

4th September 2009

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the new school year. I hope you had a happy and relaxing summer break.

I am delighted to tell you that this summer's exam results have been the best in the school's history and we fully expect them to be even better next year.

As we start another academic year, I would like to tell you about the school's priorities for the year. Our over-riding aim is to raise standards of achievement and progress so that your children are well prepared for the next stage of their life when they leave us at the end of year 11. In order to do this, we will be focussing on 3 main areas:

- **Teaching, learning and intervention** – keeping up to date with a variety of ways of teaching and assessing your children's work to ensure they learn well and make as much progress as possible. Organising extra help for them when they do not.
- **Curriculum development** – ensuring that the courses we offer your children meet their needs and interests in order to maximise their enjoyment of their education and improve their progress.
- **Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding** – making sure that we maintain our drive to improve standards of behaviour to ensure a climate for learning. Continuing our drive to improve attendance at school because if pupils are not in school, they miss important bits of their learning. Keeping your children safe and healthy so that they are able to make progress with their learning.

These priorities will form the basis of our staff training every Monday afternoon, and I will keep you informed about developments. I attach an updated copy of the information I sent out last year about some of our work, and would welcome your feedback and ideas you may have about how we can improve still further. I am really grateful to those of you who gave us feedback last year, and I look forward to hearing your views again this term.

Keeping your child safe and healthy are two responsibilities which we take very seriously. If you think you may be eligible to claim for a free school meal, please ask for a form to apply. Completing this form may enable your child to receive a token worth £1.90 a day to spend in our school refectory where there are healthy meals and drinks available. There may also be other benefits available if the form is completed, and we are more than happy to help you complete the form if you would like us to.

We encourage pupils to drink water in school but we do not recommend that they bring fizzy drinks in to school. Additionally, pupils are not allowed to bring 'energy' drinks in to school as these can lead to poor behaviour and they do not allow pupils to engage with learning.

As part of our work in keeping our pupils safe, we are working closely with The Safer School Partnership and as a result of this work, we will be having a Safer Schools Police Officer based here in school. PC Hughs has been appointed to work within our school community to help us ensure your child's safety whilst in our care. We will also be introducing some new activities to enable students to sample vertical tutoring, a series of early morning sessions where students in years 7-9 are placed in mixed year groups during tutor time allowing them to engage in a variety of competitive activities that enable them to accrue points for their houses.

We are always very conscious of the need to ensure road safety around the school and as a result of this, we have had 'School Keep Clear' zig-zag markings put on the road near the school gate. The city council has asked me to remind you that vehicles may not stop on these markings during the times shown on the sign plate. Any driver caught doing so will be subject to a fine of £70 (reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days). I would also ask parents not to use the disabled parking bays or the nursery drop-off point unless authorised to do so.

In addition, we are working closely with Southampton Primary Care Trust to offer all girls in the relevant year group the course of injections to reduce the risk of cervical cancer later in life.

If you have any concerns about your child in school, please contact their tutor in the first instance and then, if the matter still is not resolved:

Year Group	Assistant Year Leader	Year Leader	Senior Leadership Team
Year 7	Miss Ballard (temporary cover)	Ms Vaughan	Mr Baker
Year 8	Mrs Laux	Mrs Pearce (previously Mrs Murray)	Mr Mann
Year 9	Mrs Henderson	Mr Caplen	Mr Bond
Year 10	Mrs Hookings	Mrs Maguire	Miss Grainger

Year 11	Mrs Harding	Miss Hudsmith	Mrs Wood
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In October, Mrs Maguire, the Year Leader for Year 10, is going to be absent from school for about 6 weeks following an operation. In her absence, Mr Whitworth will be responsible for the year group. I know he will do a good job in Mrs Maguire's absence and Miss Grainger will work with him and the team of tutors to ensure continuity.

Please may I remind you that your child's attendance at school is of paramount importance if we are to help them reach their potential. We will therefore not authorise holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will be taking rigorous actions to address poor attendance of any pupils where there is not a valid reason for their non attendance. May I also ask that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are made at the end of the school day (we finish at 1.20 pm on Mondays and at 2.45 pm every other day of the week).

Important dates:

INSET days this year are:

- October 23rd
- February 12th
- April 1st
- July 5th

October 22 nd	-	Yr 7 Parents' Evening
October 22 nd	-	End of half term (for pupils)
November 2 nd	-	Start of new half term
November 12 th	-	Careers Evening for pupils in years 9, 10 and 11
December 10 th	-	Yr 8 Parents' Evening
December 18 th	-	Break up for Christmas holidays
January 4 th 2010	-	Spring term starts at 8.30 am for all pupils

I look forward to working with you over this academic year and to meeting you at various school events.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Anslow
Headteacher

How do we keep your child safe?

