

Monday 4th July 2022



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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you all safe and well; it is hard to believe we are nearing the end of another academic year. It has been wonderful to watch a sense of normality finally return to the academy during the last term, following all the disruption caused by the pandemic; the ACET Oscars event was a fantastic opportunity to invite parents/carers back into the academy to recognise some fantastic young people's achievements.

As you are aware, Mr Mark Cottingham, the Principal of Shirebrook Academy has been absent from work since the Christmas break due to ongoing ill health. I write to you now to inform you that Mr Cottingham has made the decision to resign from his role with effect from 1st September 2022. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mark on behalf of the Local Governing Body, for his commitment to the academy and the Shirebrook Community during the last 7 years when he has served as the Principal of this academy; he has certainly made a difference to the lives of many students, staff and parents/carers alike. I am sure you will join me in sending your best wishes to Mark for his future health.

Mark has asked me to share a farewell message with you on his behalf:

Dear students, parents, carers and members of the Shirebrook Academy community,

It has been a privilege to work with you as Principal of Shirebrook Academy over the past seven years. As you are no doubt aware I have been absent from school throughout 2022 due to ill health and have taken the decision to retire from teaching this summer after 30 years working in schools. When I started as a history teacher back in 1992 I wanted to do everything I could to help young people grow into confident, open minded and empowered citizens and becoming a school leader enabled me to go some way to fulfilling that goal. There are many highlights to look back on from my time at Shirebrook and through all my communication with you and the world beyond Shirebrook I have looked to celebrate the achievements and qualities of our young people and of this special community - you all have so much to be proud of and to look forward to. But it is the day to day interactions with our students, the fun and variety that comes from working with our young people and seeing them learn and grow that I will look back on with most fondness and will miss the most. I have always told our students and staff that qualifications are important but that education is about so much more than grades in exams. Real education lasts a lifetime, it should inspire, enthuse and open young people to new experiences and new ways of thinking. As Principal at Shirebrook Academy I have always tried to balance the need for our students to gain good qualifications with having the space to grow, enjoy experiences, try new things and learn about themselves and the wider world. Remember, you will never regret trying something and failing - you will always learn from the experience, but you may live to regret missed opportunities that you didn't have the courage or drive to attempt. I



am glad I took the opportunity to lead Shirebrook Academy and I hope that whatever you do in the future or wherever you go you will speak as fondly and proudly of yourself, your school and your community as I will.

Best wishes,

Mark Cottingham, Principal, Shirebrook Academy 2015-2022.

During Mark's period of absence, Mrs Lindsay Ward has taken on the role of Acting Principal, for which I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to her on behalf of the Local Governing Body: she has stepped up and led the academy at very short notice and we are thankful to her. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Local Governing Body have successfully appointed a new Associate Principal – I would like to congratulate Mrs Lindsey Burgin, who will commence her new role from 1st September 2022. Many of you will have already met Lindsey, as she has been working in the academy in her current role as ACET Academy Improvement Team. She knows the students, staff and the academy community extremely well and I am sure there will be a seamless transition into her new role. I am sure you will join me in congratulating Lindsey and wishing her every success in her new role.

I am aware that Mrs Lindsey Burgin will be sharing further details about the new academy leadership structure with you prior to the end of term.

Finally, I wish you all a fabulous summer break with your young people and look forward to working in partnership with you when the new term commences in September.

Kind regards,

Mr Andrew Brickles
Chair of Governors