

# CHELLASTON ACADEMY

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## Our Coaching Circle model at Chellaston Academy

Many thanks to the parents who have raised questions regarding the changes to our Personal Development offer at Chellaston Academy from September 2025. Your questions have been very useful and have helped us provide some further guidance in the FAQ style summary below.

Our academy vision is to 'inspire each other to realise our potential through Integrity, Care and Excellence' and for our young people to realise their potential they need to feel a sense of belonging. Although our current system works to a certain extent, having reflected, accessed research and seen 'outstanding' action research we believe the coaching circle model can provide a more effective whole system approach where community development and cohesion are at the forefront.

Interestingly enough, the recent 'Inclusion in Practice Emerging Insights' research document is clear that where schools know their children well, early and often it provides the foundation of inclusive practice. This is what we are trying to improve in our coaching circle model. We appreciate that change is difficult, but we are confident that the long-term benefits of this model will be a positive change for Chellaston Academy, and we ask that our community trust our educational leadership.

We are delighted that our first coaching circle trial went successfully, and we believe we have addressed/reduced a number of concerns from our student body. There are still some slight adjustments and further reflection points from the trial, but we are all excited to see this in action in September.

One of our first reflections is with regards to the title of 'coaching circles'. We believe some members of our community have misinterpreted our language used. In particular, the use of the word 'coach'. Our interpretation of the word 'coach' is related more to a general definition where a coach is 'someone whose job is to teach/guide people to improve at a sport, skill, or school subject' as opposed to a professional or 'life coach' who might partner with clients towards a specific individual goals. In addition, the most important word of the two is the word 'circle'. A move to interacting in the form a 'circle' has a plethora of research driven benefits.

Our coaches have been trained in effectively running coaching circle activities where our rationale is to foster a sense of belonging/community between a smaller group of young people, and that the circle is the original form of community. The positive impact of circles is research driven including Rohrbasser A, Wong G, Mikan S, et al. BMJ Open 2022.

The benefits of a circle include: -

- Equality
- Safety and trust
- Responsibility as everyone can play a role
- Facilitation and ownership
- Connection
- Being able to speak and be heard
- Being an active listener
- Drawing on insight from everyone else

- Fun
- Accessing help

In addition, our belief is that our coaching circles can also create: -

- a whole-systems approach to school community development and cohesion
- circle pedagogy (Roffey, 2017) delivers outcomes across seven domains. Belonging; Support; Opportunities; Achievement; Informed; participation; Diversity.
- focused interventions to support the diverse needs of children
- 'proportionate universalism', through resourcing and delivering universal services but at a level and intensity proportionate to the degree of need (Marmot, 2010).
- a dynamic and adaptable framework that can allow for greater intensity of action with focused interventions as the need arises.
- a socio-ecological framework (Allen et al., 2016) that can deliver focused interventions across several domains.

We hope that the following set of responses to your questions, provides you with the information that you require.

As part of the feedback from parents, there were also a number of celebratory comments which included phrases such as 'this is revolutionary', this is 'so positive', this is a 'momentous step forward', 'great to hear', 'what a wonderful opportunity to provide pastoral care to a smaller of number of students'.

We have also provided a link to our Coaching Vision which is on our academy website - <https://www.chellaston.derby.sch.uk/parents/coaching-circles/>

Question	Response
Does this apply to the Sixth Form? Is this for all age groups? Does this apply to the new Year 7?	It does indeed. With the concept of building a community, a community must involve all subsections within it. In addition, all of our students, including our sixth form students, have leadership expectations. Being a member of our sixth form and engaging with the coaching circle will support that. There are still opportunities for Year 12 and 13 to be with year specific classes and be immersed in the Year 12 and 13 personal development curriculum. This the same for all year groups.
Is this mandatory?	This is a whole academy commitment. Part of being a Chellaston Academy child is to be part of a coaching circle.
How do the younger students feel comfortable?	Our coaches have received training and will continue to receive training. This includes weekly training before the 'check in' session on a Monday morning. In addition, the social contract behind the circle element of this work, ensures that everyone is respectful of each, take turns and actively listens.  Our goal is to make every child feel comfortable by using the rules of the circle, options to pass and a variety of other strategies used by the staff coach. We use community builder activities to build relationships and trust within the group.

