with Year 11s finishing, staff and students will be maximising the remaining seven weeks to build a good year finish for Year 7 - 10s.

We look forward to the next seven weeks, and to working with you each day.



% Attendance	GCSE Level Equivalent	Comments
100%	9	Well Done!
98-99%	8	Your fantastic efforts have paid off
97%	7 - 6	
96%	5	Good! You got your GCSE and can build from here
93-95%	4	This needs some thought, some extra effort and consideration. This could either go 'good' or 'bad'
91-92%	3	
90%	2	You have got yourself into a danger zone! Even after all your work and effort it may result in very little if you do not put more in.
89% and less	1	
85% and less	0	

Mr Harvey - Assistant Principal



End of Term Rewards Trip

The traditional end of year rewards trip to Alton Towers is currently being planned for Years 7 to 10. This will take place on Thursday 20 July, the penultimate day of term. Students' placing on the Order of Merit is considered when deciding which students are eligible for the reward, and the top 70% of students in each year group is the usual benchmark for qualifiers. Good attendance and good behaviour are the two most important areas when determining the Order of Merit. Further information regarding the cost of the trip and consent information will be released in due course.

Uniform Standards and Expectations

As per the article in the Easter newsletter, here is a reminder of the Summer uniform expectations:

- All students must continue to attend the Academy in full uniform (including blazer and jumper).
- Mr Bishop will decide on a daily basis whether the uniform can be modified during the day. Therefore it may be that the students are allowed to carry their blazer rather than wear it.
- Staff may allow students to remove jumpers during lessons, however, when students are moving around the Academy, the expectation is that jumpers and blazers are worn.
- When the temperature rises further, Mr Bishop may decide that students are allowed to take off their blazer and jumper at all times around the Academy.

I hope we can rely on your support in ensuring your child has their full uniform every day and is then respectful of the Principal's decision on a day by day basis. Please be aware that the building is temperature controlled and air conditioned so the comfort of staff and students remains a priority at all times.

Skirt length and jewellery

Despite repeated requests to parents and students to ensure skirt lengths are appropriate and Academy rules regarding jewellery are adhered to, we still have issues with some girls who do not meet the expectations. As a result increased consequences will be enforced with these students.

Our standards will not be compromised and whether students agree with the rules or not, they are non-negotiable and therefore so are the consequences should the students choose not to comply.

Parental support with this matter is most appreciated.

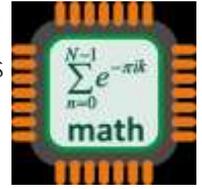
PSHE Day

Many thanks to Mrs Gerrard, Heads of Year and all staff who recently delivered an excellent PSHE day to the students.

At the heart of the programme was work covering the Academy's key principles of Pride and Respect. In addition, Year 8 took part in Inter-form activities, Year 9 had sessions with Elevate Education covering key study skills techniques; and workshops with Ray Douglas who delivered hard hitting presentations on the dangers of gang involvement and anti-social behaviour, whilst Year 10 were able to add the finishing touches to their Work Experience preparation. Year 11 students continued with their usual curriculum in preparation for their GCSE's which are now in full swing.

UKMT Junior Mathematics Challenge!

On Thursday 27 April, 40 of our Year 7 students took part in the U.K Mathematics' Trust Junior Mathematics Challenge. 200,000 students from 3000 schools across the country have taken part in this very challenging paper that tests students' logical thinking, mathematical ability and their resilience.



We are very proud of every student that took part in the challenge, as the effort and concentration levels during the paper were brilliant. The maths team had a fun lunch on the day of the paper, answering the questions and competing to see who could do the best!

Two of our students, Eden Moffett and Lily Mountford Booth, have received the silver award, an outstanding achievement, with 14 other students doing amazingly well and receiving Bronze certificates. One last big congratulations to everyone who took part in the competition, you worked very well and results showed this.

R.E. Trip!



On Thursday 11 May, Mrs Gibson and Mr Elikowski took his Year 9 class on a trip to the city central Mosque.

The students were extremely well behaved and learnt a lot about the main features of a Mosque and the role of the Mosque in the community.

The reason for this trip was due to the work they have been doing in class as part of the wider topic of Islam.

Year 11 Prom Reminder!

As you will be aware, we will be holding our annual Prom for Year 11 students again on Friday 23 June at the Moat House, Festival Park. Could we ask that the balance of £13.00 or full payment of £23.00 be made as a matter of urgency. Please bring any money to Student Reception and a receipt will be issued.

Attendance at the Prom is as always dependent upon the students maintaining good behaviour standards, being well presented, and equipped for learning and achieving the expected levels of attendance to the Academy.



'My Secret Place' Winners!



Huge congratulations to Paige Gallimore, Year 8, and Lily Mountford-Booth, Year 7, who won the Academy's 'My Secret Place' short story competition! They will now go forward to compete against other school winners in the city! I'm sure you'll agree they are fantastic! Good Luck!

My Secret Special Place by Paige Gallimore

Silence. Dangerous silence.

