

Headteacher: Mr D. Whales | Chair of Governors: Mr A. Brown

1st September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families have enjoyed a restful and enjoyable summer break.

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our pupils and families, and particularly to those who are joining our school community for the first time. We are delighted to have you with us and look forward to working together over the coming year.

At the point of you reading this letter, we have just started our first staff training day. We are very much back into school routines and preparing for a successful Autumn Term.

I have included the guidance [here](#) that we sent out at the end of last term regarding the start of the school year. The simple headline is that the school opens to all students on Thursday of this week. Do read the guidance as the times are different across the first two weeks.

The rationale for this is simple: I believe we should invest as much time as possible in staff training and development at the start of the year. Ensuring everyone is clear about expectations and their roles benefits the whole school community.

As many staff do not work on the designated training days, Week 2 will include early finishes for students to allow all staff to participate in this important training. Looking ahead:

There are several reminders that I would like to share, along with some additional information, in an attempt to clarify some of the actions we have taken and will be taking this year.

The start of term

We talk endlessly at school about making sure we are welcoming and create a place where children 'want to be'. If everyone is pushing in the same direction it makes life a lot easier. This is made infinitely easier when children arrive each day 'ready to learn'. That does mean making sure our policies are followed. It is a real challenge to be welcoming while having to challenge students who are not ready to learn.

This means things like: no dyed hair, not having multiple piercings, wearing correct uniform – no short skirts and no trainers, arriving on time, getting into lessons straight away, shirts tucked in and blazers on etc. As I'm sure you are aware, we work very hard to make sure the start of the day is routine, predictable and clear for all. This has had a huge impact on the smooth running of the school; the expectations will be the same again this year. Please continue to help and work with us.

Attendance

Attendance remains a significant national priority and therefore a priority for our school. I recognise that parents hold a range of views on matters such as term-time holidays and whether children should attend school when they are feeling slightly unwell.

Equally, your children will all have differing attendance numbers. These figures will be from non-attendance, to 50%, to 100% and everything in between. There will also be reasons like very valid

medical reasons and all sorts of life complications – we do understand, I assure you. While we understand that every family's circumstances are different, the evidence consistently shows that children achieve best when they attend school regularly.

The correlation with high attendance and positive outcomes is also very clear, equally the correlation with very low attendance and safeguarding issues a concern. That doesn't mean I am judging you as a parent or blaming children for medical conditions. It means we want your child to be safe and successful, and the research tells us that means being in school.

Mobile Phones

Recent DfE guidance makes it clear that mobile phones should not disrupt learning or school life. Our current guidance is that they must be switched off in bags. I am aware that some schools have banned them from the school site entirely and others have bought pouches. My personal thinking is that we will remain with our current guidance – in bags, switched off. The only change I am considering is that if they are seen – once confiscated they will require parental collection straight away. Before we 'change' anything though, we will consult with you. I thought it would be helpful to make you aware of this and ask for your support in managing phone use during the school day.

My other request is a very simple one – don't let your children take their phones into their rooms at bedtime. Work with them and create an agreement that the phone will be left on charge in a separate room at an agreed time (the same time every night). When we speak to students they often tell us they are scrolling into the very early hours – 5am is the latest/earliest I have heard!

Crew

Lots of research is emerging about schools' roles in making sure that children feel a sense of 'belonging'. The evidence suggests: children who attend regularly, have positive relationships with their peers, have strong relationships with trusted adults and feel they are valued as an integral part in school – are happier and do better in all aspects of school. That sounds pretty obvious to most of us, but as we all know, school and life isn't that easy.

We have invested so much resource in building our Crew model – we are going to directly plan and ensure these relationships exist. It is going to be transformational for your children – please make sure they are in on Mondays and Fridays (these are the Crew days). Also, as a heads up – a key part of these Crews working is getting to know their families better – you! More details to follow.

Open Mornings

If you are interested in seeing the school on a normal day, I will shortly share some dates for this term. I will try and organise them so that you have the opportunity to see a variety of things – including morning routines, classrooms and lessons, Crew, and all other areas of the school.

Parental Feedback

- Over 90% of parents reported that their children are happy at school.
- Almost 95% reported that their children are expected to work hard.
- Over 90% reported that the school has high expectations for behaviour.

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- More than 90% felt that the school continues to improve.
- Nine out of ten parents said they would recommend the school.
- Over a third of respondents rated the school 9 or 10 out of 10.

There were of course areas that are not so positive - that is also the point of the feedback. I have personally read every comment and point that was made. All of it is taken on board and it helps shape our thinking and future decisions. It is always disappointing to read where we haven't got things quite right, but by the same token, if we don't know, we can't do anything about it.

Thank you to everyone for taking the time to offer your feedback and thank you for so many kind and positive comments – it's hard to show how much we appreciate them, but in a high-pressure, child facing environment (with its fair share of challenges) – your kindness goes a long way.

New Year 7 parents

I hope that the transition goes smoothly for both you and your children. Secondary is very different to Primary in many ways. Be prepared though for how quickly they change in year 7. They get to grips with the new surroundings very quickly and mature at a frightening speed (in a good way). It will be natural to have some nerves (all of you) but I promise you we will do everything we can to make things go as smoothly as possible, and if it isn't smooth, we will try and help you in any way we can.

Ofsted

During the penultimate week of the summer, we received 'the call' to say we would be inspected. The inspector wanted to check what was happening during that week. When I described what was happening, we agreed that a deferral was the best course of action – he was very supportive and understanding. As a result, we are now expecting our next inspection early this term. As soon as we receive the call, we will be sharing the parent survey – if you are able to offer your view, that would be greatly appreciated.

We are very hopeful they will recognise the improvements that have been made over the past few years and with some positive reinforcement, we will continue to take strides forward.

Thank you for your continued support and trust. Together, we can make this another successful and memorable year for all our children.

I wish all our pupils a happy, successful and enjoyable start to the new term.

Yours sincerely,



Mr D Whales
Headteacher

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