



Dear parents and carers,

RE: Parental Engagement Evenings, Mossbourne Port Side Academy and Mossbourne Fobbing Academy

I write in response to the key queries from parents and carers which arose at the recent Parental Engagement Evenings at Mossbourne Port Side Academy (MPSA) and Mossbourne Fobbing Academy.

As I have previously stated, I am very grateful to the parents and carers who attended the events as it was a valuable opportunity to meet parents and carers again. As always, I appreciate being given the forum to hear from, and speak directly to, the most important people in our students' lives. I was again lifted by the support our young people so clearly have both at home and at school.

For clarity and, to avoid repetition, the queries from parents and carers at both MFA and MPSA secondary academies have been combined and condensed in subtitled sections. Questions are in red font and federation responses are in black font.

Academic Term Dates

Will there be a later start to the academic year in line with September 2024 and if so when will this be shared with parents? I can confirm that there will be a change to the start date of next academic year for students. Please be assured that teaching and learning, and safeguarding, are the federation's priorities. We believe that additional staff training at the start of the academic year will help to ensure future progress and success in MFA and MPSA's journey towards outstanding.

There will be two additional INSET (staff training) days on **Wednesday, 3rd** and **Thursday, 4th September 2025**.

Years 7: will start on **Friday, 5th September 2025**

Years 8 -11: will return on **Monday, 8th September 2025**

Year 12: will have an induction day on **Friday, 5th September 2025**. Year 12 students will return on **Wednesday, 10th September 2025**.

Monday 1 st	Tuesday 2 nd	Wednesday 3 rd	Thursday 4 th	Friday 5 th
INSET	INSET	INSET	INSET	Year 7 and 12

Monday 8 th	Tuesday 9 th	Wednesday 10 th	Thursday 11 th	Friday 12 th
Years 7-11	Years 7-11	All students	All students	All students

Uniform and Costs

Will there be a change to the uniform, and if so, when and how will this be communicated to parents? We intend to introduce a Mossbourne uniform for Years 7 – 11 from September 2025. Details were communicated just before the Easter holidays.

Can you confirm that all teachers will follow the new behaviour and uniform policy uniformly?

In line with previous communication, the Ortu Trust Behaviour Policy, and Uniform Policy, have been applied, and will be applied, until September 2025. As previously communicated, we will signpost, as and when, Mossbourne Federation policies are confirmed and published on academy websites.

Much of our staff training at the start of the academic year will focus on The Mossbourne Federation policies, including behaviour expectations and the new Mossbourne Federation uniform.

If parents and carers believe that a staff member's judgement does not align with what you have been told or has been published, please ask to speak to your child's Head of Year or a Senior Leader. The further training on the INSET days will enable all staff, including staff new to The Mossbourne Federation, to be fully cognisant with both expectations including changes to the uniform and internal and external processes.

What support will be provided for families? We have committed to meeting the cost of a blazer and a coat – the most two expensive items of the uniform – for every current Year 10 student and every disadvantaged (pupil premium) student currently in Years 7, 8 & 9. Parents and carers who are not able to meet the financial cost of a new uniform and who have contacted the academies, in some cases before Easter, will be contacted individually to meet with a staff member. Each case will be judged on its own merits. A process for accessing financial support will be shared with those parents and carers affected. Please be assured that if contact has been made with your child's academy this has been logged, and you will be invited in to meet.

Will the new uniform adhere to the government guidance on affordable non-branded uniforms to help reduce costs for parents? Mossbourne has always sourced uniform that is excellent value for money and is of excellent quality because we believe all students deserve to look smart and take pride in their uniform. We have always complied with statutory guidance and will continue to do so.

Why is the cost of the blazer 38% higher (£47 vs. £33)? The average cost of a school blazer in the UK is between £32 and £50. Though we recognise that the price is at the higher end of the range and is a significant increase to the price of the previous uniform blazer, the price reflects the superior quality of the fabric and lining, improved durability and smarter design.

Why is the girls' uniform significantly more expensive, and is this penalising parents of girls? The cost of the blouses in Uniform A is approximately equivalent to the cost of the rugby shirt in Uniform B. This means that there is parity in cost between Uniform 'A' and 'B'.

Can non-branded items be used instead of branded ones to reduce costs. Yes. If non-branded items are the equivalent style and colour in appearance. The branded items which must be worn are the blazer, blouse, academy coat and rugby shirt. The tie which is part of Uniform B is a compulsory but does not count as a branded item for the purpose of restricting the number of branded items to three pieces per uniform.

What are the rules regarding skirt length? The skirt must be below the knee. As per the policy, it must also be A-line – this means it must not be made of Lycra and/or tight fitting. We are aware that there has been mixed messaging about the skirt length and apologise for this. If you have purchased a skirt of incorrect length due to incorrect guidance, please contact your child/ren's academy reception via telephone or enquiries and we will be in contact to arrange a meeting to offer support should it be necessary. Please note that the uniform policy for the Hackney academies will be reviewed in readiness for September 2025. Please do not refer to the current Hackney policies for guidance. Questions pertaining to the Thurrock Mossbourne uniform must be directed to your child/ren's academy reception via telephone or enquiries.



