



Malbank School and Sixth Form College



Rejoice in being the best that we can be

9th July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, thank you for your support for all we have done at Malbank in the last 12 months. Every time I sit down to write this letter and look back over the past 12 months it is amazing to consider what has taken place during the academic year. 2023/24 may not have been the strange experience of the return from Covid or feature the disruption of the industrial action we saw last year, but a year that started with a national press obsession about the quality of concrete in school buildings and ends with us looking towards a new political future and potential education policy changes with an entirely new government still feels like a pretty interesting one to have navigated. I genuinely love the daily challenge and variety that my job brings, and this is the same for all people in education – our job is based on developing the ability to build resilience and face challenges head on so as leaders and teachers we must address any issue with positivity and optimism. I am truly excited about what the future holds for Malbank and as such, what the future has in store for your young people.

As a school we have made massive strides forward this year in terms of school improvement, developing a level of consistency in our practice in terms of teaching and learning that we are very proud of. Our relentless focus on training for staff led by Mrs Edwards, Mrs Machin and our new Assistant Head Miss Coppenhall has seen staff embrace the widespread use of whiteboards to aid knowledge retention for our young people and has transformed the manner in which many of our staff deliver their lessons. The way we have worked tirelessly to keep our young people in school and worked hard to bring those who find school challenging back in has also been something to celebrate. It is a simple fact that increased attendance enhances chances of successful educational outcomes, and we will continue to do our utmost to help our young people attend every single day and make the 60 minutes matter as much as we humanly can. Alongside this attendance support, all schools nationally continue to see a rise in the need to support our young people with their mental health and help them to tackle their emotions. I would like to put on record my massive thanks to our extensive attendance, pastoral and wellbeing team for all they do for our young people. Malbank simply could not operate without them.

To our year 11 and 13 students and parents – we could not have asked any more of you. You gave everything you could and both you and the teachers who supported you through the process should be incredibly proud of the determination and effort shown throughout what was a gruelling exam period. Whatever happens in the summer, all anyone could ask is that you tried your best and you certainly did.

Like any successful student who reflects on their progress, as a school we know we still have work to do, know we are by no means perfect and until the experience is right for every single student and the outcomes ideal for all learners, we can never ever allow ourselves to stop looking for ways to better ourselves in the pursuit of excellence. However, just like any student who tries their best and deserves praise for giving their all – I want all the staff at Malbank to feel proud of themselves for working so hard this year in helping the students to feel happy, supported and challenged to be the best they can be.

Included in the following pages are a collection of messages I feel you need to know about before the summer break. Please also have a look at the forthcoming summer edition of our termly newsletter “Gaudeamus” for more lovely features and my end of year video update which will be released right at the end of term.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the students and staff at Malbank this year and I am incredibly excited about getting started again in September as we continue our shared journey of improvement. I wish everyone a restful and relaxing summer and look forward to seeing all our students return in September with batteries recharged, eager to make the 60 matter once again.

Headteacher: John D. Harrison B.A. (Hons.)

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Key end of term messages – July 2024

Arrangements for the end of term.

Term will finish for students at 12.50pm on Tuesday 23rd of July. Transport has been rearranged where possible but if any student is unable to get home, we will, of course, supervise them until 3.15pm. All school buses will depart from school at 1.00pm except for the D&G services which will leave at the normal time.

Exam results days arrangements

For all year 11 and 13 students, there will be separate communications with clear instructions about the plans for our two results days on August the 15th (A-Level) and 22nd (GCSE) in the summer. Please ensure you pay attention to MS Teams and emails over the summer for further communication.

Staff leaving us this month.

Mrs. Madden from Key stage 3 leaves us to embark on an exciting new career in social care and although we are very sad to lose her, I am sure her skills will go on to benefit families across Cheshire given her fantastic skillset and empathetic manner. Ms. Mayall from the Science team also departs for a new role closer to home at the end of term having supported us during the last year through our delivery of Careers. It goes without saying that they will both be greatly missed. I am sure all our students would like to join me in wishing them well on their next career steps.

We also sadly lose the wisdom and expertise of Mr Leigh and Mrs. Maunder who will retire at the end of term. Mrs. Maunder has worked at Malbank since 2005 and has been a key part of our KS4 pastoral team as a Learning manager from 2009 onwards. Thousands of students have benefitted from her support and guidance over the years; indeed, I cannot imagine there is a pastoral issue that exists that Mrs. Maunder has not handled and solved during her time at Malbank. Staff and students will keenly miss her knowledge, understanding and sense of humour enormously. Mr Leigh has been at Malbank since 1993, was a teacher here when I attended the Sixth Form myself and has instilled a love of technology in our students throughout that period leading the team as Head of Technology since 2017. Inspiring students to be creative and think of ways to solve problems throughout his career, Mr Leigh has also inspired students to achieve in sport too given his own exceptional achievements throughout his career in athletics. I would like to thank both members of staff for their fantastic long service to Malbank.

