



19 April 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

The White Paper

On Monday 28 March, the Secretary of State for Education released the anticipated Education White Paper to parliament. The first white paper for 6 years, there has been a great deal of expectation about what it may contain. The paper reflects on the many improvements which have taken place in Education over the past decade, but also on a number of key challenges which remain.

Attendance

There has been much discussion about the impact COVID has had on school attendance and you will have read letters from us encouraging high attendance. As stated in the white paper, children with no absence during key stage 4 are almost 2 times more likely to achieve 5 or more GCSEs than children who missed 10-15 percent of lessons. In our Year 10 cohort, 1 in 3 students have missed more than 10 percent of lessons. This is placing these students at a significant disadvantage.

Over the coming weeks we will be writing to parents and carers to identify the number of school days their children have had off. Absences due to COVID will not be included in this information. Today, academy attendance remains lower than we would expect. With only 7 students absent due to COVID, less than 1% of our Year 7-11 cohort, the total absence figures which show 109 student absences today is far greater than is usual. In promoting good attendance, it is important that we work together with students to help them attend whenever they can.

The Parent Pledge

Another section of the paper focuses on the positive impact which effective additional tuition can have with students who have fallen behind in their learning. At Guilsborough we have already introduced additional tuition which a number of students are benefiting from. Currently, this is funded from the Governments 'catch-up' premium as well as funding from the Pupil Premium budget.

Moving forward, I am working on plans to further expand this facility so that more students may benefit from the additional support. We aim to meet this pledge ahead of the Governments 2024 target.

The Green Paper

Only 24 hours after the release of the White Paper, a consultation on SEND and Alternative Provision, also known as the Green Paper, was released. This consultation focuses on the national provision for SEND and how we can work together to ensure all students receive 'the right support, in the right place, at the right time'. At Guilsborough we benefit from having two senior colleagues who already hold the SENDCo award, while a third is currently studying towards it.

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We have already taken steps to enhance our support for SEND students and, via regular meetings with the parents and carers of those students, we intend to further develop our support. During the last two weeks prior to the Easter break we were successful in appointing 4 additional Teaching Assistants. These colleagues work closely with teaching staff to offer our students amazing support in lessons and ensure they make rapid progress.

Parent Survey

We have now collated the responses we received from our recent parent survey. I would like to begin by thanking the parents who took the time to respond to the survey. We appreciate all of the kind words, particularly those who refer to specific members of staff. Please rest assured this positive feedback has been shared with individuals concerned.

In response to comments relating to the frequency of reports, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind parents that student progress data is available all year via our online tracking system 'go4schools' which parents and students can access via www.go4schools.com. From 22nd April, to further improve the level of information available to parents, we will be making the individual grades and/or marks of assessments completed on a subject-by-subject basis. This additional information will further improve the quality and quantity of information we share.

In addition to the above, we are always keen to develop the systems we use to keep students and parents updated on progress. We are currently exploring adaptations which will allow us to provide even more detail to parents on a regular basis.

Some comments were received which related to trips and other educational visits, while the message may not have permeated yet, I would like to reassure all parents that we are currently approving a significant number of educational visits to take place over the next year. We fully appreciate our scope for running and organising these trips was curtailed by the pandemic, so a significant focus on reigniting this incredibly important aspect of our curriculum is now underway.

Next week we have our Year 8 Parents' Evening. Please do contact the academy if you have any difficulty in booking your appointments or a member of staff you were hoping to speak to was fully booked.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Frazer', written over a horizontal line.

Mr S Frazer
Principal