



The Halifax Academy

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

SECONDARY PHASE



HEART - MIND - CONNECT

# CONTENTS



---

**03**

MESSAGE FROM  
THE HEAD

---

**04**

OUR VALUES

---

**05**

OUR VALUES; HEART

---

**06**

OUR VALUES; MIND

---

**07**

OUR VALUES; CONNECT

---

**08**

OUR CURRICULUM

---

**09**

SUBJECT SPECIALISM AND CAREERS

---

**10**

CHARACTER AND WELL-BEING

---

**11**

LITERACY

---

**12**

NUMERACY

---

**13**

VOICE

---

**14**

CREATIVITY

---



# A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Hello

As the Headteacher of The Halifax Academy, it gives me immense pleasure to welcome you and your children. This is just the beginning of an exciting secondary school journey and whether you are new to The Halifax Academy, or have been part of our family in primary phase, it is lovely to see you! I am looking forward to getting to know all of you better over the next few years.

Starting Year 7 can be daunting, and over the coming few months, your child will face new experiences, routines and challenges. Don't worry - we're here to guide them every step of the way, helping them build the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary for their future. I am a firm believer, that school is not just about classrooms and calculators. Academic success is, of course, important and we have a long history of excellence in examinations, but it is not enough by itself - we also want to develop assured, compassionate young people who will readily offer their 'voice to change the world'.

We are rightly proud of the school and all it has to offer. As Ofsted noted in June 2023, "pupils receive an education that provides them with the qualifications and confidence to make a positive difference in their community and beyond. Pupils benefit greatly from the curriculums and programmes in place to meet these goals." We work hard to make sure every child can flourish, academically and personally, and that all of our students are successful, safe and happy. There is always a great deal going on to get involved with and I would encourage your child to enthusiastically dive in and take part.

The next five years will be very much a partnership and we value your support and encourage your input. Together, we can ensure your child thrives. So, if you ever have questions, suggestions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Welcome to Phase 3!



**MATT PERRY**  
HEAD TEACHER





## OUR VALUES

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Our purpose is to provide young people with a voice to change the world.

We aim to inspire a love of learning and help students achieve academic excellence. But we also encourage our students to develop their creativity and imagination, to build positive relationships with others and acquire an understanding of the world around them.

We deliver a curriculum that facilitates the development of strong academic skills and moral character through a variety of subjects and memorable experiences. It is built on three tenets: Heart, Mind, Connect. These relate to different aspects of character or behaviour we seek to nurture in pursuit of personal and academic success.

For each aspect we have adopted a quotation by an individual admired for their considerable contribution or achievement in that particular area; these carefully chosen words provide meaning and help our students to understand our ethos.

*Students are expertly supported  
to "develop a voice to  
positively change their world"*

**OFSTED, August 2023**





# HEART - CREATIVITY, KINDNESS, SELF-WORTH

## What does this mean?

Students are encouraged to be creative, confident, ambitious for themselves and others. We are a school where everybody strives for excellence but understands that finding things difficult is a normal part of learning. We celebrate success but learn how to meet challenges with resilience and fortitude. When others around us fail or falter, we demonstrate kindness and encouragement.

## What does this look like?

Students are recognised for showing kindness, self-worth and creativity as they conduct themselves in a calm and considerate way around the academy. This creates a purposeful and positive environment for all students irrespective of their individual need.

- Students are recognised when they demonstrate good manners and chose to behave in a way that shows kindness to other students and adults in the academy.
- Students walk to and from lessons in a responsible way and demonstrate self-regulation at break and lunch time.
- Students show respect to each other and all adults in the academy and use kind words and actions in their relationships. They think before they speak as they realise that their words and actions can have an impact on others.
- We recognise that part of growing up means that relationships can get damaged, but students are forgiving when this happen and accept apologies where given.
- Students can offer comfort and support to those who are in need and know when to get support from adults where appropriate.



