

20 November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Recent Important Key Infrastructure Improvements

As an academy, every member of staff at Plume, Maldon's Community Academy works to provide an environment where every student can reach their maximum academic and personal potential. It therefore gives me huge pleasure to be able to update all our parents and carers on a number of key infrastructure improvements the academy has made in recent months to enhance the holistic learning experience, whilst also providing a safer environment for our students, your children, at the same time.

Any recent visitor to our Fambridge Road Campus will not have missed the significant improvement to the site security and front fencing. As a community academy, Plume has always upheld an open-door policy, however, the previous fencing and entrance facilities were long overdue an upgrade to meet the current standards and expectations of student and staff safeguarding. By utilising additional capital money received from the Department for Education after submitting a robust bid, the access requirements have been dramatically improved with significantly improved fencing and gate systems that now allow us to properly safeguard the students at our town centre located campus.

The pedestrian gates now automatically close at the start of the academy day (8:30am) and do not open until the end of the day (3:10pm). Between these times, the gates are controlled by the main and student receptions and all visitors can be monitored via the respective intercoms located on the two separate entrance gates.

As an additional project, and one which whilst being much less visible is still of significant importance with regard to safety, after a further complex and detailed bid was completed and submitted by the academy, we secured a grant of just over £250,000 to replace and update the fire alarm system across both Mill Road and Fambridge Road Campuses. Whilst the original system met the basic needs, regulations and expectations have moved on significantly since their original installation. The new state of the art Category 5 fire alarm now includes over 650 automatic detection points (previously we had around 40!) and improved remote monitoring. Whilst everybody hopes the system will never be needed in earnest, parents and carers can be reassured that we now have a fire detection and prevention system that is second to none and is fully compliant with the most stringent legislation in order to protect all students, staff and our many visitors each and every day.

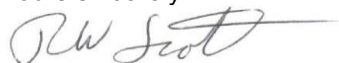
The bulk of this large-scale replacement took place during the summer holidays and is now fully installed at our Mill Road Campus and continues to be installed outside of academy hours in the evenings at our Fambridge Road Campus with a final completion date in early December.

As a final update on student facing facilities, the academy's IT systems have recently seen a significant boost through a major update on the core infrastructure, directly funded from the academy's own carefully managed funds and associated resources. The updates include a new internet connection with a 1GB synchronous capacity, a new and greatly improved security firewall and Unified Threat Management (UTM) system to better monitor and protect the online content being accessed and delivered, and finally, an updated Wi-Fi system that allows for a faster, more secure and more reliable wireless network connection for all of our staff and students.

As everyone is aware, IT forms a core part of modern society and in providing significant updates to our central internal systems, this enables us to ensure your children are able to enjoy the best experience for learning whilst ensuring the highest quality of protection at the same time.

To conclude, the academy continues to strive to ensure the facilities are strategically placed to meet the needs of our students and staff, and we will continue to review all sources of funding and grants that are available to us to provide our core stakeholders with only the best possible daily education and workplace experience.

Yours sincerely



Director of Finance & Estates