She's lonely, cold and broken. She sobs as the beautiful yet eerie moon illuminates the very ground she stands on; as if she's in the spotlight on stage performing. The ground is crumbly but still hard. Everything she knows was taken away in a blink of an eye. The rain curses the ground, hitting it with force as if trying to break the surface.



Buildings that once stood tall and proud in the chaotic city have since fallen and are now nothing more than a distant memory. She collapses. She's empty. She closes her eyes and enters her complicated mind; leaving this cruel world behind and finding sanctuary in her safe place.

The magnificent sun and blooming flowers paint a picture in her mind that she so desperately longs for. She takes her self back a few weeks. For just a short while she escapes the solitary silence of the real world. In her world everything is perfect. It's the only utopia she knows. Now she smiles as she plays on the swing that made her childhood special. It's in that very spot she met the love of her life, where she took her own child. All she sees now is the face of her young daughter. So precious and pure. This makes her feel safe and secure just to see her again, even if it is only in her head. She can hear her laughing as she plays. She begs for just five more minutes on the swing.

"Just five more minutes mummy. Please?" she asks full of hope. Then suddenly a crash of thunder startles her and she wakes from her dream world. She thinks to herself, 'I wish I had five more minutes.'

Her last breath is almost as angry as the sky. As she goes everything is silent and calm one more.

Silence. Dangerous silence.



My Dystopian Sanctuary by Lily Mountford-Booth

Death, war and gloom surrounds me. I have no friends or family, they were taken. My house is scattered like the ashes of a loved one across what used to be London. Electricity and happiness are non-existent. Cold remains of the Big Ben lay under my over worn shoes, small foot shredding stones cut the heels of my swollen feet.

The world is broken. No one is safe from them. The days are worthless now that they have destroyed my Earth. I stopped

counting them after 735.

The only sanctuary I have is my Burrow. Only I know its location and how to enter it without being slaughtered. I hate this world, but I'll save myself and my cat. He is my only love, my only memory, my only sanity that remains.

My world is located underneath the remains of The Tower Of London. I would tell you how to enter safely, but I can't trust anyone anymore. It is my paradise filled with art, hope and memories. My food and water is sourced from abandoned farms and I care for the life stock that has survived this long.

My burrow provides warmth, comfort, safety and sanity. It's filled with sketches paintings and photographs of my family, my friends and the world before its destruction. Before they were taken.

I am nearly there. I am nearly safe. I am nearly free.

Monty, the only the only piece of my life that I possess, welcomes me as I scope the dystopian land around me, searching for any killers that cover the territory. They hunt living creatures (including humans) capture them, torture and then kill them with their long jagged fangs.

I closed the entrance, sat down and took the deepest breath humanly possible and relaxed. I had collected chicken and duck for Monty and firewood to cook it, water to hydrate us and vegetables to keep myself healthy.

Happiness (I think that is what its called) overwhelms me as I begin to create my memories and hope into my personal masterpieces made up of paint and graphite. Love is what I create, the love that humanity thirsts, that I thirst, that we all lost.

I often loose myself, contemplating everything, The past, the future. Am I worth saving. Can I make a difference on this broken planet. Can this Earth be saved from the constant fear looming over the few that remain.

Someone is here. I can feel them...



Meet the Team!

In September 2016 a new safeguarding team was developed to include a range of staff who can support your child with welfare needs. Generally, this means that your child has somewhere to go if they feel upset, lonely, scared or worried about anything in or out of school.

This team consists of 5 members of staff.



Miss Smith works across the College Academies Trust (Excel Academy, The Discovery Academy, Maple Court, Studio College) in her role as safeguarding lead. She has been working within safeguarding for 9 years and teaching for 15 years, but now has the opportunity to do this work with even more students and staff!

Mrs Wainwright (right) has a wealth of experience in supporting young people and is on hand every day in the welfare office.



Mrs Sherratt (left) is usually everybody's first port of call! She is incredibly approachable and likes nothing more than seeing happy and safe students!

Mr Pickup (right) is a Maths teacher, and as you can see our only male member of the team! We are looking to expand this – so watch this space!

