



AP/saa let parents mar 2016

March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to Sybil Andrews Academy, the exciting new school opening in September!

Now that you know that your son/daughter has a place with us in September, you will no doubt be anxious to find out how things are progressing with the building and what will happen next. Events are moving very quickly, so I have summarised a number of important areas below. Please keep this letter safe as it contains a number of future dates for your convenience.

We are also updating our website at www.sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk after the Easter holidays. This will become an important source of information for you as we move towards September, so please check it regularly for updates. You will be able to find a copy of this letter there, along with many of our policies, should you need to.

Contacting us

Knowing whom to contact to find out about your child's new school is one of the most important aspects of successfully making the transition from middle to secondary school. Almost certainly you or your child will have a number of questions for us, whether they be about term dates, uniform, transition arrangements, times of the day or some other aspect of school life. Though I have tried to address some of the more frequently asked questions below, there will be other, individual, queries that we are happy to answer on a one to one basis. Should you have such a query, please email directly to Eileen Simeonidis at esimeonidis@samuelward.co.uk and we will respond as quickly as we can. We can also be reached on 01440 761511 at our temporary home at Samuel Ward Academy.

Uniform

The uniform that a child wears shapes their aspirations, their sense of self-belief and so helps inform their approach to learning. Our belief, therefore, is that we want a uniform that our pupils will feel proud to wear, that is distinctive in its context and that expresses the ambition that we have for all. To that end, we have engaged with a number of providers and have selected a uniform based on a combination of prior experience, the parental feedback that we have had to this point, durability and cost effectiveness in relation to similar products. If you would like to leave feedback on the proposed uniform, please email Debbie Willson at dwillson@samuelward.co.uk.

Photographs of the uniform can be found at www.swatrust.co.uk/sybil-andrews-academy-bury-st-edmunds.

Rougham Tower Avenue, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7QB. T: 01440 761511 F: 01440 761899 E: SAA@sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk





The building and staff



Sybil Andrews Academy on March 16 2016

As you can see, the new building is going up fast. The details around the Eastern Relief Road have been agreed and the funding agreement signed. At present Barnes, the construction company, are assuring us that they are on track for completion ready for the start of the September term, though of course we will keep you updated on progress between now and then. In the event that the opening of the building is delayed, our contingency plan is to use the St James' Middle School site.

The appointment of staff is also going very well. At the parent briefing evenings in October a number of parents expressed concern as to whether we would be able to recruit sufficient staff given the highly publicised national teacher shortage. The reality could not have been more different; we have been inundated with applications in all subject areas and, as a result, have been able to appoint all of the teaching staff needed for September. Together they make an impressive team that I am very much looking forward to working with.

Two faces who are playing a major part in shaping the development of the new academy are James Mason and Shaun Douglas, the two vice principals. Both have been appointed from within the Samuel Ward Academy Trust because of their high standards, ambition for all pupils and their understanding of the ethos and values that we are looking to embed in the new school. James has come from Samuel Ward Academy and Shaun from Thomas Gainsborough School.

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James Mason



Shaun Douglas

House names

One of our principles of learning is to have a House System. Through this, pupils become members of a community that is smaller than the school, can engage with competition and can develop a sense of pride. We will have four houses at Sybil Andrews and I would like to invite you to help us choose the names of the houses. Because of the focus that we place on the development of values, I would like the houses to be named after people, ideally with a link to Bury St. Edmunds, the Moreton Hall area or Suffolk so that we can make the connection to real individuals from our community. Like Sybil Andrews herself, it would be helpful if the named people had interesting stories that, ultimately, pupils will be able to engage with and, in the process of doing so, shape their own values. Our values can be found in our prospectus and will be available on the school website. Please email SAA@sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk with your suggestions.

Transition

Our whole philosophy of learning is founded on the partnership that we want to build with our pupils and their parents. This process begins with an induction meeting between our staff and yourselves that will be held at St James' Middle School. These meetings will take place in the first two weeks of May and we will write to you shortly with your appointment time. Your child will also be able to try on their uniform and ensure that they are measured for the correct fit.

We also have a number of transition dates that have been agreed with the other schools in Bury St Edmunds. Each year group has its own transition arrangements. The dates for each year group are as follows:

- Year 8 into 9 – 23 & 24 June

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- Year 7 into 8 – 30 June & 1 July
- Year 6 into 7 – 7 & 8 July

Pupils should attend these days in their PE kit. They should also bring with them a pencil case containing a pen, pencil, ruler and coloured pencils. Food will be provided on these days and details of transportation will be available at your induction meeting.

The focus for the transition days is for us to get to know your son/daughter and for them to meet the other members of their coaching group. To this end, there will be a number of team building activities for them to take part in and we will also run a series of taster lessons and enrichment sessions.

In addition to this, there is also a Transfer Day for all pupils starting with us in September. This will be on the 15 July. On this day, pupils will experience a normal day at Sybil Andrews Academy.

Finally, we will also be inviting you, our parents, to an induction evening. Here you will be able to meet your child's learning coach and learn more about our philosophy of learning. We will send details of this evening out with your induction-meeting letter.

Term Dates

Autumn Term:

PD Day - Thursday 1 & Friday 2 September 2016

First day of term – Monday 5 September, last day of term Tuesday 20 December

PD Day – Friday 21 October

Half term – Monday 24 October to Friday 28 October

Christmas Holiday 21 December 2016 to Tuesday 3 January 2017

Spring Term:

PD Day - Wednesday 4 January 2017

First Day of Term Thursday 5 January, last day of term Friday 31 March 2017

Half term – Monday 13 February 2017 to Friday 17 February 2017

Easter holiday – Monday 3 April to Friday 14 April 2017

Summer Term:

PD Day - Tuesday 18 April

First day of term – Wednesday 19 April, last day of term Friday 21 July 2017

Half term – Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June 2017

Please note that the school is closed to pupils on the PD days

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Timings of the school day & our curriculum

Our school day is anticipated to start at 8.40am and finish on a Monday and a Friday at 2.50pm. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we will finish later at 3.40pm after Enrichment. At the time of writing, we are in the final stages of consultation with Suffolk County Council regarding transport to and from the school. Should these timings change, we will of course let you know.

I am also aware that you and/or your child will be curious about the curriculum that they will study. Years 7 & 8 will comprise Key Stage 3 and can expect to study all of the subjects in the National Curriculum. Pupils entering Year 9 in September will start their GCSE courses in English, Maths and Science. We will ensure that they have settled in and that they have been given appropriate information regarding their option choices before then guiding them to make their decisions towards the end of the Autumn Term. GCSE option choices will then begin in January 2017. Broadly, all pupils will, in addition to English, Maths, Science, Core PE and Citizenship & Religious Education, study a humanities subject, a modern foreign language, and arts subject and a technology subject. This will ensure that they have a broad and balanced curriculum that will prepare them well for their future. Further details are available on request.

I am very conscious of the exciting opportunity that the opening of Sybil Andrews offers your child. I would like to thank you, our pioneering parents, for the positive choice that you made when you selected us as your child's school and I very much look forward to working with you in the forthcoming months and years.

Yours sincerely

Andy Prestoe
Principal