



Kidbrooke Park Road  
London SE3 9PX

t: 020 8856 0115  
f: 020 8331 3004  
www.thomastallischool.com

Head: Carolyn Roberts  
e: headteacher@thomastallis.org.uk

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To All Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to or welcome back to Tallis for 2019-20. This letter is about some of our procedures and expectations, and gives you some useful dates.

### Communication

Most of our communication throughout the year is by text and email, so please remember always to tell us if you change your mobile number or your email address. If you cannot receive either, please make sure we know that. There is also a Parents' Newsletter each week which is emailed on Mondays. This has news about what we are doing and often some information about important matters from me, as well as upcoming dates. Most parents read it, so please, if you are new, make sure you do. That's where, for example, you'd find invitations to our wonderful exhibitions and performances.

One of the things you'll find in the newsletter is the link to our Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA). Please join in with this and their events.

Of course, everything you need to know is on the website and you should please look at this regularly. For example, you can find out more about our examination results there.

During the year we hold Parent Forums – usually 3 or 4. They are advertised in the newsletter and by text. Do come along if you are interested in the topic. We also hold parent support evenings for examination year groups. There is more on the usual annual achievement-focused parents' evenings below.

### Attendance and Punctuality

The foundation stone of learning is attendance. There is a huge amount of data to show how students with poor attendance - less than 95% - and poor punctuality make less progress. Mr Tomlin will write to you further about this. Please make sure your child is *at school, on time, every single day*. If they are ill enough to need medical attention and you keep them away from school, please phone us so that we know. We will ring you – every day – if we are worried about your child's attendance. I will not authorise holidays in term time or most other absences and I won't consider any request for absence for a child whose attendance is not 96% or above.

Students should be on site by 0830 and ready to enter their tutor room before 0840. If late, they will be detained after school. Latecomers to lessons disrupt the learning of others and we will not tolerate it. I'm sorry if this sounds harsh.

### Behaviour

Our Behaviour Policy is on the website, but it is quite long as it needs to cover a lot of things! However, if I may, I will pick out four very important things.

1. We do not tolerate harmful or abusive behaviour or any kind of disruption to learning. We have a clear system of sanctions which include detentions and internal exclusion. These, like our other policies are not negotiable. We always act in a fair and humane manner, but clear rules help all children to learn about boundaries and civilised behaviour.
2. Students may be detained for a range of reasons. These usually include disruption to lessons, failure to do homework or lateness. Detentions are not negotiable and while we will seek to warn parents of year 7 children if they have a detention after school, we will not always do that with children of year 8 and above. It is your child's duty to tell you if they are being kept behind as a punishment.
3. We *only* allow mobile phones or headphones inside the buildings *in the canteen at break and lunchtime*. If we see them at any other time we always confiscate them and the child will have to wait behind at the end of the day to get them back. If a child has three confiscations, parents or carers will have to come and retrieve the phone. Please do not ask us to bend our rules on this. Children have to learn that rules apply to everyone.

4. We try very hard to keep our young people safe and so we do not allow them to hang around at the Dover Patrol shops after school. We are moving our curfew time from 1600 to 1545 this year. That means that any child found at Dover after 1545 will be sanctioned in school the next day. If your child is young enough to use the Cator Park playground at Kidbrooke Village on the way home will you please impress upon them the need to behave kindly and not upset little children. Children's behaviour to and from school is often observed and will be followed up if necessary.

### Learning

In the classroom we need all of our young people to meet our expectations, make their best effort and be engaged in their work. This means that they must always behave well in class and do classwork and homework to the best of their ability. It is your duty to support them in this, in the same way that you make sure they get to school on time, in uniform, fully equipped and having had a good night's sleep and some breakfast.

### Sleep

Speaking of sleep, please will you take steps to ensure that young people are not on their phones or computers all night. Adolescents need a lot of sleep and they just can't learn without it. The NHS recommend that 11 year olds sleep for 9 hours and 30 minutes reducing to 9 hours by the time they are 16. We have advice and lots of ideas at [tallisscreentime.weebly.com](http://tallisscreentime.weebly.com).

### Funding

There has been talk in the national press about funding so I'll add to the discussion. Tallis' budget is tight but we are relatively stable and forecast our position well. We have taken major steps to reduce expenditure over the last three years.

It is funding, for example, which causes the 'early close' sessions for staff training. After I had to reduce the amount of preparation and marking time to the bare minimum in 2017, there was no time for essential staff training. That's why we close early three times each half-term. Schools and colleges are desperate for a long-term funding settlement to assure us of sufficient resources into the future.

We are, of course, examining the almost-daily announcements about considerable additional funding for education. London schools have particular cost pressures and we need funding to increase at the same time as our costs are rising. We welcome the overdue realisation that school funding is a priority but we are frustrated that pronouncements often mask the very real problems schools face.

When something isn't right, we encourage our pupils to speak out and so must we. School funding is not a luxury for a civilised society: it is the most fundamental investment in all of our futures.

### Parents' Evenings

We look forward to seeing you throughout the year. Some year groups have a settling-in evening with Head of Year and Tutor. These are on

- Wednesday 11 September for Years 8 (1530-1630) and 12 (1730-1830)
- Wednesday 18 September for Years 7 (1630-1800) 9 (1530-1630).

Please put the relevant date in your diary and wait for more details, or look on the website.

Each year group also has a Parents Evening which at which we expect to meet you. The dates are below so please make a note of these too. These start at 1545 and information about booking parents' evening appointments will be sent to you in good time.

Wed 22 Apr - Y7  
Wed 05 Feb - Y8  
Wed 13 May - Y9  
Wed 03 Jun - Y10  
Wed 22 Jan - Y11  
Wed 04 Mar - Y12  
Wed 12 Feb - Y13

### Contact us

Of course, if you are worried about this or other aspects of school life, you'll want to contact someone. The Tutor is a good place to start, though the Head of Year may be more easily available. We do not guarantee that you can speak to any member of our staff during the course of the school day so it is likely that our reception staff will take a message for you. If you need to talk to someone face to face you MUST

make an appointment, by email or through reception unless it is a dire emergency. We try to respond to emails reasonably quickly, but it may not be on the same day.

If you are really worried about something you can always contact me on [headteacher@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:headteacher@thomastallis.org.uk). Alternatively, Mr Tomlin is Principal Deputy Head and can answer any question on behaviour [atomlin@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:atomlin@thomastallis.org.uk). Mr Curtis-Brignell is the other Deputy and he is in charge of the curriculum and teaching [jcurtisbrignell@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:jcurtisbrignell@thomastallis.org.uk). It is always best to contact school when you are worried about something that your child has told you. Sometimes they don't see the whole picture and you may be worrying unnecessarily.

Finally

I'm sorry if some of this letter sounds a bit Headteacher-y but that is what I am!

We hope to offer *education to understand the world and change it for the better*, and I think you'll agree that we could do with that change. I look forward to another good year in this happy school, working with you to do the best for our children.

Yours sincerely

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

Carolyn Roberts  
Head