Uniform

As many parents look to buy new uniform before September, please note that details of our school uniform can be found in the attached document and via this link:

[Uniform expectations 2024.pdf](#)

Please note that from the first day back in September we will be launching an initiative to tackle uniform issues on the gate as students enter school. When students arrive, members of the leadership and pastoral teams will greet them at the gate and if there are any issues with uniform, students will be asked to remove them before they enter school. As all students should have a school bag, they will be asked to remove the non-uniform (for instance a hoodie) and put it in their bag for the remainder of the day. If they do not have a bag, staff will have a box to put the non-uniform in and students will be expected to collect the items at the end of the day. Any non-uniform items seen in school beyond the gate will be instantly confiscated.

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Please note that this check will apply to all elements of our uniform policy, including jewellery, piercings, and footwear. If students attend school in footwear that is not acceptable, they will be offered the alternative of a pair of shoes from the Key stage team as a loan whilst we have stock. Please note that unless for an evidenced medical condition, **students will not be allowed free time at break and lunch until the matter is resolved.**

The uniform check will also ensure that students are wearing a tie and blazer as both items are mandatory uniform. Again, as with shoes, we have a small supply of blazers and ties to loan out to students if they do not have the correct uniform. Again, this will lead to break and lunch detentions as above.

If your child has a piercing, please read the uniform expectations document as we have changed our approach to the wearing of plasters to cover piercings. From September, a clear retainer must be used in place of any facial piercing. Plasters will no longer be an option.

As with uniform, it is important to remind our young people of our **phone** rules. At Malbank phones are not allowed to be used on site and this will be enforced with uniform upon entry through the gate. From the gate onwards, phones and all related devices such as earbuds and earphones are not allowed and will be confiscated if seen.

Attendance and holidays in term time

As we continue to do all we can to encourage high levels of attendance in school, it is more important than ever that we work together to reduce any time lost from learning. Our leave in term time policy is available on the school website, however parents should note that significant changes regarding attendance are being introduced nationally by the Department for Education from September. Cheshire East as a local authority have produced a clear handout to explain these new national expectations which is attached for parents and found via this link: [Penalty Notices are Changing - one page guide 2024.pdf](#)

The key elements of the rules are:

- Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.
- A Penalty Notice may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period. (A "session" refers to a morning or afternoon block of time in school)

However, the local authority makes it very clear that we also retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

It is also important to note that there has been a sizable increase in the fines and Cheshire East make it clear that they will look to potentially prosecute parents for what is legally deemed the 'Failure to send a child to school' if necessary. Please see the attached information sheet from the LA for more details about processes and costs.

Changes to the school day timings from September onwards

You may remember that last year, to comply with government expectations regarding a mandatory 32.5-hour school week, we extended our school day by 15 minutes meaning students finished at 3.15pm instead

of 3.00pm. As part of this re-structure, we took the decision to move our form time away from the start of the day. Following a year of reflection and analysis, we have decided to revert to a more traditional start to the school day from September 2024. As such, our school day length remains the same starting at 8:45 and ending at 3.15, however all students will start with a 30-minute form time session at 8:45am each morning before starting their first lesson at 9.15am.

Return dates for September 2024

Monday the 2nd and Tuesday the 3rd of September are traditional on-site INSET days where staff will be in school preparing for the year ahead. Students are not expected to be in on these days.

Wednesday the 4th of September marks the on-site return for Years **7, 11 and 13** to allow for a smooth transition for our new students and those in terminal exam years. Students in years **8, 9 and 10** will be set work remotely on Microsoft teams to prepare them for their return to school in person the following day.

Thursday the 5th marks the first day when all students will be back on site together. All students should arrive at the usual time of 8.45 whereby they will begin their day with their form tutor. All students will also benefit from a return to school assembly with the leadership team on their first physical day in school and will spend time learning about their timetable and the year ahead before starting lessons.

Thursday the 5th also sees us welcome our new year 12 students to join the rest of the school. They will have a day off timetable to integrate them into 6th form life before starting their lessons on Friday the 6th.

Safeguarding and student wellbeing

During the summer holidays, safeguarding concerns outside of school working hours should be raised with ChECS on [0300 123 5012](tel:03001235012) (option 3). We also encourage students to keep us informed of any concerns they have by using the "I wish my teacher knew" app on their school desktop. This can still be accessed via remote login over the summer, although students should be aware that these submissions will not be viewed by the pastoral and wellbeing teams until our return in September, so this forum should not be used for urgent support needs.

Thank you for taking the time to read through all the information I have shared, I hope your child enjoys what will be an event packed end to the summer term with our annual sports day, fabulous school show and enrichment day still in the pipeline to ensure we end the academic year on a high. If you have any questions about any of the details in my letter, please contact your relevant key stage office for support and guidance.

Take care, stay safe and have a lovely summer.

Yours,



Mr J Harrison
Headteacher
Malbank School