Heart

PAGE 05

# MIND - EFFORT, UNDERSTANDING, WISDOM

## What does this mean?

Students develop learning attributes: resourcefulness, respect, resilience, reflection and reasoning. They practise these skills every lesson, every day and are rewarded for their efforts. We help students to manage their time, prioritise, problem solve and we provide frequent opportunities for thoughtful reflection. Students are wise enough to know the importance of education and are keen to take the next steps in their learning.

## What does this look like?

Students are encouraged to demonstrate the 5 Rs in lesson; resourcefulness, respect, resilience, reflection and reasoning. Students receive an Attitude to Learning grade based on these and also receive achievement points when they demonstrate these in class.

- Students are resourceful in their learning. They are able to organise themselves and their studies. They are able to identify and explain how they can work through challenges and know the best solution to their problems.
- Students respect their learning and their lessons. They make sure that they complete their homework and that the quality of their work is always to a high standard. They care about their learning and the learning of others.
- Students understand that learning is difficult and fraught with setbacks. They understand that they may not always achieve their potential on the first go but realise that by practising, reviewing and editing their work and responding to feedback, they can always improve their learning.
- Students are thoughtful about their learning. They are able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning and the learning of others and use feedback to improve.
- Students are inquisitive about their learning. They are confident to ask questions to deepen their understanding and are able to make positive decisions around their own learning. They are happy to grapple with difficult questions and ideas and listen to different viewpoints.





## What does this mean?

Students are encouraged to use their voice. Speaking is emphasised as a tool for thinking, debate and presentation both in and outside the classroom. In a complex world, we encourage students to use their voice for good; we want our students to be able to express themselves knowledgeably, eloquently and to be a force for change.

## What does this look like?

We want students are to find their voice and change the world. Students know that in order to become the very best versions of themselves, they need opportunities to connect their learning, to connect with people and to connect with the wider world.

- Students are proud of their school and local community and are positive advocates for both.
- Students understand their part in making positive communities and actively engage with this
- Students take part in a variety of different activities that not only benefit their own development but also the community as a whole and that are sometimes out of their comfort zone.
- Students stand up for what they believe and are not afraid to speak up in an appropriate and sensible manner.
- Students feel a sense of belonging to the school and their house and are active participants in their tutor groups.



# OUR CURRICULUM

At The Halifax Academy, we believe all students are entitled to an ambitious and creative curriculum which will help them to succeed, thrive and become a voice to change the world.

We challenge social injustice by building knowledge and developing skills through an academic curriculum which is broad and balanced. Each subject specifies, in detail, the knowledge students will remember, underpinned by the National Curriculum and enhanced by wider subject related experiences. As such, across all subjects, students are prepared for examinations, whilst importantly, acquiring knowledge from experiences that build wider cultural capital.

As an all-through school, we have considered the knowledge, skills and attributes we want our students to acquire so that they confidently develop their 'voice to change the world'. High-quality subject specialists intelligently sequence the curriculum so that each phase builds on what has come before and prepares for what comes after. It is this careful consideration of what students learn, when, how and in what order that creates the richest experience possible for our students. Our curriculum is underpinned by research and best practice across oracy, literacy, numeracy and cognitive science. By employing our curriculum as a progression model and enriching it with memorable experience, we make knowledge stick, develop transferable skills and create independent learners who can go on to be successful beyond Year 11.





# SUBJECT SPECIALISM AND CAREERS

Our students enjoy a curriculum that is written and delivered by talented subject specialists. We take every opportunity to connect students with subject expertise both inside and outside the Academy.

Our careers programme aims to provide all students with regular access to employers, further education providers, expert guidance and workplace experiences to support students in making informed and educated decisions about their next steps. We want all of our students to have a voice to change the world. This means, we must teach our students to be able to navigate the unwritten social codes of interviews and networking with confidence. We recognise that the job market is ever-changing and seek to provide our students with knowledge, opportunities and experience that allow them to thrive Post-16.

