



NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY  
SAMWORTH ACADEMY

Friday, 11 July 2014

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing with news of our most recent Ofsted inspection and the recommendations they have made, our end of term arrangements, and term dates and times of the school day for the next academic year.

**Key Messages** – *please read on for more information on all of these messages:-*

**1. Ofsted Monitoring Visit**

- NUSA is making reasonable progress; report now available online.
- From September, NUSA will be imposing fines for persistent absence and lateness.
- New rules for September on sweets, fizzy drinks, mobile phones.

**2. Summer Term 2014: End of Term Arrangements**

The last day of term will be **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**; please ensure you ask your child for details of the end of term trips.

**3. Term Dates for 2014-15**

The Autumn Term starts on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September**. Our term dates for the Spring and Summer terms will be the same as Nottingham City, but our Autumn term dates will be different.

## **1. Ofsted Monitoring Visit**

I am pleased to report that our final monitoring visit for this academic year has confirmed that we are still on track to come out of Special Measures within Ofsted's expected time limit of two years. We remain confident that the changes we are planning for 2014-15 will mean that we will be ready for that milestone much earlier. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our pupils, parents, carers, staff, governors and sponsors who have all made this possible. It has already taken a lot of hard work to get this far, and in reality we have only just started our journey of improvement.

### Ofsted's recommendations

The Ofsted monitoring visits are not only designed to inspect standards, they aim to give clear recommendations to schools, to help them improve. While our inspection team were pleased with what we have done so far, they were clear that we still have a lot to do to become a 'good' school.

### The quality of teaching

Overall, teaching has improved, but standards in the lessons observed were still too variable. As many of you are aware, we have not had enough teachers at NUSA this year, particularly in English, Maths and Science. I am delighted to report that we are fully staffed for September, and indeed many of our new staff are already here making preparations for next year.

### Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are safer at NUSA now, as incidents of serious misconduct have dramatically reduced. However, there are a number of pupils in every year group who are not supporting our rising expectations. Since starting at NUSA in November I have tried to give every pupil the opportunity to 'start again'. We have had some fantastic successes, with a number of pupils making the most of that opportunity to re-focus on their education. I will, however, continue to take a determined view of behaviour in school, and in some cases this may unfortunately mean I have to permanently exclude pupils whose behaviour continues to threaten the education of others.

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### Attendance

Our average attendance figure for this year will be 93%. While this may sound good, in reality it means that 'on average' our pupils miss almost three weeks of lessons. Our inspectors were very clear about the need to use fines to tackle the worst cases of persistent absence and lateness. I am very aware of some of the negative stories in the press about these fines, but I hope parents can appreciate how important it is for us to improve our attendance figures, in order to improve the progress and attainment of our pupils.

### Academy rules and expectations

We are currently revising some of our rules for September. Those that have been finalised include a ban on all drinks that contain too much sugar, particularly those that also contain caffeine. Excess amount of sweets will also be confiscated. There will be designated areas and times when pupils can use electronic devices such as mobile phones and music players. We will also be expecting all pupils to adhere to the uniform expectations that we published earlier this year. Please refer to them before purchasing new items for September. Can I particularly draw your attention to the need for formal shoes and a plain coat. Pupils will also need a school bag large enough to carry their planner (A5 size), pencil case and some books.

You can view the full report on line at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/135761>, or via our website. There will also be information evenings for parents in September.

## **2. Summer Term 2014**

The final day of this term for pupils will be **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014**. I have changed the curriculum for next year to include more lessons of English, Maths and Science. This means that these departments need more space, and so there needs to be a re-organisation of the whole academy. We have also moved to a year based pastoral structure, and so pupils need to be re-assigned a locker that is close to their registration room. For these reasons, our governors have agreed that it is necessary to close the school to pupils on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July to complete this process safely.

## **3. Term Dates and Times of the School Day for 2014-15**

The Autumn Term for 2014 will start on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September** for all pupils. There is a slight change in the times of the school day, with morning registration starting at **8.45 a.m.** and the last lesson finishing at **3.15 p.m.** On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September our new Year 7s will meet at 8.45 a.m. in the Lecture Theatre. All other pupils will be directed to their registration room, where they will be given their new timetable and instructions for the rest of the day.

NUSA will follow the city holiday pattern for schools next year, with one noticeable exception. NUSA will only take one week's holiday for October half term, and will add an extra week to the Christmas holiday. This is not a decision we have taken lightly, as we realise the potential disruption this will cause for families with pupils in primary and secondary school. However, we have to retain focus on our primary responsibility, which is to secure far better examination results for our pupils. It is our view that pupils will learn far more effectively in October than in mid to late December at the end of a long term. We intend to trial this holiday pattern for 2014-15, and then review it in the Spring term, including taking feedback from our primary feeder schools and from parents and carers. I would appreciate your support in trialling this holiday pattern for next year.

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Watts**  
**Head of School**