

## LETTER FROM INTERIM GAET CEO TO ALL PARENTS AND CARERS

20 January 2026

Dear Parents and/or carers

Happy New Year! It seems a long time ago now, but I hope you had a reasonably restful and peaceful break.

When I took up the interim CEO role, I made a firm commitment to try and keep you all in the loop on the proposed merger with Dixons Academies Trust (DAT). I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made on this matter largely due to the hard work of many GAET colleagues as well the commitment and flexibility of Dixons staff and local council officers. It is looking highly likely that we will merge on 1 March. This is great news. There is still much to do and there can be problems along the way.

As we progress towards the merger, senior staff in each academy have begun to explain what all of this will mean for the pupils. They have rightly stressed that teachers will still be teaching in their usual classes and the high expectations will not change. If they have a problem or need help, then they can get this in the usual way. One thing they may notice on their way into school on 2 March is that some of the school signage has changed. I have been pleased with the way each academy alongside DAT staff has involved pupils in the process of determining the revised logos.



It is worth stressing that existing school uniforms will continue and over time modifications will be introduced. Dixons is committed to this process having no negative financial impact on our families.

Each week I receive an update on the data for attendance and behaviour. This data provides an overview and doesn't take into account the impact of the weather etc on attendance levels or individual issues that can affect a child's willingness to attend. I

am aware that our academies do their utmost to encourage regular attendance, but I am beginning to be concerned at the reducing level of attendance from a small proportion of pupils in each academy. I have asked one of the senior Dixons staff members, who is assisting our work through the merger to report back to me on the trends for groups of pupils as well as individuals.

I will write to you again before the February half term to keep you up to date with the merger and more general issues.

Best wishes

Frank Norris MBE FCCT