

Headteacher: Mr D. Whales | Chair of Governors: Mr T. French

27th October 2023

Good afternoon,

Welcome back (almost) to the second half term of this academic year.

The first half term was extremely positive. Teachers are reporting that the quality of learning in lessons is as good as it has ever been. Students have adapted brilliantly to all the changes and improvements. KSA is improving rapidly!

In this letter I have included lots of information, I hope in doing so this enables further clarity on how school and home need to work together.

The basics (as a reminder)

Uniform

We have been delighted with the standards we have reached, thank you for supporting this. Uniform battles are a pointless distraction, the uniform policy is clear, straightforward and available on our website.

Skirts remain problematic, so we are soon going to consult with you over a 'standard skirt' to prevent the stretchy/Lycra style. There is more to follow on this and will not likely be rolled out until the summer at the earliest.

As the weather deteriorates, please make sure your child/ren has a coat with them. Hoodies are not allowed in school and will be confiscated if worn ("It's cold" is not a reason for wearing a hoody). Confiscation can often create negative interactions between staff and students. This can easily be avoided if they leave their hoodies at home.

Attendance

This remains a major concern for education in general and for us at Ken Stimpson. We have already sent out guidance around this ([link](#)). This makes it very clear that students need to be in school every day, and that each day missed has a negative impact on their school success. *Please do everything in your power to get your children to school as often as possible and on time.*

Punctuality to school

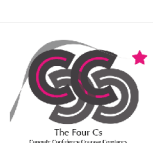
With the Golden Hour processes embedded at the start of the day, we can see clearly, student punctuality, every morning.

In terms of 'process' at 8.45 am the external gates close. Anybody who is not through at 8.45 am is late. The interior gate is closed at 8.43 am, we allow 2 minutes to travel to their form, and by 8.45 am they need to be sat in their classroom when the bell rings. If they arrive after this point, they will disrupt the silent reading. Therefore, any student who has not passed that gate by 8.43 am is late.

Headteacher: Damien Whales, Ken Stimpson Academy is a school within the Four Cs Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

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If students are late before 9 am, they are taken to the canteen where they sit in silence until the start of lesson 1, this is recorded as one of their 'lates to lesson'. After 9 am they receive an automatic detention.

If they are more than 5 minutes late to a lesson (beyond the 5-minute bell) this is also recorded as late. Once a student has been late on 3 occasions to morning registration or to lessons, they are placed in after-school detention. We get a little bit of argument from students where they say "I'm only 30 secs late" - this speaks for itself, they are late. We cannot have a period of late that is ok.

Additional points for your consideration

Year 11

There is an increasing focus on Year 11. After Christmas they will be sitting their 'Finals' these are a series of full GCSE papers and the last set of exams, in exam conditions, before their GCSEs in May. The exams will cover all course content and will give us a very clear indication of the level they are working at. It will demonstrate what they can and can't do, which will be essential as that will directly inform what areas teachers will focus on.

Following the Finals, you will receive their data and there will be a parent's evening to share what we know at that point. If your child is not where they need to be, we will likely invite you in for a targeted support meeting.

Now, the guidance is very straightforward – get to school on time every day, work hard, attend lesson 6 boosters on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, study at home and begin revising for the finals. The harder they work the greater the likelihood of success. This may mean small steps to begin with.

Feedback and parental engagement

Last half term I hosted several parent tours. I am pleased to report that the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and very complimentary about what goes on across the school. I will again be very happy to host these later this term or at the start of next.

We have just completed our first staff survey of the year, which has also come out extremely positive. Without going into too much detail 98% of our staff 'think the school has improved since the last Ofsted inspection'. During this next half term, we will be sharing a parent and a student survey to help us gather your feedback.

If you would like to have a more influential role in the school's development, we currently have a Parent Governor vacancy. If you would like more details, please contact Pauline Greenwood (Headteachers PA) p.greenwood@kscs.org.uk

Homework and Class Charts

Another area we will be looking to tidy up is homework. Homework is such an emotive topic with a huge diversity of opinions that span the desire for hours every night to a very anti anything outside

school stance. Our stance is we do have homework and it is compulsory. We have moved the majority of it to online platforms you can see these via our homework 100+ area on the website.

The other important component of communication is Class Charts, which records any additional homework set, and any positive or negative instances of behaviour – it is essential that all parents have access to Class Charts. If you haven't got access, can you please email ParentITHelpdesk@kscs.org.uk to request an access code.

On our return, we will be trialling the use of a body camera. This will be used by a single member of staff, whilst on the school gates at the start and end of the day. This is not in response to anything sinister – more my desire to keep staff safe. I have seen them used by the police and now in places like Tesco's. The evidence suggests they lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and complaints. Hopefully, we won't ever need to use it.

Finally, as we are all too aware, the tragic events in Israel and Palestine continue to play out. As a school, we must remain impartial. However, we are aware that this conflict may impact on our young people.

We will provide as much support as we possibly can, please make sure we are made aware if direct support is required. The government has written to all schools and has shared the following websites that may offer assistance around antisemitism and other acts of intolerance:

- [Educational Resources – CST – Protecting Our Jewish Community](#)
- [Report in Anti-Muslim Hate or Islamophobia \(tellmamauk.org\)](#)
- [Support for Victims of Terrorism – Information on where to seek advice and assistance following a terrorist attack.](#)

I'm sorry to end on such a sour note. If anything, it helps give us a sense of perspective and shines a light on the need to look after those around you.

I look forward to another successful half-term at KSA.

Yours sincerely,



Mr D Whales
Headteacher