

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

7th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Further to my letter in the summer, I wanted to make immediate contact with you at the start of this term to communicate what we are trying to achieve with regards to the start of the school day and the basic expectations.

As is the case with the majority of schools across the country we are attempting to start the term with clear processes and boundaries. This morning was our first day of 'Roll Call' and checking 'Readiness to Learn'. I am happy to report that the success rate was exceptionally high with only a small proportion of minor uniform issues (around 20 students), many of which were sorted very quickly.

Our intention is not to create negative relationships with students or families over matters like skirts or jewellery. For example, what constitutes an 'appropriate skirt' is not as straightforward as it may seem; although I can appreciate the confusion you may feel. We are trying to be as consistent and clear on this as we can, I'm not convinced we are there yet! For next year we are already looking at having a single type of 'traditional pleated skirt' that we will accept. On the school website, we have tried to make things as clear as we possibly can [Uniform Policy | Ken Stimpson Academy \(kscs.org.uk\)](https://www.kscs.org.uk)

I had intended to write to you tomorrow with an update, but following the success of this morning, and some of the teething problems, it felt appropriate to write to you slightly sooner.

There has been a change at the school both in terms of leadership and with the school joining the Four Cs Academy Trust. That means we are in an opportune time to make some significant improvements. Alongside this, last year Ofsted graded the school as Requiring Improvement, one of the categories that fell into that was Behaviour. As a result of this, we have made some quite dramatic changes around our expectations of your children both in terms of Behaviour and their Academic approach to school.

This morning I have personally led assemblies to two-year groups and I will be addressing the other year groups on Monday. It is vitally important that everyone is clear about what we are doing and more importantly why we are doing the things we are. Many of the changes we have made are ideas that we have taken from schools like ours in other parts of the country. I, and others have visited these schools to see the processes in place. Their approach has had a transformational impact on each school, they have taken schools from Inadequate to achieving results in the top 5% of schools in the country. Our aspiration is not simply about better-behaved children, it is making sure all students succeed!

The uniform issues or equipment issues may seem trivial, but in all honesty, in isolation they are. The essential thing is that they are part of the bigger picture. The important point is that we publish expectations and policies to help everyone understand what is expected, we cannot then pick and choose what we insist on. I would like to ask that you trust what we are doing is the right thing for

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

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the school, I assure you it will have a major positive impact on your children and their future opportunities.

Some operational type updates:

- *Skirts* - Please don't send them in with stretchy/Lyrca-type skirts that they can roll up. Choose a more traditional style or choose trousers.
- *Canteen* - Each morning 'free breakfast' is available from 8 am. At break time all years are out together and there is no way we can get all year groups through the canteen to buy their 'lunch' in 20mins. Therefore, we suggest they have a snack, a drink and use the toilet at break. At lunchtime when the breaks are longer and split, they can use the canteen in a much more convenient way.
- *Equipment checks* – Are about ensuring all students have arrived at school with the tools with which to learn.
- *School entry* - Each morning every adult in the school will be in a position to greet your children and ensure they have everything they need. If they arrive without anything and need to borrow something this can be achieved by going to the canteen and asking for support before the start of school.
- *Meetings* - Due to the morning 'Golden Hour', staff will not be available for meetings before 9 am and will not be available after 4.30 pm
- *Contacts* - As part of our safeguarding responsibilities it is essential that we have two emergency contacts for each child.
- *Attendance* - We will shortly be sharing lots of guidance around this. This is a major concern in schools across the country. I cannot stress enough how important it is that students are present in school as often as possible. The research demonstrates that the more often they are here the better they perform. The point being, the odd day here or there makes a big difference.

As I put in the previous correspondence, we need your support to enable students to achieve. I can't guarantee that you will agree with everything we do. I can guarantee that everything we do and every decision we make is based on ensuring the best possible outcomes for the students who attend our school. Holding a firm line on what we will and won't accept is, I hope, what you would expect as a basic starting point.

I will try and make sure we communicate and keep you updated as often as possible.

Many thanks for your support in advance.



Damien Whales

Headteacher