

Dear Parents/Carers

It has been lovely to meet many of you during the past few weeks. It is always difficult to meet with parents and carers regularly when pupils come to school by LA transport and do not live near the school. We are keen to increase the number of opportunities for parents to come into school in addition to the usual school events. **On the 12th of December at 2pm, you are invited to Afternoon Tea.** I look forward to meeting you and having the opportunity to talk about what is happening at school and our plans to further develop the curriculum and provision for your children. In the meantime, the below outlines some of our current plans and developments.

Parking and Transport

The front and side of the school is currently an area children and staff use to travel between buildings and enter and exit classrooms. It is also an area where vehicles are used. I have been keen to improve pedestrian safety in these areas and I am pleased to tell you that work will be going ahead to ensure pedestrian and vehicle segregation is in place. Staff no longer park in this area and fencing is being erected to ensure no vehicles are routinely accessing areas in front of the classrooms. Designated bays near the school will be in place for pupils who use wheelchairs. This will greatly improve safety for all pupils and staff.

A couple of weeks ago, a school minibus, returning from a trip, was unable to get to school due to the taxi queue at the end of the day. This highlighted the issue of emergency vehicles not being able to get to us at the start or end of the day. On the 22nd of November, I met with Sophie Dennis, (Student Travel Team Lead) to discuss the times taxis arrive to drop-off and collect pupils and it was agreed that she would inform providers of the times to arrive at school. It was then for providers to inform parents of the changed times. As you are aware, school transport is not managed by the school and communication about changes to routes and collection times are for the provider to manage directly with parents.

The morning drop-off time has not changed. It was always 9am. Providers have been reminded of this but told they can arrive from 8.50am. They have also been reminded that the school day ends at 3pm and so they have been asked not to arrive to collect before 2.50pm.

Now that we have created the space, we are able to open the gates and get all vehicles onto the school site. Before we made these changes it took up to 25 minutes for all pupils to leave the site with the emergency access blocked for that period of time. We are now getting all pupils onto their transport within 10-15 minutes and doing so in a much safer way. This is a much calmer end to the day for pupils, many of whom still have a long journey before they reach home.

Unfortunately, some taxis were arriving before 2.50pm and this had led to longer queues than before. We have asked all providers not to arrive at school before this time as the gates will not be opened. We are aware that some drivers are unhappy with the arrangements and have asked them to be patient as the new system will mean they will no longer be queuing and will be departing the site more quickly than before.

Once the planned works have been completed vehicle access and pedestrian safety will be further improved.

Lunchtimes

Due to the increase in pupil numbers, many of our pupils are currently eating their meals in the classroom or outside of the dining hall. We will soon be putting new plans into place which will mean that all pupils can eat in the dining hall or in a designated quiet area. Pupils who have packed lunches will now be eating together in the sports hall. All pupils will know when their lunch sitting is, and we will be able to provide lunchtime clubs and more organised social time for pupils during the lunch period. Pupils will no longer be in areas not designed for eating meals or carrying plates of food to their classroom. By having designated sittings, we will also be able to ensure that all staff receive a lunch break. This is not currently the case.

The Arts

The increase in pupil numbers also saw the loss of the school's art room. We have moved the staffroom and will be using the space created for an Art Studio. With this new space we will be offering The Arts Award qualification for our Key Stage 4 pupils. We already have a purpose-built studio for music, dance and drama. This is underused and a subject specialist will soon be using the space to deliver our music curriculum. The Arts Award qualification will also be put into place for pupils.

Curriculum Offer

We currently offer ASDAN, Entry Level and GCSE in Key Stage 4. We will be expanding our curriculum offer and increasing the number of awards and qualifications to include Food Tech, Music, Art, DofE, Sports Leaders and others. We want our pupils to have the best chance for success beyond school and our pathway curriculum will ensure all pupils are able to leave school equipped to continue their pathway journey.

New Rooms and Old Rooms

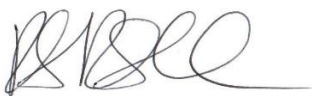
We have been looking at how to best use the space we have available. Some classrooms will be moving to larger rooms, and some will be moving closer to their key stage cohort. We are having a purpose-built first aid room installed and works to improve pupil toilets and to increase disabled and changing access. We now have two mini library areas in the school, and we have removed some rooms from office use so that we can increase the number of intervention rooms available. Year 11 pupils have been invited to plan and cost a common room which they are very keen on having. We will support the pupils and involve them in room changes.

Assemblies

We have reintroduced assemblies and at the moment these have taken place on a Thursday morning. It has been lovely to see pupils being rewarded for a host of reasons. I very much enjoyed 'Tea with Head' last week which was attended by the 'pupil of the week' from each class. There is an open invitation for parents to attend assemblies. Once we have the assembly plan in place we will let you know when they will be. It was lovely to see some of you at our Poppy Day Assembly before half term and I hope to see many more of you at future events.

If you have any questions about the above or would like to discuss them further, then please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office.

Kindest regards



Miss Ridgwell

Interim Headteacher