We have specialist leadership for careers within the Academy and have been accredited with the Gold Standard Award in Careers, showing our commitment to high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). Our careers offer is underpinned by the Gatsby framework with a commitment to meeting all eight benchmarks.

The intended outcomes of the careers programme include, but are not limited to:

- Students undertake work related experiences
- Students reflect upon and refine their aspirations
- Students increase their knowledge of education, training and career opportunities
- Students make informed next steps so as to realise their potential Post-16



# CHARACTER AND WELL-BEING

Our curriculum teaches students to be well in mind and body, and to build happy relationships with others within the school and wider community. We encourage students to collaborate with each other and teach emotional intelligence and empathy. We nurture personal qualities in our young people, such as kindness, creativity and a sense of self-worth. As well as high quality teaching in every subject, our students also learn effective study habits: problem solving and reasoning skills, memory techniques and revision strategies, good sleep hygiene and the importance of routines.

The Character Programme runs throughout the entire school experience including: subject lessons, tutor group sessions, assemblies, the Wellbeing Programme, the Achievement Programme, careers education, the House System, the Enrichment Programme, the Leadership Programme, the School Council and our Big Learning Lessons – creative, active, memorable year group lessons, which are underpinned by our values and ethos.

The school offers many leadership opportunities, nurturing confidence, independence and character and enabling interaction with a wide range of people. Students are encouraged to go out into the world and begin to advocate change through for example, gardening in the local community, fundraising for local charities and competing in national STEM competitions.







## LITERACY

Reading sits at the heart of our school. Throughout the phases, we are keen to nurture a love of reading by:

- placing reading at the heart of our school experience and curriculum
- rewarding students regularly and consistently for excellent reading habits
- providing a ready ear for quality discussions about reading and different books
- selecting texts which speaks to the students' own experience as well as extending their understanding of the world in which they live
- enriching the curriculum with a varied programme of visits, speakers, trips, activities

We work hard to establish excellent reading routines in school and ask that families support us by encouraging good reading habits at home.

### *Class Reader*

Carefully chosen by teachers, our class reader texts sit at the heart of our curriculum. A class reader reiterates the pleasure of a shared story whilst also providing rich opportunities for writing and closer analysis.

### *Library Lessons and Accelerated Reader*

These lessons place the library and reading at the centre of school experience. Students follow the Accelerated Reader programme which monitors and guides their reading progress whilst also experiencing the full range of texts and experiences the library has to offer.

### *Bedrock*

Focusing on language, these lessons and the Bedrock programme encourage students to become word aware and to immerse themselves in academic language. This is a key strategy in closing the language gap and allows students to track their own progress.

### *Lexia*

A phonics based individualised programme helping those students who require further support.



## NUMERACY

At The Halifax Academy we recognise that numeracy is a life skill which permeates and supports all areas of learning. We provide numeracy opportunities across the curriculum, ensuring that students have a strong grasp of number and can solve problems, analyse information and make informed decisions based on calculations. In our mathematics lessons, we follow a Maths Mastery approach; creating skilful, confident mathematicians.

### Sparx & Times Table Rock Stars

In Year 7, all students are introduced to Sparx, an online platform to support learning and address gaps in numeracy and mathematics. In addition, students can continue to develop their numeracy times table skills on TT Rock Stars, a platform familiar from Primary School.







## VOICE

We teach students how to speak with clarity and conviction, how to listen carefully and how to take part in powerful and productive conversations. Talk infuses every aspect of our school curriculum whether that be storytelling, role play, performing or listening carefully to each other. We enable students to learn about what matters, and to understand how to effect real change in their school, their community and the world.







## CREATIVITY

We are a school that loves art and see creativity as a vital tool for developing imagination, building relationships, exploring the world around us and encouraging problem solving skills. Our art curriculum has been developed by specialists and is delivered across all year groups by our highly successful team of practitioners. Students are supported in taking risks, giving and receiving feedback and producing beautiful outcomes.

