

14 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

It has been a few months now since I was appointed Principal at Netherwood, so I think the time has come to write to you all to introduce myself. Over the past couple of months, I have been working with a number of my new colleagues to understand the academy, how it operates, and formulating how we can all work together to make rapid improvements.

I am incredibly excited to be joining the academy, and I have been very impressed with how the staff I have already met are genuinely passionate about the academy, the students and the whole community.

I have been in education and schools for 20 years – and 14 of those as a senior leader. I have been very fortunate to have led two schools as Principal, Thornhill Community Academy in Dewsbury and Co-op Academy in Leeds. Brilliant as these jobs were, there is always a good time to embark on new challenges, and I made the decision to move to Netherwood because I saw straight away the potential here. Nothing I have seen since has convinced me otherwise – and I cannot wait to get cracking, and working with the talented staff and students.

I am not the only new leader in the academy – in fact, there are quite a few. This will mean that the leadership team looks very different to what you have been used to. And there are staff you will be familiar with already who have taken on new responsibilities.

Principal – Mr Mitchell

Senior Vice Principal – Mrs Hubbert

Vice Principal – Mr Bennett

Associate Vice Principal – Mr Harper

Assistant Principals – Mrs Priest, Mrs Waite and Mrs Gwynnette

Mrs Flaherty joined the academy at Easter as Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In addition, Miss Wilson, Miss Smith and Mr Walker have all taken on a greater role as part of our wider Leadership Team.

The first term or so is going to be extremely challenging as everyone gets used to new ways of working under the post-pandemic arrangements. Alongside the staff, I will be looking at all the ways we can make the transition to the new normal as smooth as possible, as well as looking at ways we can help students catch up on what they might have missed. I hope I can count on your support during this difficult period.

I look forward very much to meeting the students in September, and will be creating opportunities for parents to come into the academy in the new academic year to find out more about what we are striving to achieve at Netherwood.

I will be in touch again early in the new academic year, but – in the meantime – I wish you good health over the summer break.

With regard to our re-opening in September, year groups will return on a gradual basis. Please make a note of the following:

- We are **closed** to students on **Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September** due to INSET days.
- The new Year 7 students will start in the academy on **Thursday 3rd September** (please meet in the Amphitheatre **at 8.20am**. You will be directed by staff at the front of the academy if you do not know where to go). The day will finish at 2.40pm. This will be an opportunity for our new Year 7s to spend time in the academy on their own and for us to do some of the transition work that we were unable to do in the summer term.
- **Year 7** will be in again on **Friday 4th September** (8.20am to 2.40pm).
- Year 11 will return on **Friday 4th September at 1pm**.
- **All year groups** will be in the academy from **Monday 7th September**. There will be a slightly staggered start to the day with year groups entering the building in 15 minute intervals via a designated entrance (we will send further details on this in due course).

We very much look forward to welcoming our students (new and current) back in September.

Yours faithfully



Mr J Mitchell  
**Principal Designate**