How will we mitigate late arrivals?	From our analysis, the buses are on time frequently and the majority of our late marks come from students who travel to school from our locality. If there are late buses, we will take the same approach that we currently do for form. Students will not be penalised for a late bus and their teachers will support with catching up on missed elements of the lesson. In addition, resources and revision materials linked to lessons are available from FireFly and through App like GCSE Pod.
What training for coaching has happened and what training is planned? Are coaches all teaching staff?	Our coaches are all members of staff who have qualifications and are contracted to educate our young people. There are also other members of staff who are non-teaching staff but have volunteered. With regards to training, we have been training our staff since February, and we have provided 7 development sessions. In addition, other areas of school life are based around circle activities and coaching circles. This training has been centred around how to run an effective circle. There are also multiple resources available to staff to support the coaching circle sessions. Also, every Monday morning all staff are trained for the circle themes for the week ahead.
Will there be 1:1 opportunity for students who need support?	All of the interventions and additional support students' needs will still be available during our academy week.
What evidence and data/research has this been based upon?	There is much educational and psychological research based upon the effectiveness of a circle in building a community. Some references have been included above. In addition, we have based some elements of our model on quality practice that is taking place across the city and outstanding practice that is happening outside of the city. In particular, we have been working closely with Carr Manor School in Leeds who have run an effective coaching model for a number of years. Their latest Ofsted rating was outstanding in all areas ( <a href="https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271457">https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271457</a> ). From some of our staff visiting and immersing themselves at Carr Manor, the impact of coaching circles is evident in building an effective community who thrive personally and academically.
What international professional coaching standards are you measuring yourself too? Is it the EMCC or ICF?	The phraseology of our coaching model might have resulted in some confusion. My staff are not trained professional certified coaches, and the aim of the coaching circles is not to provide client based professional coaching. The coaching circle is established to build a stronger sense of community.
What are the key measures of success? What are the benefits behind this?	Our belief is that coaching circles will foster a stronger sense of community across Chellaston Academy and provide additional pastoral care to our young people as there are less students in a group. Our success measures will come through our academy KPIs which are on our strategic documents which include attendance, outcomes, relational percentages. In addition, community voice, in particular our young people will be a gauge of success.

School is about regular daily activity with their peers, and this is where friendships are developed. School is about learning and not a punishment. This isn't good for kids.	Students from every year group have many opportunities to have daily activity with their peers. This can happen in Personal Development sessions (3 hours a fortnight), their lessons (45 hours a fortnight) as well as break and lunch time. This totals 31.5 hours out of 32.5 hours which is 97% of time in our academy. In addition, there are many wider curriculum activities where peers can mix. On top of that, mixing with other peers in different year groups is part of personal development.
Who do parents contact every day?	The year teams will still be the masters of providing pastoral care for each year group. But if a parent has a concern, they are to contact their child's coach or HOY/DHOY. You can contact our staff either by telephone or via email.
What will happen in these sessions?	There will be a variety of activities on top of the pastoral check in, check up and check out nature which include receiving notices, discussing opportunities to get involved in school life, preparing for the week, engaging in discussions around topical news, reviewing attendance and setting targets for each week.
How will the age difference be overcome?	Every individual will be treated as an equal in terms of what they can offer and how they communicate to each other. The vertical nature means students can support each other and discuss their experiences from a differing perspective.
Will my child be able to choose their coach? Can we be involved in that process? Can a coaching group be changed if they do not get on?	The coaching circle groups have been selected by a range of staff within school, including having inputs for the pastoral teams. Just like any other teacher, changing them is not advisable and we will work together to make it work. Therefore, coaching groups will not be changed. We are, however, reviewing some of the logistical elements of the coaching circles which might result in a few changes driven by the school.
Is there no form between 0830 and 0900?	There will be no 'form' as such, although students will be with their current 'form' group and 'form' teacher for 3 hours a fortnight in personal Development/PSHE sessions.
Where does the 5 <sup>th</sup> PD session come from?	In our curriculum every Wednesday period 3 is a Personal Development/PSHE lesson that is timetabled.
How does my child get support if their coach is not available?	The year teams will still be the masters of providing pastoral care for each year group. Student Services will still be accessible every minute of the school day and the fantastic HOYs/DHOYs will still be based there. In addition, students can ask for help from any teacher at any time.
Why have you changed the current set up?	Part of our academy vision is to ensure that our young people are not 'forgotten'. Our current form tutors do a great job, but providing detailed pastoral and emotional care for 28 students is not effective. Therefore, reducing group sizes will increase our pastoral impact. The research behind circles and how it supports building a community aligns with our vision of building a stronger community at Chellaston Academy.

