

Dear Colleague,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Northampton Academy. You have made an excellent decision to pursue your career here and I promise that we will find ways to support and develop you.

We are part of a group of academies, primaries and independent schools called United Learning. Many opportunities can lie ahead for you within our group and we encourage our staff to make links with colleagues in other United Learning schools at their earliest opportunity. The United Learning motto is 'The Best in Everyone', and we wholeheartedly subscribe to this philosophy.

Here at Northampton Academy, we live and breathe our three core values:

- Respect - showing consideration for the views, opinions and beliefs of others
- Determination - never giving up
- Ambition - aiming high; not just for what you want to be, but also for who you wish to be

Last academic year we focused on Integrity and Tolerance. These 5 values now form our 'Pillars of Character' at the Academy. This year we will be expanding significantly on values that we explore and look to develop within the students.

To this extent we include them in every job interview, every policy, every rule for students and every opportunity we create for staff and students. We regularly hold ourselves to account against these values, accept things which are in-line with them and quickly reject things which are not. We are a child-centred organisation and every decision is taken in the best interests of the students.

At Northampton Academy we are firmly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. To achieve our commitment, we ensure continuous development and improvement of robust safeguarding processes and procedures that promote a culture of safeguarding amongst our staff and volunteers.

Leadership skills at every level are vitally important for young people. In developing leadership qualities, they develop the persuasive ability to influence others in a positive fashion; they also improve their confidence and ability to sell themselves at interview and in selection processes. We have made a promise to the young people of Northampton Academy that is enshrined on the plaque in the main reception:

"Leadership opportunities for every student, every year."

We systematically track and monitor to ensure that every student has had such an opportunity, however modest, and encourage our staff to contribute to this end by offering leadership opportunities within lessons and through extracurricular activities that you can become involved with. The leadership of the academy is completely determined to create an environment in which teachers can get on with their core role: delivering excellent lessons. To this end, the student behaviour system is clear and simple and easy to administer in lessons.

An Academy of Character and Excellence

If action is needed beyond these simple steps, the pastoral and senior teams take all the burden away from the teachers, conducting detentions, following up and dealing with parents on your behalf. Teachers at the academy speak of this as one of the major benefits of working here. In addition to this, teachers are trusted to be professionals through: no unannounced observations, no lesson grading, three extra INSET days per year for joint team planning and a feedback and recognition policy that lets teachers decide the best feedback mechanism for their own classes, rather than having this prescribed centrally.

All schools are busy, exciting and sometimes tiring places to work, and Northampton Academy is no exception. You will obviously be keen to do your best and make your mark in the academy, but we will always encourage you to try to retain a good work-life balance and ensure you find time for your families and loved-ones. The wellbeing of staff is of great importance and feedback from staff on this front is always welcome, and often results in changes being made. For example, in November 2018 we had 'quiet November', when we completely cleared the calendar of any distractions to teaching. This has come as a response to feedback from staff that felt this was one of the most pressured times in the school year.

There are many hierarchies within the academy, and you will find help and support at every level. But if there is a problem you simply cannot solve or nobody else has been able to help you with: my door is always open. You can find me in the corridors and in the playground every day, or if your issue is more confidential then book some time with me through my PA. I consider it my job to help you to be excellent for the young people; to remove any obstacles that prevent you from giving them the very best possible education and to look after you as valued members of staff at the academy.

We have also recently invested in personal Surface Pro tablet computers for each member of staff. These can be transformational in the classroom, allowing staff to annotate their presentations as they wander around the room, and give every member of staff a portable visualiser to show student and staff workings. Aside from this, they enable teachers to have their own personal IT experience, avoiding the pitfalls of having to log on to numerous different machines.

When I first started working here, a colleague said to me "The kids here get under your skin, but in a good way." And I have come to realise just how true this is. There is a diversity and vibrancy here that is greater than any other school I have worked in or experienced. I can guarantee that by the end of a holiday, you will be looking forward to coming back here and seeing our students again, and you will be confident that you are making a great difference to the young people of Northampton.

I wholeheartedly commend Northampton Academy to you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nat Parnell', written in a cursive style.

Nat Parnell
Principal