

5th February 2010

Dear Parents and Carers

As part of my continuing effort to keep you informed and involved in your child's education at the Bridge, I felt it important to write to you before the half-term break. Having now been in post for the grand total of almost five weeks, and having weathered the snow storms at the start of the year, I am pleased to say that there has been a great deal happening at the Academy. The term is moving along at a tremendous pace, and the range of activities taking place each week shows how much talent our students have. They have led assemblies, competed in numerous sporting events, participated in fund raising ventures and rehearsed and presented an excellent drama production, to name a few.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for returning the questionnaire sent to you at the start of January which gave a great deal of insight into what you believe is working at the Academy and, more importantly, what you think is not. We are definitely listening to what you say and we are addressing any concerns you may have. Some areas will not easily be resolved but I have stressed to staff, parents and students that I am here for the long term and will endeavour to ensure your child is successful.

On Saturday, 23rd January I met several parents when the Bridge Academy played Langdon as part of the Tower Hamlets and Hackney Saturday Schools League. All years were playing and we managed to win all three games. This maintained the Year 7 team's position at top of the league, and top fourth position for Years 8 and 9.

This week some of our students visited another academy and went with our librarian, Mr. Higgins, on an author visit. Imagine my pleasure on hearing that several students were immaculately well behaved and an exemplary representative of our student community. In addition, I believe our young students were excellent competitors in a competition held on the day and managed to win prizes in the History quiz. Likewise, Year 7 students represented the Academy exceedingly well when they visited the National Portrait Gallery on 3rd February and the previous week too.

Lockers

I understand that in the past students have purchased identical locks whereby 'one key fits all'. To ensure students' personal belongings are safe, every student will shortly be receiving a combination lock free of charge from the Academy. It will be the responsibility of the student to keep their number combination safe. If the student loses their lock they will need to purchase a replacement.

Enrichment

The Enrichment booklet is available for all to see on the Bridge Academy website to help children make their choices. Spare copies of the children's choices are at Reception.

If for any reason your child has not returned their Choices Form for Enrichment, it is absolutely imperative that they get it in by Tuesday, 9th February or else they may be assigned to an Enrichment group that they have not chosen.

We have already had a fantastic response from students so far. Choices are in the process of being entered onto system at the moment.

- 📅 Tuesday, 9th February – data entry completed and lists sent to staff for checking
- 📅 Wednesday, 10th February - deadline for teacher returns
- 📅 Thursday, 11th February - new timetables printed and distributed to students
- 📅 Friday, 12th February, 4.10pm to 4.40pm - student enrichment clinic in Lecture Hall
- 📅 Tuesday, 22nd February - new enrichment activities active

Please note that on Tuesday, 9th February there will be no enrichment classes. Students will therefore leave at 2.50pm on this day.

KS4 Curriculum

We are now in the process of finalising our KS4 Curriculum and are looking forward to sharing this with you and the students. We have focused on providing a curriculum based on four key principles:

- 📅 To ensure that all students succeed with appropriate qualifications to progress to the next level of their education.
- 📅 To provide a deep and wide educational experience that encourages all students to fulfil their potential across many different areas relevant to their own abilities, skill and interests.
- 📅 To ensure that all pupils develop the Key Skills of Literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- 📅 To prepare students to move into adult working life and equip them with the technological skills to succeed in the continually changing modern workplace.

Our priority is to match students to appropriate courses and qualifications that will give them the best opportunities in further and higher education and employment. As parents you will play a key role in helping us make this happen. On the 3rd March we will be hosting a KS4 Curriculum Information evening from 6pm to 7pm at the Bridge, where we will outline our current plans for KS4 as well as providing you with general information about KS4. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this event. On the 10th March we will be holding our Year 9 Options evening. This will be an opportunity for you and your child to discuss with their Learning Adviser which options they will take in Year 10. On 25th March, Year 9 students will take part in an Options Taster day where they will get a chance to find out more about the different qualifications on offer.

2009/10 Term Dates

Spring Term 2010

Start	Half Term	Finish
Monday, 4 th January 2010	Monday, 15 th February to Friday, 19 th February 2010	Thursday, 1 st April 2010

Summer Term 2010

Start	Half Term	Finish
Monday, 19 th April 2010	Monday, 31 st May to Friday, 4 th June 2010	Friday, 23 rd July 2010

Staff Training Day: Monday, 7th June – the academy will be closed to students on this day.

Autumn Term 2010

Start	Half Term	Finish
Wednesday, 1 st September 2010*	Monday, 25 th October to Friday, 29 th October 2010	Friday, 17 th December 2010

* 1st September 2010 will be a staff training day. Students will come into school from 2nd September 2010.

Parents' Evenings

You will shortly be receiving a letter confirming the arrangements for Parents' Evening. The dates are as follows:

Year 9: 10th March 2010 (Options Evening)
Year 8: 22nd March 2010
Year 7: 21st April 2010

Non-Uniform Day

Some Year 8 students have requested a non-uniform day in order to raise money to help the people of Haiti. Students who do not wish to wear school uniform on the nominated day will pay £1 for this privilege. I am very keen to support the students with their initiative and have agreed that a non-uniform day will be assigned during the first week back after half-term. Students will be informed of the nominated day in due course by Ms. O'Shaughnessy and Ms. Evans.