I have concerns about students sharing their feelings?	The group contract will mean no one is asked to share anything that they do not want to. We operate this way in PSHCE already and provide a supportive environment for pupils to share if they wish.
When will students be able to share age specific challenges of adolescence?	There will be no 'form' as such, although students will be with their current 'form' group and 'form' teacher for 3 hours a fortnight in personal Development/PSHCE sessions. In these year specific sessions age appropriate and age relevant development t will be put in place.
Will the Check in, up and out be with the same person?	Coaching circles will be run by the same member of staff. Where colleagues have non-working days there will be a second coach, who will also remain with the same coaching circle.
Where will careers come from?	Careers education will be taught in year groups in the Personal Development sessions that take place every Tuesday, Thursday and every other Wednesday.
How will SEND children be supported?	Coaches will work alongside the Extended Learning department, SENCOs and SEND Link to better understand and support vulnerable learners. Students following a specific pathway have been deliberately placed with an adult identified on their plan. All coaches will follow information and guidance as dictated on student passports.
Why can't the form tutor be their coach?	As coaching groups are a lot smaller than current form groups, this is not possible.
When will you register the students?	Students will be registered in all of their lesson as they normally are. This will include registers in coaching circles and Personal Development sessions.
Will students still be able to access Mrs Burdis?	Students who access any intervention will still be able to access those interventions.
I am worried about my child being split up from their friend.	Students will still be in lessons and with their current form group in 3 hours of Personal Development time every two weeks.
Can the PD and Coaching sessions be consistent across the week? Why is Monday different?	The reason that the days are different is because part of our vision for all students is to have a check in during the first part of Monday morning. That is why Monday morning is different. As we review our model, we may change certain timing elements.
Has the impact on the vulnerable students been thought about?	Most definitely, all vulnerable children have been considered when set groups up and paired them with coaches. In addition, there are some specialised coaching groups. This has also been part of the training we have put on offer for staff.
Is this just a trial or permanent?	This is a permanent fixture for Chellaston Academy. We appreciate that this is a change, but we believe this will be beneficial.
How will sixth form free periods work?	Just as they do now. If some sixth form students do not have a lesson they can work from home. Coaching circle sessions are classed as lessons, and we would expect sixth form students in school.

