

09 December 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we come to the end of another successful term, it's a good time to reflect on the continued successes achieved here at St. Mark's. Last week we hosted our ACE Awards which was an evening of Christmas celebration and showcased the amazing creative talent of our students. This event was a fantastic opportunity to publically recognise those students who have made an exceptional contribution to the Academy. Our enrichment days continue to provide exceptional opportunities for our young people to experience learning beyond the classroom. So far this year we have had an amazing array of school trips and visits including a Medical Seminar at Royal Surrey County Hospital, Stamford Bridge Chelsea Football Grounds, Geography field trip into London, Imperial War Museum, Tower Bridge & Monument, V&A Museum, Wimbledon Theatre, City University and much more!

The year 7s have all settled in beautifully and they now feel fully immersed into the community. The year 7 parent's event at the start of the term had exceptional attendance and it's clear that our parents are fully committed to working with us to support every member of the Academy to achieve.

End of Term

We will be ending the term on **Wednesday 18 December 2019** and as usual will be dismissing students early. We will start to dismiss students from **12.00pm**. Food for students will be available at break time only on that day. The Academy will re-open on **Monday 6 January 2020 at 8.25am for all students**.

The first half of the Spring term lasts for six weeks ending at the normal time of **2.45pm** on **Friday 14 February 2020**. Half term will be from **Monday 17 to Friday 21 February**. Students return to the Academy on **Monday 24 February 2020** at the normal time of **8.25am**.

Winter weather

We are now in the season where we can experience severe weather that can cause disruption to the opening of the Academy. **Our aim is to keep the Academy open at all times**, however, occasionally we may need to close or modify the school day due to severe weather. If we have to do this a message will be placed on our website, a message will be sent via [Twitter@stmarks_academy](https://twitter.com/stmarks_academy) and a text message will also be sent. Merton Council will also be informed of any changes to the Academy day and information will be available on their OpenCheck website too. We will aim to make any decision about school closure as early as possible on that day. Please ensure that we have up-to-date contact details for you.

As such, I thought it would be appropriate to share with you the factors I have to consider when a decision is made. In the first instance I have to decide whether or not it is appropriate to close the school during 'severe' weather based on the 'inability of staff or students to attend school'. Many students walk to school, however, some rely on public transport, including buses and trains. I therefore keep updated on the decisions made by Network Rail and other transport providers.

Principal Lisa Peterkin



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When I make a decision to close the school it is also based on the 'ability of staff to supervise students'. As staff travel from a variety of areas, the weather conditions where they live may be very different to the conditions in Mitcham. I also have to consider the current staff availability, i.e. staff who have managed to make the journey to school. On that day we ask staff to notify us by 7am if they are unable to attend work.

Myself and the leadership team always consider the above factors and avoid closing the school where possible. However, if the need arises I would like you to know that we do take all factors into consideration. I appreciate the support and understanding my senior team and myself continue to have from parents and carers of our students at St Mark's Academy

I hope that you have a joyful and peaceful Christmas. We look forward to the new term in January and to seeing your son/daughter return to school **on Monday 6 January 2020 at 8.25am.**

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Peterkin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa Peterkin
Academy Principal