Student Behaviour

In my assemblies to all students at the start of term, I reminded them of the standards and expectations regarding their behaviour and highlighted the Academy's Code of Conduct. It is extremely important that students assume responsibility for their learning and their behaviour. It is equally vital that parents / carers, students and staff work together to help students achieve to their full potential. Student discipline is a critical factor in maintaining a safe environment for students and staff and students who do not adhere to our Code of Conduct will be severely reprimanded. Please take a few moments to talk with your child about our

school's behaviour expectations and the consequences for inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

Code of Conduct:

- # We respect ourselves and others
- # We respect other people's property
- # We listen and follow instructions the first time we are asked
- # We always ensure that effective learning and teaching take place
- # We always use ICT responsibly
- # We respect our school environment
- # We take pride in our appearance and our school uniform
- # We speak quietly and politely to others
- # We move quietly and sensibly around the building
- # We only bring to school items which are necessary

We have used many and varied sanctions against students who have not followed this code. There have been a number of incidents where students have been asked to leave school because their behaviour was not acceptable. Their parents have been very supportive. We will continue to do this until students get the appropriate message.

Police presence

Please do not be alarmed if you see a visible police presence at the Academy. The Academy works very closely with the police and I had a very good meeting with our Safer Schools Partnership Officer. PC Hayley Keyes is our assigned officer. This is a relationship I positively encourage to ensure the safety of our students and the community. It was a strong feature of my last school.

Following a recent incident this week by a few pupils from our school and another academy in the area, the police were called and were on hand to deal with the incident. Until further notice however all students participating in MUGA activities at the end of the day or in PE clubs will be dismissed from the school as opposed to Haggerston Park as requested by some parents.

School Uniform

We are proud of our uniform and want to ensure the highest possible standard of dress in the academy. Can I remind you of the uniform requirements outlined in the student handbook provided when your child joined the academy:

Girls	Boys
Purple academy blazer	Purple academy blazer
Academy jumper	Academy jumper
White shirt with collar and Academy tie	White shirt with collar and Academy tie
Grey academy skirt or trousers	Grey academy trousers
Grey or black socks or tights	Grey or black socks
Plain black, flat shoes	Plain smart black shoes
Hats (Winter): Black beanie with blue logo	Hats (Winter): Black beanie with blue logo

Please note the following:

- Shoes: These should be plain black and smart. Boots, trainers, plimsolls, open sandals and ballet pumps are not permitted.
- Socks: Plain black or grey socks or tights should be worn.
- Scarves: Should be plain black, grey or purple.
- Bag: This should be an appropriate black school bag large enough to accommodate an A4 folder.
- Jewellery: Only one pair of small gold or silver stud earrings (no diamante). No other jewellery is permitted. It can be confiscated by staff.
- Hair: Girls are required to tie back long hair throughout the day. Boys are not permitted to have patterns cut into their hair.
- Coats: Plain black or grey coat preferred.

Students must wear their shirt collars buttoned up and the tie should be smartly tied. No coats / scarves / hats to be worn in school. The students are cooperating with us on this.

Garments that do not comply with the school uniform will be confiscated.

Sweets, fizzy drinks and chewing gum inside school





These are not permitted. They will be confiscated and if used in a lesson the member of staff has my permission to detain the student.

Newsletter

We intend that the Bridge Academy Newsletter will be issued on a weekly basis after half-term to improve communication. Copies will also be available in the Parent Room for any parent who has not received it.

Clarissa Pilgrim - Parent Support Advisor

Clarissa is based in our school one day a week and is available to support parents. Her key role is to support Natalia Dawkins on Community engagement and Lesley Hamilton in developing links with parents and supporting achievement of students. This is broken down into the key areas below:

-  Improve relationships between school, parents and children to support attendance, behaviour and achievement for the students within the academy
-  To support and empower parents to develop their own knowledge, skills and understanding of education provided for their children
-  Increasing and valuing parental participation in the life of School
-  Enabling children to reach their full learning potential

Clarissa is always available to support parents on a Monday and by all means do ring and make an appointment with her if you have ideas or would like support or help.

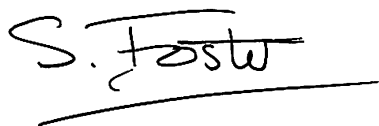
Conclusion:

I would like to thank you for your very kind welcome and look forward to meeting you in the near future. If you would like further clarification, the Senior Leadership Team is at the Academy entrance from 8.15am to 8.30am every morning to greet students and at the end of the day. We are always happy to speak with any parents or carers during these times. Alternatively, I can be contacted via Anne Shaker, my PA; her direct number is 020 7749 5256

Finally, in closing, I would like to mention that one of the key points I have tried to make clear to governors, staff and students is that I am not changing things for the sake of being new, and certainly not during this term. There has been enough instability over the life of the Academy and the systems / structures that were introduced last term we are going to embed. We are trying to make the new things work even better. This is not therefore a lost term, but a period to build upon. I am sure that I would have your support on that stance.

Thank you for your continued support.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Foster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Stephen Foster
Principal