How do you ensure that the dominant characters don't take over the group? How will you foster an environment where students can be confident to speak up? Particularly over seven year groups?	There is a clear circle activity framework and coaches have been trained.
Where will children go for registration and if it is raining where will they go?	Students are registered in every lesson and this will continue. If there is inclement weather, we have wet weather plans where students can be inside.
How will we be informed of the progress my child is making in a coaching circle?	You will still be able to see all your child's data on G4S. In addition, there will be a meet the coach day, where parents/carers can come in and discuss their child with their coach.
Would the academy consider changing this from parent feedback?	Not for a while. We passionately believe in this model, and we will need some time to fully embed all its principles. If this changes in the future, we will always review.
How will you support students who will only see their friends for twice a week instead of 5? Is this an aim to reduce time spent in social groups?	Students from every year group have many opportunities to have daily activity with their peers. This can happen in Personal Development sessions (3 hours a fortnight), their lessons (45 hours a fortnight) as well as break and lunch time. This totals 31.5 hours out of 32.5 hours which is 97% of time in our academy. In addition, there are many wider curriculum activities where peers can mix. On top of that, mixing with other peers in different year groups is part of personal development.
How were the groups chosen?	Groups were selected by the pastoral teams working together.
How do I opt my child out of this?	This is a whole academy commitment. Part of being a Chellaston Academy child is to be part of a coaching circle. Therefore, there is no option to opt out.
Will there be longer assemblies? Will this replace the current PSHCE? What will happen to the reading sessions?	Assemblies and PSHCE will take place during Personal Development PD time. Reading will also take place during this time.
How will Year 11's revise during form time now?	When we get to exam preparation phase of the year, we will look at support Year 11 and 13 in as many ways as we can.
Can my child still go to their old form tutor for support?	Yes. All students can approach any member of staff for support.
Is there an adult leading each group?	Indeed. These sessions are an integral part of our curriculum, so staff will lead them.
Why weren't we consulted about this?	The reality of the answer here is that this is not a change to the external timings of the school day, but a curriculum change

	within it. Therefore, we do not need to consult. As educationalists and professionals we make the decisions we believe are in the best interest for our young people.
Are students staying in coaching groups for lessons?	No coaching groups will happen three times a week.
What will happen to the franchise and house competitions?	Year 2 of our plans will involve the franchise/house elements taking off and embedded fully across the academy. The coaching circle groups will support the franchise modelling.
What will the coach do differently to that of a form tutor?	You child's coach will provide the pastoral care your child needs and support their growth into the Chellaston community which will engender belonging. Your child's coach will not be delivering the personal development aspects, which a form tutor used to do.
Has this been implemented in other schools and what was the outcome?	This is a model that has been implemented across the country and even within the city. Carr Manor are an outstanding school and if you read their Ofsted report you can see just a few benefits of this.
Form is a buffer time for lesson 1, what will happen now?	Learning at Chellaston Academy has always started at 0830. Therefore, if a child was late to form, they were still missing out on learning.
Is there a plan to change the Aston bus?	We have been working with all bus companies to endeavour to get all our children in on time.
How has this been explained to the children to help us support the change from home, the children are describing it as 'therapy'?	It has been explained to our young people through assemblies and we have already had a circle session trial last week. Through time, we are confident that students will understand the rationale behind this in practice.
What if the children don't want to talk/engage? If they are in a group they feel uncomfortable with they may not want to. Being in a smaller group could actually make them feel more uncomfortable/awkward/isolated. Especially if they have no friends in that group. Not everyone wants to talk. It kind of feels like they are being forced into a situation.	There is no mandate to talk if students do not want to. They have the opportunity to pass in circle conversations and are also encouraged to listen to others. Relationships and comfort will take time to build but there will be no expectation that anyone needs to speak if they do not want to. Ultimately, we'd like to develop confidence and speaking to others without distraction as a skill pupils can use in the wider world.
Why can't the check-ups, check outs and PD be completed during form time (8.30-9.00) to avoid disruption to the normal day?	In reality the groups in forms are too big for effective circle work where we check in, check-up and check out.
My daughter will not be attending these small group meetings as she has anxiety and selective mutism so want talk to people much and it will be hell for her.	Our coaching circles are part of our curriculum and offer at Chellaston Academy, just like any of the other lessons/curriculum we offer. As with all lessons, our children with additional needs can access learning as we make reasonable adjustments to support making it work.

	We will work with all our parents, as we currently do to ensure students access out full curriculum.
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