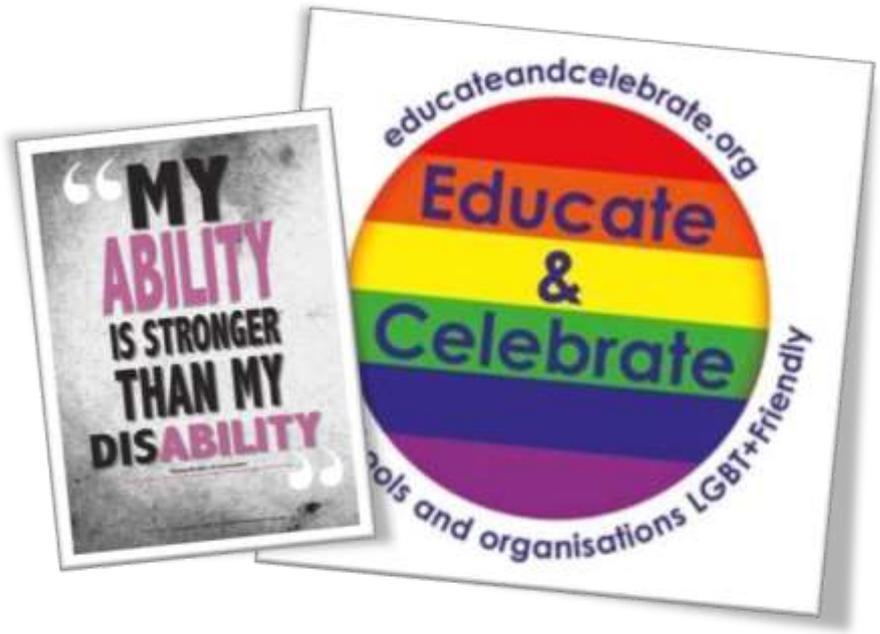


Mrs Malhi (left) is also the Academy's SENCO. She has lots of different roles to play in the Academy, but oversees all the Special Educational needs provision.

Equality & Diversity

At The Excel Academy we ensure that we follow the Government's Equality Act 2010. Within that we sign up to protecting the characteristics within it.

These are....



This term, we have focused on creating an 'Equalities Team' within the Academy consisting of students who want to see a change. Some of our young people, and young people in many schools, are part of the LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender+) community and this term will be the start of these young people seeing just how inclusive this Academy really is! We intend to educate and celebrate LGBT through displays, assemblies, PSHE time and events so that all students feel included and celebrated. **One World...Many People!**

If you would like to be part of the 'E Team'...let us know,



For more information on how you can support your child through these challenges, please see our website under 'Parents'.

You will see a huge button like the one to the left, and if you press it, you will see lots of support and guidance which can point you in the right direction.

Safeguarding for Parents/Carers



Remember to view our Safeguarding briefings for Parents/Carers every fortnight on either the Academy website, or on the Academy Facebook page! This contains all the up to date information on all the latest safeguarding issues and agendas, including those related to new technologies and APPS!

General Information



You may be concerned about a child or young person. You may or may not know them, or even their name. Child protection is everyone's responsibility. Abuse can take different forms such as:

- Neglect;
- Sexual abuse;
- Physical abuse; or
- Emotional abuse.

Don't assume that someone else will take responsibility and make that telephone call. You could help to save a child's life.

There are a variety of numbers to call if you are worried about a child or young person and think they may be the victim of neglect or abuse:

- If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, telephone 999
- If a child or young person is at risk of significant harm contact the Safeguarding Referral Team on 01782 235100 or email SRT@stoke.gcsx.gov.uk

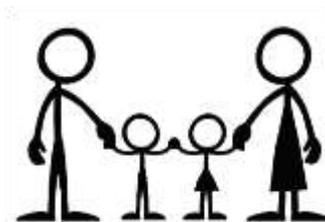
You can call someone in Stoke on Trent to help if you are worried about a child or young person and think they may be a victim of neglect or abuse:

- Cooperative Working Team, telephone 01782 232200 or email CW@stoke.gov.uk
- Emergency Duty Team - 01782 234234 (after 5pm)

If your child is upset about something happening at home...

We take your child's wellbeing very seriously. We pride ourselves on caring for your child to make sure they are happy, healthy and safe. In doing this you need to be mindful of the fact that if your child comes into school to talk to us about something that has happened at home which they are worried, upset or frightened about, we may

need to refer this to Children's Services or the Co-operative Working Team. We may need to contact the police. We may just need to ring you and talk things through. **Please don't be angry at us for doing this...all schools and Academies have to follow the same procedure set out in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016' document.**



If you need to talk to us about something that has happened at home...

Please call us if you feel we need to know about something that has happened or is happening at home that you feel might affect your child's emotions whilst being at school.



Safeguarding Policy

If you wish to read our Safeguarding Policy, please request a copy via our Main Office.

Mental Health - Parents

If you are worried about a child or young person's emotional wellbeing and mental health, there are a range of services available. These can provide additional support when low level techniques and support have not been effective. They can also usually be contacted to answer any queries you may have and provide advice, where appropriate, to help you to support the child/young person. There is also a range of free training available to help parents, carers and practitioners to understand the emotional health of children and young people and how to identify and support children and young people who are experiencing difficulties: www.camhs-stoke.org.uk

Peer mediation is both a program and a process where students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes between two people or small groups.

Duties involved:

- Being available to support students at break and lunchtimes
- Reporting any serious incidents to Form Tutors or Head of Year
- Encouraging students to speak respectfully to each other
- Carrying out welfare checks after intervention has taken place (making sure the students are OK after the peer mediation)
- Attend a termly meeting with Mrs Malhi
- Staying objective in the situation (not taking sides)

Person Specification:

- Caring
- Good listener
- Approachable
- Non-confrontational
- Understanding
- Good time keeper
- Good role model

Selected Peer Mediators will receive two full days of training this term followed with a third day in September. If you are interested, please write a letter explaining why you think you would be suitable and hand into Student Reception for Mrs Malhi by 9th June.

Dates for your diary

Summer Term 2017	
Half Term	Monday 29 May to Friday 02 June
Academy Closes	Friday 21 July

Upcoming Events

Year 11 Prom	Friday 23 June	Ticket Holders Only
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