



PROUD TO BE A PART OF



Headteacher: Mr N D Finlay BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteachers: Mr B Fletcher BSc (Hons) MSc

Dr J Rowley PhD BSc (Hons)

Dear Parents,

Safeguarding Newsletter – October 2016

Regarding Leave of Absence during Term Time.

As you will be aware there has been some ambiguity over the regulations for Leave of Absence during term time, in light of the recent Isle of Wight case.

We strive to achieve high levels of attendance for our pupils, with as few absences from school as possible, in order to maximise your child's educational opportunities. Consequently we hope your child can achieve 96% or more school attendance over the academic year.

Regarding holiday requests during term time, or other requests for leave of absence, it remains the case that Headteachers may only authorise such absences if there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Requests for leave of absence must now be made at least two weeks in advance (unless it is a funeral) by completing a form which can be found on our website or collected from reception or the house office.

Attendance

Attached to this email is supporting information about the importance of attendance at school. Our whole school target is 96%. We appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter attends school regularly and is only absent if absolutely necessary. Where possible please make medical appointments outside of school hours or towards the end of the school day if absolutely necessary.

Our education welfare support is now being provided by a company called 'Attend EDC'. All staff have DBS clearances in order to work with children. Should your son/daughter have attendance difficulties you may receive a home visit from Attend EDC in order to address any concerns they may have.

Social Networking Sites

I would like to remind you about our concerns with students accessing social networking sites. Already this term we have had issues raised about inappropriate messages which have been sent between students. This can cause significant disruption to the school day when issues are subsequently brought into school. We would welcome your support in closely monitoring your child's access to social media (please see additional letter attached sent to all parents in May 2016).

Note for Parents on Social Networking Sites

As we all know, social networking sites such as 'Facebook' are widely used and enjoyed by the majority of parents and older children. However, sometimes these sites are used to publicly discuss matters which may include personal disagreements between pupils at the School or for parents to vent frustration about school matters.

You may not be aware that comments made on Social Networking Sites about an individual can be considered to be 'defamatory' and lead to the onset of legal action being taken against those who made them. Therefore I feel it is important to remind users of Social Networking Sites to bear this in mind before posting comments.

Social networking sites are not as 'private' as we might like to think and careless or inconsiderate use of these sites can cause unnecessary distress to the individuals concerned, or have an adverse impact on the School in general, and this is something the School seeks to avoid.

The School works hard to create a safe and happy environment for its staff and pupils and should any parent have concerns about either their child, or the School in general, I would urge them to contact us immediately. Thank you all for your support in this matter.

Parking

Please can I politely request that you consider student safety when dropping off or collecting your son/daughter from all entrances? Please do not park on the yellow lines or turn in the school entrance.

First Response

Please may I remind parents that if you have a safeguarding concern out of school hours, you are advised to contact **First Response on 0800 1313 126**. The First Response Service is part of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH brings together people from police, health services and local authorities so that they can share information and take a better informed decision over the best course of action. First Response should be contacted if you have a child protection or safeguarding concern where you are aware of a serious problem and are worried that a child is suffering harm or a child is living in circumstances where maltreatment is resulting in a lack of safe and effective care or an impairment of their health and development. First Response will also take calls to request support for a child with a disability and to request support from an Occupational Therapist.

The Local Support Team

The LST aims to ensure that the needs of children and families are met as early as possible by using the Staffordshire Early Help Assessment process. They are a single point of contact for accessing targeted support services and provide a co-ordinated response to meeting the needs of children, young people and their families LST staff deliver their support and interventions in a variety of ways:

1:1 work with children and families in home, school or other settings as appropriate. Additional support may be delivered as part of a group at a children's centre, school or other community building.

LST staff often work in partnership with other services. Focus support around children and families.

The Local Support Team can be contacted **on 01785 276800**

Parents can also contact Childline for confidential support on 0800 111.

If you have any safeguarding concerns regarding your son/daughter please do not hesitate to contact me directly Email: a.cashmore@walton.staffs.sch.uk Tel: 01785 356300.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Cashmore, Assistant Headteacher