

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Wow, how time flies! It seems incredible that I am writing to you now at the end of our first half term at Watling and that it was seven weeks ago when I first wrote to you at the beginning of term. It is really striking how our students have developed during that time, not just in terms of their learning but also in the way they have grown together as a community, through their tutor and House groups. Standing in the corridor today at the end of tutorial it struck me just how much more grown-up they are now in comparison with their first day of term and how so many new friendships have blossomed giving a real sense of confidence and togetherness.

Thank you to all of you as parents, carers and families who have supported your children at the start of their Watling journey and supported us with establishing our routines, expectations, and standards. The strength of the partnership between you and us will really help the children go from strength to strength throughout the year.

Today we finished the afternoon with a celebration of students' successes this half term following a surprise at break time when the 'Starship Robot' appeared in the playground to deliver 180 certificates for successfully completing the challenges presented to them as part of the 'virtual trip' to the National Museum of Computing. A massive thank you for this end of half term treat to Starship Robots, which launched their maiden delivery service in Milton Keynes in 2018. You can find out more information about them at <https://www.starship.xyz>



**Respect / Responsibility / Kindness**

Looking ahead to next half term I have a few things I would like to share with you about the curriculum, grouping and PE and also a reminder of some key dates.

### **Curriculum and Grouping**

As you will know we have, up to now, taught all students together as a tutor group, which is essentially a mixed ability class. At the beginning of December, we will be re-grouping the students into classes loosely based on ability. English, History, Geography, RE, Food and Well Being groups will be based on our assessment of students' attainment in English; Maths, Science, Computing, Spanish, Music groups will be based on our assessment of students' attainment in Maths. The remaining subjects will still be taught in mixed ability groups.

This will be based on the teachers' assessment of the student's work so far this half term, information from the Cognitive Abilities Tests students took earlier this month, information we received from Primary schools and in addition, a more formal assessment that students will sit in Maths and English during the week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> November. This will allow us to provide more targeted stretch and/or support for our students. Please be assured however, that we will review these groupings at key points throughout the rest of the year and make any group changes that are necessary to ensure that every student achieves to their full potential.

### **PE lessons off-site**

I am extremely grateful to Fairfields Primary for working so constructively with us to share their PE facilities, but we have found this slightly restrictive. As a result I have had detailed discussions with St. Mary & St. Giles C of E Primary and they have offered us the exclusive use of the field on their Galley Hill site and their Multi-Use Games area at their site in Stony Stratford. This is a great opportunity and will give us much more scope to offer a secondary PE curriculum and so with effect from the first week back, PE lessons will take place at one of those venues. Please can you provide your son/daughter with football boots for their PE lessons after half term.

To facilitate this, you may have noticed a Watling Academy minibus has appeared in our car park! We will transport the students to and from the venues in groups of 15 in our own minibus, fully insured by us and driven by a member of our Academy staff. There will be two journeys needed to transport each class and a member of staff will always remain with the students. There is direct access to the sports facilities we are using, and we have arranged for specialist toilet provision to ensure there will be no need for students to enter the St. Mary & St. Giles school buildings.

A huge thank you to Miss Holland, the Headteacher at St. Mary & St. Giles, and her team for all the help they have provided in making this happen. PE is an important part of the curriculum and I am keen to make sure we have the best facilities available until we move into the main build.

To ensure we minimise the risk from COVID-19 transmission, all students will be required to wear a face covering whilst in the minibus and to remain facing forward throughout the journey. When students exit the minibus, they will need to wipe their seating area down with sanitising wipes, just as they would do in a lesson.

I would be very grateful if you could complete the permission slip attached to this letter and return to Watling Academy via your child's tutor on the first day back after half term (Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November).

### Dates for your Diary

- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November Students return after half term
- Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November PE begins at St. Mary & St. Giles
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 6:30-8pm Friends of Watling Academy meeting (online)
- w/b Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November Maths/English assessments in lessons
- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November Academy STEM day
- Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 7:45-8:45am Parent Drop-in (email for telephone appointment)
- Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 5-8pm Subject teacher consultation evening for GHN/FWL/BPR (online)
- Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December Inter-House event
- Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December Progress Reports home
- Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 5-8pm Subject teacher consultation evening for CBL/JCY/RST (online)
- Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December Non-uniform day
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December Academy Christmas lunch
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 5:30-8pm Awards Evening
- Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December School closes at 12:55pm for end of term

This letter is also being sent via our Parent Communication Tool SIMS InTouch, if you have not received an email via SIMS can you please let us know by email [admin@watling.academy](mailto:admin@watling.academy)

Yours sincerely,



Mr Ian Bacon  
Head of School

***Please Return this form to your child's Form Tutor on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020***

**Permission for Students to Take Part in Off-Site Physical Education Activities during the School Day at St. Mary & St. Giles C of E Primary School**

Please indicate:

- a. I understand and agree to the arrangements in place as per the letter from Mr Bacon and give permission for my child to be transported to and from St. Mary & St. Giles sports facilities via school minibus driven by a fully insured and trained member of Watling Academy staff.

YES  NO

- b. Is your child allergic to any medication or suffering from any conditions requiring medical treatment?

YES  NO

(If yes, please give details .....

.....)

- c. I agree that if my child urgently requires medical treatment and it is not possible to contact me or my partner, the teacher in charge of the party is authorised to give consent on my behalf

My contact telephone number(s) is: .....

Name of student ..... Registration Group .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....