19th July 2019

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Dear Parent/Guardian

2019/20 Reminders

This academic year has been another excellent one for Axe Valley Academy and we'd like to take the opportunity to thank our entire school community for their hard work and support. Following our fantastic GCSE results last summer we have seen our current examination cohorts work very hard throughout this year. We believe that their examinations have gone well and we are looking forward to their results in August. We remain as committed, as ever, to providing a breadth of experience for our students and this has been seen through fantastic sporting achievements, a diverse range of off-site and other extra-curricular opportunities and the incredible school shows and productions. We have seen a vibrant and busy year where Axe Valley Academy has felt like a real community.

As we begin to prepare for next academic year we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you about a number of areas that are an important focus each September. We remain committed to driving up standards and are always grateful of the support we receive from our parents on this ongoing journey. We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to read the guidance that follows for each of these areas to ensure a strong start to the new academic year.

Uniform

Recent fashion trends have led to a proliferation of casual black shoes which at first glance to be acceptable as school footwear. Indeed, we are told that many retail outlets promote these shoes as being 'school shoes'. In our view, footwear of this type is not formal and is consequently not appropriate for our school. However, we recognise that many parents have purchased shoes of this type in good faith and at some expense. As a result, I am writing to give plenty of advance notice that shoes of this type will not be permitted from September 2019. If you are unsure as to the types of shoes that are acceptable, we have provided detailed additional guidance on our school website.
http://axevalley.devon.sch.uk/information/uniform/

We are also conscious that a noticeable minority of our girls are choosing to roll the waistband of their skirts and then fasten it in place using a hair bobble (or equivalent). As a result, skirts that are leaving home approaching knee length are arriving at school significantly shorter. This is also causing broken zips. Our tartan skirts are meant to be knee length and the students will be corrected if they are rolled higher than this. Our supplier Thomas Moore offer a skirt fitting service if you visit their store in Exeter.
https://www.thomasmooretoymaster.com/product-category/collections/axe-valley-academy/

This Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
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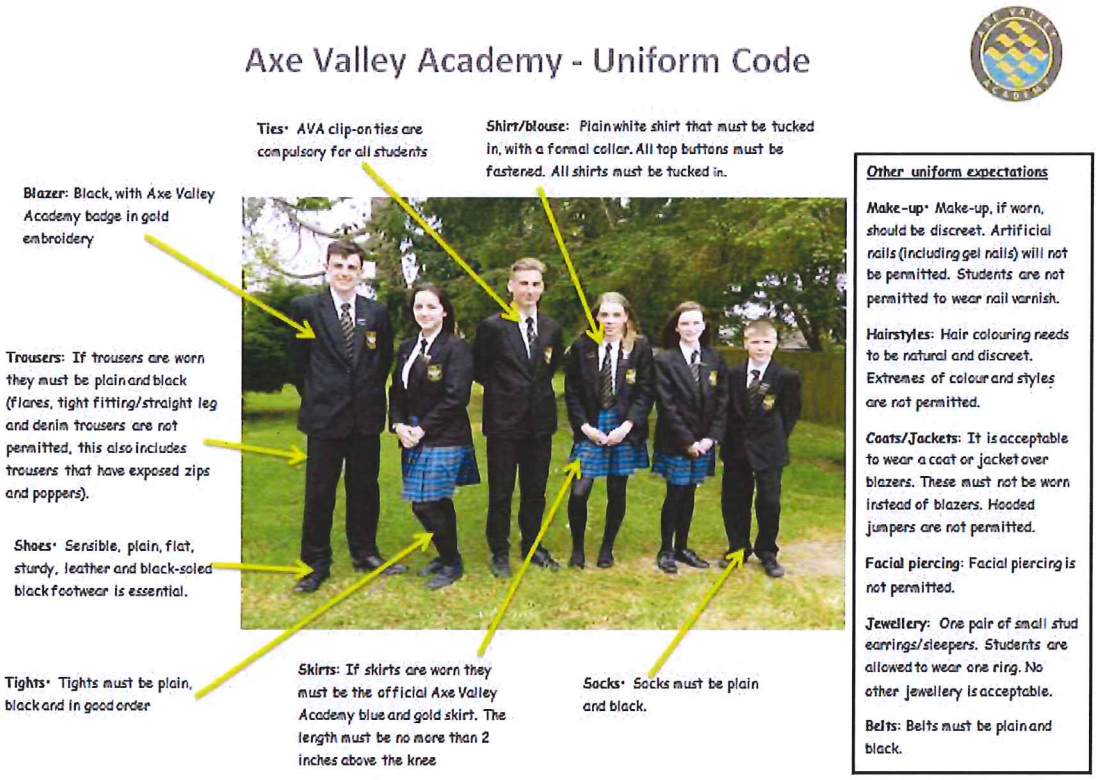
We expect trousers to be black and tailored. The style of these trousers should be formal and not unlike that used in a suit. We don't accept jeans, chinos or any denim style material, even if they are black. Neither do we accept 'skinny jeans' or any other trousers that are deliberately designed to be tight fitting. If you are unsure as to the types of trousers that are acceptable, we have provided additional guidance on our school website http://axevalley.devon.sch.uk/information/uniform/



Basic Equipment

To ensure a settled start to lessons please can you ensure that all students are fully equipped for the new term. Below is a list of the essential equipment.

1. Pen (blue or black)
2. Green pen for corrections
3. Pencil
4. Rubber
5. Ruler
6. Calculator
7. School bag

We would also strongly recommend that every student purchases a pencil case. We intend to stock a supply of items 1-5 in school and students can come and purchase these items.

We are aware that most families will choose to renew uniform and equipment for their children between now and the start of the 2019-20 academic year. For this reason, we are taking this opportunity to highlight these matters now so that you have plenty of time to budget appropriately. Please get in touch if this presents financial challenges for your family as we may be able to agree a reasonable approach that takes your particular circumstances into account. Jacky Lomax, the schools Business Manager, will be contactable over the holidays if you have any financial concerns around uniform and/or equipment (jlomax@axevalley.devon.sch.uk).

Attendance and Punctuality

We would like to remind you about the importance of good attendance and punctuality, which as a school we take very seriously. Days off school soon add up and missing lessons makes it hard to catch up, resulting in students having to work harder when they come back and missing vital information that will prevent their progress. There are 175 non-school days a year for holidays, cultural experiences and family time. It may be useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child.

Above 98%	Excellent attendance Less than 4 days absence in a year
95%	Good attendance Less than 9 day's absence in a year. Axe Valley Academy's attendance target for all students is 96% and above.
90%	Below average /low attendance 19 days absence over the year. Students with attendance 90% or below are classified as persistently absent from school and parents of students with this level of attendance or below could be issued with a Penalty Notice
85%	Exceptionally low attendance. 29 days absences in a year.

We appreciate that it can be difficult for families who live some distance from Axe Valley to get to school on time, particularly if they rely on public transport. To help with this, we run a breakfast club from 8.00am so that students can arrive earlier and have somewhere warm and dry to wait in the morning.

First day of term

Finally, we would like to remind you that all students are due back on Wednesday 4th September 2019 by 8.45am. The students will report to their tutor rooms and will spend the first part of the day in assemblies; having their uniform and equipment checked; clarifying their timetables and being talked through to any year group specific matters.

Finally, we hope that all students have a restful and enjoyable summer break. 2018/19 has been a fantastic year with so many successes to celebrate within our school community. We look forward to seeing everyone in the new academic year after a restful break.

Yours faithfully

Senior Leadership Team