

Ref: JEV/SME/AST/RCL/GHA

2 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Uniform and Attendance Expectations for Plume Academy Students (Years' 7-11)

I hope this correspondence finds you and your family well after what we hope has been a wonderful summer holiday.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our students back into the academy for the new academic year. A special welcome to our new Year 7 students who are joining us from a variety of primary schools, and our Year 9 students who have transitioned to Fambridge Road Campus.

As we commence a new academic year, we felt it essential to share some key changes in our academy protocols, especially with regards our uniform policy and our new attendance structure that will commence this term.

Uniform

As a team of staff, we continue to listen to our stakeholders and through various forums, discussions, and communications with our students, families and colleagues, we have identified aspects of our uniform that we believe can be adapted to better support student wellbeing, self-esteem and personal confidence. By doing so, we believe we have adopted more of a modern day approach but, importantly, without compromising our usual high standards and expectations for uniform at the same time. Therefore, we have amended our Uniform Policy, which can be accessed via www.plume.essex.sch.uk/policies and we have summarised the key amendments below:

- **Earrings** (in addition to studs) will be permitted with one being worn in the lobe of each ear. Earrings must be removed for practical subjects though to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students during these activities.
- **Makeup** may be worn but must remain subtle/discrete.
- **Eyelashes** may be worn whether it be extensions or glue on eyelashes. Light mascara may also be used to volumise eyelashes if required.
- **Jewellery** – items such as watches, bracelets, rings or necklaces can be worn, however, as mentioned with earrings, they must be removed during practical lessons.
Please note all these possessions remain our students' responsibility and we take no responsibility for the items if they are damaged or lost.
- **Nails** – coloured, painted, false or extensions of nails are permitted, however, this must be to a safe length that allows students to safely participate in physical activities whilst not causing any possible harm to themselves or others.

As an academy, especially in recent times, we have increasingly recognised and acknowledged that for an increasing number of our students, the ability to wear jewellery, and/or adjusted their appearance as outlined above can serve to enhance their self-esteem and mental wellbeing. Therefore, it is important we continue to be as supportive and as understanding as possible to enable our students to feel confident as they complete their studies at Plume Academy.

However, moving forward, we must also continue to endeavor to maintain our high standards for the key aspects of our uniform and we hope that as our parents and carers, you will support us to ensure students adhere to the following **non-negotiable** expectations:

- **Shoes and trainers** – these must be all black leather shoes or trainers. These can be such brands as Nike Air Force Ones, Converse all-star black leather shoes or other such brands if students wish. However, we will not accept non-leather trainers made by the same brands or variations of these shoes that come with non-leather features. This includes Nike Air Max and other similar trainers plus any black leather shoes with coloured stitching, piping or logos on them.

- **Skirts** – students wear the academy graphite grey skirt and it must not be rolled up to shorten the length or to change the fit of the skirt itself. Persistent infringements of the uniform guidance for skirts will see students' sanctioned accordingly.
- **Trousers/shorts** – students can wear harrow or graphite grey trousers or shorts in a straight leg or fitted shape. The academy will not accept alternative versions that are black or dark grey in colour. The grey shade must match the academy skirts, shorts and trousers as found on our uniform supplier website.
- **Top buttons** – top buttons must be done up at all times and ties worn with a minimum of four stripes for students in Years' 7-10.
- **Mobile phones and earphones/airpods**
 - **Mill Road Campus (Years' 7 and 8):** there will remain a no mobile phones and earphones/airpods allowed policy. This means that if a student wishes to bring their phone into Mill Road Campus, they will need to turn it off and place it in their bag for the duration of the academy day. Any Years' 7 or 8 student found with a mobile phone will have it confiscated until the end of the working day with persistent infringements leading to escalating sanctions.
 - **Fambridge Road Campus students (Years' 9-11):** will continue to be permitted to use their mobile phones and earphones/airpods at break and lunch time outside of the academy building. However, any student found using their mobile phone and/or earphones/airpods in the academy building at any time during the academy day, including break or lunch, should expect the item to be confiscated for a student collection from our SSC reception at the end of the working day in the first instance. Persistent infringements will lead to escalating sanctions.

As of **Monday 5 September 2022**, all students will be required to attend the academy in full uniform, adhering to each feature stipulated above as well as in our fully ratified Uniform Policy. Please use the following link to access this: <https://www.plume.essex.sch.uk/uniform-policy>.

