



Batley Grammar School

Mrs Brigid Tullie

Head

7 July 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians

As the 2009-2010 school year draws to a close I would like to update you on our 'Free School/Academy' proposals and bring a few items to your attention for the next school year.

Free School/Academy Update

You may have noticed the change of terminology from Academy to 'Free School'. We have been invited to submit our academy proposals under the new coalition government's 'Free School' pathway.

What is the difference between an Academy and a 'Free School'?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools, free from local authority control. Other freedoms include setting their own pay and conditions for staff, freedom from following the National Curriculum, and the ability to change the lengths of their terms and school days. There are plans for further freedoms for academies in the way they engage in local partnerships and deliver 14-19 education. 'Free Schools' are all-ability state-funded schools who will enjoy the same freedoms as academies free from local authority control. All 'Free Schools' will be accountable, like other state schools, via inspections and tests. (DfE website)

We submitted our 'Free School' proposal form, just shortly after the DfE released this new application form, a fortnight ago. Since then, the DfE have been in contact with us with regard to the next steps and we have a Partnership For Schools team visiting us later this week.

For the time being, to ensure that information is not misrepresented we shall communicate by letter rather than posting information on the school website and you will be informed of our developing progress.

I continue to operate an Open Door policy and you are most welcome to make an appointment, with my secretary, to see me to discuss any of this.

School Newsletter, Dates and Website

The Spring/Summer Term Newsletter, with the various articles and photographs, only gives you a flavour of the many activities and events that have taken place in both Senior School and Priestley House. The School Magazine, due to be published during the summer holidays, will give fuller and more comprehensive coverage.

Calendar dates can be found on our website www.batleygrammar.co.uk and we have made access to them more easily available via a link from the homepage. We would encourage you to look at our website, which is regularly updated and displays the most recent versions of school policies. We always welcome your suggestions and feedback as to what other information and inclusions you would find useful.

Contacting School

Please note that if you need to contact a member of staff in senior school with regard to your son or daughter, unless you have an administrative matter which can be dealt with by the School Secretary or the staff in the Finance Office, you should make contact with the Form Tutor in the first instance. Depending upon the circumstances they may then refer the matter to the Head of Year, as appropriate, but they should be the first point of contact as they meet with your son or daughter at least twice a day and are likely to be the person most familiar with their progress and situation. In Priestley House the first point of contact will be the class teacher.

School Uniform and Dress Code

As all parents will be aware, Batley Grammar School demands high standards of personal appearance from all our pupils. School uniform must be complete and correctly worn at all times. With this in mind, I would like all parents and pupils to pay careful attention to uniform purchases over the summer holiday to ensure that standards remain as high as possible during the next academic year.

The correct school uniform is very clear (and can always be referenced in the pupil planner). However, important points to remember for September about our standards of dress are:

- Pupils **must not** wear shirts or blouses that are too short to ensure that they can always be tucked in and/or are too tight at the neck.
- Pupils **must not** wear shoes that do not follow our clear guidelines, namely: plain black, leather, low heeled, no “extreme” styles.
- We only allow a **minimum** of jewellery: one earring (plain, small stud), in each ear lobe, no other piercings.
- **No make-up whatsoever** may be worn in Key Stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9).
- **Discreet make-up only** is allowed in Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11), with absolutely **no nail varnish**.
- Skirt length for girls in Key Stages 3 and 4 is “knee length”.
- Any hair colouring must be in **natural shades** and an appropriate style for school.
- If a pupil chooses to wear a grey jumper then it **must** be the regulation school jumper with the school colours around the neckline. Alternative grey or black jumpers or cardigans will not be allowed.

Sixth Form Dress Code

Mr Hussain (Head of Sixth Form) has sent a separate letter to all parents of members of the Sixth Form giving full and precise details of the updated Sixth Form dress code.

Thank you for your support regarding this important aspect of school life, helping us maintain our emphasis on high standards of personal appearance for all our pupils. Please continue this support by ensuring that all uniform purchases for September are appropriate in size and style.

We clearly have no wish to spend time dealing with unnecessary breaches of school uniform rules, but all pupils should understand that our high standards will be enforced, maintained and also improved wherever possible.

Pupil Safety

I should like to remind parents that the yellow zig-zag lines outside the school gates are there for the safety of everyone and parents should not stop on them to drop off their children. There have been a number of incidents reported to me that give grave cause for concern and we have been most fortunate not to have had a serious accident occur. I should like to appeal to parents to ensure that they obey the Highway Code.

Similarly we have had one or two incidences of drivers driving at speed across the playground. Such irresponsible behaviour is unacceptable and an accident waiting to happen. To ensure the safety of our pupils the speed limit on school grounds should be no more than 10 m.p.h.

Absence and Punctuality

In senior school we have witnessed the persistent lateness of an increasing number of pupils. Please ensure that your son or daughter arrives in school in time for registration at 8.55.

We have experienced an increasing number of pupils being removed from school for extended holidays and other events without first gaining permission from school. It would seem appropriate therefore to draw your attention to an extract from our Attendance Policy (full details of which you will find on the website in the Policies section):

“Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence. Parents cannot approve absence. On the first day of a pupil's absence from school, parents or guardians should contact the school office, by telephone and at the earliest opportunity, giving a reason for the absence and a date when the child is expected to return to school.

Parents should attempt to arrange appointments for their child outside school time whenever possible. When the appointment is local, the pupil will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.

Other than in exceptional circumstances a family holiday should not be arranged during school time. Parents must seek, in writing, permission for time off school prior to the event”.

May I also remind parents of the importance of contacting school as soon as possible if your son or daughter is absent due to illness. Parents are requested to telephone school before 8.45 a.m. on the first day of absence. It should also be followed up with a note in the pupil planner for senior school pupils or a letter to the class teacher for Priestley House pupils. Failure to contact school will result in a pupil having an unauthorised absence recorded.

Parents' Association and Friends of Priestley House Events

Included with this letter is a flyer advertising the Parents' Association and Friends of Priestley House Christmas Ball. Tickets will be available from the School Office either individually or you may like to make up a table of 10 people. To request tickets please complete the reply slip and return it with your cheque made payable to Batley Grammar School Parents' Association. The Parents' Association members work hard to support the school and your support for such events would be greatly appreciated.

Bags2School

There will be a **Bags2School** collection next term at the end of October/beginning of November. If you are having a clear out you may like to donate those unwanted items to this venture which raises valuable extra funds for projects in school. Collecting bags for clothes, shoes, bags, bedding, curtains and soft toys will be sent home early next term. This has been particularly well supported in the past and we look to you for your continued support.

This academic year has been a particularly busy and eventful year but also an exciting year as we look forward towards celebrating our 400th anniversary in 2012.

I have both met and corresponded with many parents since our announcement in March and I would particularly like to thank you as parents for your support and encouragement for the direction in which we are moving towards 'Free School' status. You may be interested to know that not only interest in the school, but registrations and admissions have increased since that announcement.

As usual our pupils have worked hard at Batley Grammar School and Priestley House and many have contributed fully to the corporate life of the school. This is something we wish to continue to increasingly encourage, but in the meantime they deserve their rest and relaxation time over the summer period.

The staff and I look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Yours sincerely

B P TULLIE (Mrs)