What are the rules regarding trousers? Trousers must be in the same colour and style as those listed in the policy. They must be straight legged and not be tight fitting or denim.

What are the rules regarding sock length? If wearing a skirt, socks must be white and ankle length. If wearing trousers, socks must be black and ankle length. Trainer socks are not permitted. Tights must be black 60 denier+.

Is there a grace period for transitioning to new shoe styles? No.

Why do jumpers cost £24-28, and can parents use non-branded jumpers? The jumper is not deemed a branded item, but we recognise it will be challenging to find a non-branded jumper that is of equivalent design. To this end, the jumper is an optional item. As stated, we will offer support, where appropriate, to parents and carers who may find purchasing the uniform challenging.

Will there be more than one supplier for uniforms to provide parents with choices? The speed of transition and arrangements has made this challenging at this time and we have worked closely with the current supplier in Hackney to ensure that parents and carers will have access to a local, face to face retail supply who aims to keep costs to a minimum and quality to a high standard. At the time of writing there is one supplier, but we are open to exploring the provision of a second supplier in the future, as necessary. As stated, we will offer support, where appropriate, to parents and carers who may find purchasing the uniform challenging.

What are the rules for removing blazers and jumpers during the day? Jumpers are not a compulsory part of the uniform, and students may opt not to wear a jumper. In class, students who choose to wear a jumper may ask the teacher to remove their blazer and will not be expected to remove their jumper, too. Outside of class, during transition and on the way to and from the academy, students are expected to wear their blazer at all times.

Why do shoes have to be leather, and what about the acceptability of ballerina-style shoes? Shoes must be polishable with a leather look. Leather is not compulsory; coloured stitching, patent, and suede are not permitted. A flat ballerina style shoe with no embellishments e.g. buckles or bows is permitted. Please note that 'Kicker' boots are a popular choice. They are permitted if worn with trousers but are not permitted when worn with the skirt. 'Kicker' shoes are permitted with trousers or a skirt. Please note that shoes with the appearance of trainers are not permitted.

What happens if students come to school in a different coat or refuse to wear certain parts of the uniform? Students will receive a sanction if they are not wearing the correct and full academy uniform.

Are there possibilities for upscaling or recycling uniforms, such as adding badges to existing blazers? No. However, the federation is hugely supportive of recycling uniforms if donated in good condition and is very open to parental support and suggestions regarding how good quality uniform can be donated or resold at a reduced price to families. The website also contains a link to an organisation which parents and carers may donate or sell second hand uniforms should they wish, which can be found [here](#).

Does the full uniform option need to be followed, or can students mix and match between Uniform A and B? The uniform, as described in the policy, must be worn in full and items from Uniform A and B cannot be mixed and matched.

Can students wear Uniform A for classroom based lessons and Uniform B for PE lessons or vice versa? Students may wear Uniform A or Uniform B for classroom based lessons. The appropriate PE uniform must be worn for the PE lesson the student is participating in. PE Uniform A is for students taking part in girls' PE; PE Uniform B is for students taking part in boys' PE. This decision has been made in light of the types of sports that students are taught as part of the PE curriculum.



What is the logic behind requiring white shorts? The white shorts are in line with the Hackney secondary academies and the colour was selected to match the rugby shirt. Students at KS3, and most students at KS4, will have PE just once a week. It is important that students across the federation wear the same uniform, and this will be most important when academies take part in cross federation sporting events.

Is it possible to have a single PE kit rather than separate male and female kits? Not currently. See above. All aspects of uniform are reviewed and a whole federation review of the PE uniform is something we are open to in the future.

What will the rules be around the use of Mobile Phones? Though mobile phones have never been permitted on the sites of the Hackney academies (for students in Years 7 -11) there has been no final decision made on this matter. We will review so as to understand the difference in context of the local areas and the current practice and custom. Once a decision is made this will be shared with parents and carers.

Catering

Thank you for feeding back your concerns regarding the provision, pricing and initial teething problems of the catering service. Please continue to raise concerns as your feedback is welcomed. Please be aware we are working closely with The Pantry to ensure that the quality of provision improves to rapidly meet an excellent standard and will continue to liaise with The Pantry. Though we know that price point of the provision is competitive, we understand that there has been a price increase from the previous provision. This, unfortunately, is in line with the rate of inflation but we will strive to ensure that the quality of provision is of the highest standard.

Academic and Staffing

Several parents and carers requested assurance about recruitment and staffing for 2025/26. At this point and prior to the resignation deadline at the end of May, I can confirm that recruitment has been a federation priority since January, and the recruitment process is underway. We have successfully made a significant number of exciting appointments who we believe have the skill set to deliver outstanding teaching and learning.

Communication and Reports

Several parents shared concerns surrounding the organisation of Parents Evenings and the need to further improve communication. This is noted, and we will review the arrangement of parents' evenings in 2025-26 and will continue to strive for better communication in a timely manner.

Finally, I wish to offer my gratitude, again, to parents and carers who attended the Parental Engagement Evenings and to those who have spoken to myself and staff at the academies. I look forward to continuing to work with students, staff, parents and carers and also look forward to celebrating Year 11 and Year 13 outcomes this coming August. Please accept my apologies for this being sent out later than intended. I wanted to ensure it was as comprehensive as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Hughes
CEO