- Provide a range of strategies to tackle bullying, including a student led support group 'Bully Busters', and work with the YMCA Youth theatre
- All staff have to undergo a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check
- High levels of break time supervision
- Strict adherence to the Local Authority's trip guidelines
- Regular Health and Safety checks and meetings with the company who owns the building
- Regular fire drills to practise safe evacuation of the building
- Good ratio of staff to pupils in practical subjects
- Staff on gate duty at the beginning and end of the school day
- Monitored visitor access to the school
- Assemblies given to all year groups on a variety of aspects of staying safe including road safety, fire safety, stranger danger
- Substance abuse and sexual health topics covered during our Personal Discovery days
- Collaboration with the police in delivering the FAKE project (Firearms and Knife Education)
- Non teaching Assistant Year Leader attached to each year group
- An attendance officer who follows up unexplained absence from school on a daily basis
- Close liaison with the Social Services and Health when necessary
- A Safer Schools Partnership Officer located in school
- Peer mentoring
- Nurture group for vulnerable children
- A school Counsellor who provides therapeutic work for pupils experiencing severe difficulties
- Youth workers on site to provide support and advocacy
- An innovative Journey 7 course to support transition to secondary school
- Regular safeguarding meetings to plan for vulnerable students

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work.

How do we help your child to maintain a healthy lifestyle?

- Pupils are allowed to drink water in class
- Unlimited free salad on offer in the refectory
- Fresh fruit on sale every day in the refectory
- Unlimited free fresh bread on offer in the refectory

- No chips served in the refectory
- Pupils in each year group have at least 2 hours of PE a week
- Extra curricular sport opportunities
- Annual participation in the National Rock Challenge competition (the competition promotes healthy lifestyles)
- Food technology/catering taught in all year groups
- Water fountains in school
- Mountaineering/outward bound activities
- ‘Quitters’ clinic on site once a week to support pupils who want to give up smoking
- Sexual health clinic on site once a week
- Healthy cooking during Personal Discovery Days.
- Encouragement of pupils to walk or cycle to school with appropriate facilities to store bikes
- No limits counselling service visits the school each week, and is available for pupils to access directly
- Close liaison with the Primary Care Trust to ensure inoculation programmes as appropriate
- School counsellor

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

How do we prepare your child for the next stage of education, training or employment?

- Study skills as part of our year 7 curriculum
- Annual Careers Evening for years 9, 10 and 11
- Presentations from the local Further Education 6th form colleges to years 9, 10 and 11 including specialist colleges such as Sparsholt
- Appointment with a Careers Adviser for all pupils in years 10 and 11
- College taster sessions offered
- Work experience placement for pupils in year 10
- Thorough information and guidance given to pupils when making their KS4 choices
- In September we will have a full time Personal Adviser on site to support students with careers advice
- A city-wide conference for pupils in year 11 who are at risk of not going on to employment, education or training
- Visits to Higher Education institutions
- Meetings with College Advisors in school time during Year 10 and Year 11 through the Personal Discovery Programme
- Apprenticeship Training Providers presentations

- Visit in Year 9 and 10 to Skills Festival for careers and new learning Diploma tasters
- Skills for working life course offered to pupils at risk of disengaging. The course also provides additional support to prepare for and support work experience placements

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

How do we inform you about your child's progress?

- Each term we send home a summary of your child's progress in each subject
- Each year every pupil receives a full school report which tells you about your child's progress, with a comment from the teacher and targets for improvement
- Once a year we hold a parents' evening so that you can meet your child's teachers and discuss their progress with them
- In year 9 we hold an additional evening for parents and pupils to discuss courses to be studied at KS4
- When a pupil is making particularly good progress, teachers often make phone calls home to pass on the news to parents
- A termly edition of our newsletter 'The Oracle'

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

How do we help you to support your child's learning?

- Annual parents' evenings when you have the opportunity to discuss with teachers how you can support your child's learning
- Science parents' lessons to help you get to grips with what the pupils are learning

- A careers evening for you to discuss your child's learning requirements with 6th form colleges and employers
- Exam support materials and revision guidance sent home to parents of year 11 pupils
- Family cooking
- Holiday clubs for pupils and parents
- KS3 Homework newsletters on the school website and sent to parents

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

How we meet your child's particular needs

- Individual Education Plans discussed with you if your child has a particular learning need
- Intervention work in year 11 as necessary to help pupils prepare for their exams
- Additional support for all year 11 pupils by offering revision sessions after school and in the holiday
- Extension opportunities for pupils identified as being able, gifted or talented.
- Pupil Support Workers and teaching Assistants for pupils who need extra support in lessons
- Liaison with the Local Authority's Behaviour Improvement Support Team as needed by individual pupils
- Off-site centres for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Progress mentors in year 11
- A Pupil Support Worker is part of every year team to support pupils with particular needs to access the school learning and social environment

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

How we deal with incidents of bad behaviour

- Effective behaviour management system which teaches pupils that unacceptable behaviour has consequences and which is regularly reviewed and updated

- Regular contact with parents as necessary
- Regular behaviour management training for all staff
- An isolation room for constant disruption to lessons
- Fixed term exclusion from school for more serious issues
- Permanent exclusion from school for very serious issues
- Meetings with parents to agree targets for improvement
- Report cards to monitor agreed targets
- Rewards for pupils who behave well and make good progress
- Patience and willingness to give another chance whenever possible.
- Mediators to help restore strained relationships

Please add your ideas about how we could improve this aspect of our work

Please return any comments to Mrs Smirk, the Headteacher's PA.