Attendance

Research overwhelmingly shows that school absenteeism is negatively associated with a student's academic achievement. It has been imperative for us as an academy to work closely with our families on crucial matters such as attendance, however, as all stakeholders will appreciate, attendance is one of the most crucial contributors to student future success and holistic outcomes. Missing school for just a few days a year can damage a student's chances of gaining good GCSE outcomes, therefore, it is vital that stakeholders maintain good attendance (e.g. 95%+ attendance) and follow the clear expectations as outlined in our Attendance Policy which can be accessed via:

https://www.plume.essex.sch.uk/files/ugd/03a94d_d383a3c273c7410086780f25a35f16bc.pdf

The academy endeavours to work with all our stakeholders to ensure it continues to strive to improve attendance and as such, we would like to share with you our new expanded attendance staffing structure including each colleagues' specific role. This is so you are fully aware of which member of staff to directly communicate with should you have any attendance related queries:

Position	Role
Mrs Catherine Frampton-Singh Mill Road Campus Attendance Officer (From October 2022)	To support students and families collectively with attendance related issues at each campus. To ensure communications are sent home to parents and carers in a timely and supportive manner.
Mrs Claire Yorston Fambridge Road Campus Attendance Officer	
Mrs Mel Sarling Acting Mill Road Campus Attendance Officer and Maximising School Attendance Coordinator (MSAC)	To support students who may be struggling to attend the academy on a daily basis. Also, with medical evidence provided will be supported by the local authority and academy via an Education Access Referral (EAT).
Mrs Donna Harrington Maximising School Attendance Visitor (MSAV)	To complete regular home visits to parents and carers addresses where the attendance policy has not been adhered to, and to ensure that the stakeholders are supported in a bespoke manner. Also, to encourage, and ensure that students continue to improve their overall attendance.

Holiday Requests

Mrs Clark, as the Joint Head of Academy, will be leading on the decision process for holiday requests during term time. These requests must be submitted **four weeks before the holiday** and will only be authorised if the 'exceptional circumstances' provided are deemed appropriate as outlined by the Department for Education. All requests will receive an email response from Mrs Clark or Mr Stoneman (Vice Principal with responsibility for attendance) as well as a letter via our attendance team shortly thereafter.

If parents or carers would like to discuss any elements of the attendance policy and expectations, please contact your child's respective campus Attendance Officer, as highlighted above, in the first instance.

Punctuality

Good punctuality to and whilst at school is also essential for students to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital in supporting students to form good habits for later life.

Punctuality records form part of references passed onto employers or higher education institutes. Therefore, we would like to remind all stakeholders of the importance of arriving to the academy on time. Whilst we fully appreciate that roadworks and closures can pose some difficulties with punctuality, we reiterate to students that such events should be taken into consideration where possible, as it is imperative that students **arrive no later than 8.25am each morning.**

Punctuality whilst in school also builds the path to success in a student's later life by enabling them to plan ahead, become adept at building efficient routines, whilst also being fully prepared for their associated tasks. A punctual student is better equipped to deal with their day-to-day requirements than a person who leaves it to the last moment. As an academy, we acknowledge the importance of punctuality in a student's life from a young age and strive to build this habit as part of their holistic approach to education.

Our students and stakeholders should continue to expect to be challenged on persistent lateness and punctuality issues whether that be at the start of the academy day or individual lessons. Students will be supported as they always are, however, they will be expected to adhere to the academy movement times and ensure they arrive to lessons on time.

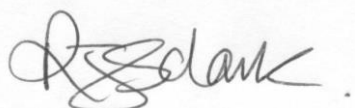
The tutor time sessions that our students partake in have a meticulously planned curriculum that not only includes the legal requirement of a morning register being taken, but also Personal Development lessons that contain crucial information that students will be required to know to support their own safety, wellbeing and lifelong learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter as well as for your ongoing support. We are all looking forward to the academic year and seeing our students return or arrive at their respective campuses in just a few days' time.

We are also very much looking forward to working alongside your good selves in your usual, positive and constructive manner, and we will continue to do our best to listen to any input from you too.

If you have any questions relating to the information above, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year or Campus Attendance Officer in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



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Plume, working with:

