



Dear Parent/Carer,

Saltley Academy - Channel 4 Television Series: 'The Integration School Exchange' (working title)

I am writing in connection with a Channel 4 observational documentary series, on which we are delighted and privileged to be working with Saltley Academy. I work for Top Hat, the television production company, which is making the series.

The series is looking to explore the important issue of integration and segregation in the UK today by following an innovative exchange project, where a group of Students from two schools in the same area – but with a differing ethnic demographic, namely majority White British and majority British Asian heritages – come together to spend time with each other.

Taking part in the exchange will be open to students in **Year 8 and Year 9**. As your child is in these years we wanted to write to you in detail about the series. We believe that the project will be valuable in contributing towards the students' learning and understanding as well as being an enjoyable experience.

One of the schools involved in the exchange is **Saltley Academy**. The other school is **Tamworth Enterprise College**. Each set of students – approximately 15 from each school – will spend a week in the other's school, lives and communities.

Saltley Academy students will be taken from and returned each day to Saltley Academy by bus when they attend Tamworth Enterprise College for the week. There will also be opportunity for some of the students – with a parent or guardian – to stay with a host family for a night or two as part of the exchange, if they wish to. Conversely, students and their families can volunteer to act as a host to a student and family member from Tamworth. Any residential stay will of course be subject to strict welfare and safety checks.

The residential element is **not** a pre-requisite to taking part in the exchange: students will be able to come home every night when they attend Tamworth, if they wish.

The inspiration for the series is 'Busing': namely the process used in America (and areas of the UK in the 1970s, such as Bradford) to facilitate integration in mono-cultural schools. There will be reference to this in the series and the daily transport of the Students to and from the schools will be through a similar mode of transport.

By exploring the issue of integration and segregation among schools and communities, the ambition is that the series will, through documenting and telling the stories of the students' experiences, make a contribution towards the wider national conversation on how to facilitate understanding between communities.

We understand and recognise there are many views on this subject-matter. We would encourage students and families to get involved to make their viewpoint known.

Over the next few months – during the **Summer Term 2018** – we will spend time in the school meeting staff, students and parents. We will find out which students and parents are happy to be filmed. We may also do some preliminary filming.

We hope that we can include many students in the series whether in a smaller or larger way, however, the students taking part in the exchange will become a particular focus of the series. We do not yet know who these students are and we are looking forward to meeting as many students as possible over the next few weeks. We will of course speak in more detail to any students and their parents/carers if they're interested in taking part in the 'exchange'.

We know that your child's school work is of the utmost importance and we will ensure that the production takes up as little extra time as possible for the students. We will always carry out any discussions at times which are not disruptive to students' work – at break/lunch times or after school.

Dates for Principal Filming of the Exchange will be over a **fortnight in July 2018**, towards the end of the Summer term: one week's filming will be at Saltley Academy (with students from Tamworth Enterprise College attending that school); and a week's filming at Tamworth Enterprise College (with students from Saltley Academy attending the school).

We will, of course, update you when these filming dates are finalised.

The main method of filming will be with fixed cameras in one classroom which will be a 'form' room for the exchange students from both schools. Outside of that classroom, small handheld cameras will film around the school, primarily concentrating on the experiences of the 'exchange' students during breaks, lunchtimes and the beginning/end of each day.

We will be clearly identifiable and there is no secret filming. We will always endeavour to alert staff and students when filming is taking place. We intend to be unobtrusive as much as possible. It will allow the staff and students to continue with their school day with minimal disruption. And during filming and there will always be members of the team on hand.

If for any reason you do not wish your son/daughter to be appear in the series please contact me, **Heenan Bhatti**, Series Producer at Top Hat on **busingexchange@tophat.tv** or by **telephone or text on 07494 279 816** and we can of course ensure that your child is not included.

If you are happy for your child to be filmed there is no need to do anything.

On **Thursday 19th April at 4pm we will be holding a meeting in the school** to give all parents/carers the chance to ask the school and production team about the series. We hope that you will be able to come.

We will be happy to discuss the series or any concerns you may have in more detail. Please feel free to contact me, the Top Hat Producer on the email or number above or the office of Headteacher Peter Weir on 0121 566 6555.

The series will consist of two parts (2 x 60' films) and is expected to be transmitted on Channel 4 at 9pm over two consecutive weeks in 2018 or the beginning of 2019 so that it does not interfere with GCSEs

Our production company, Top Hat focuses on premium documentary and specialist factual programming. Our recent productions include a 3 x 60' series *Meet the Lords* for the BBC featuring exclusive access behind the scenes at the House of the Lords in the countdown to the Brexit vote; and *Love and Hate Crime*, a series exploring the fatal dangers of being different in America for BBC Three. More information about us can be found at our website **www.tophat.tv**

We hope that this will prove to be an exciting and valuable experience for all involved.

With Best Wishes,

Heenan Bhatti
Series Producer