



28 March 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

As we rapidly approach the end of another busy term, it is important to reflect on some of the key messages which have come from central government, as well as how we will be responding to them.

The Department for Education and the various teaching unions have recognised a rise in challenging behaviours over the last few years. I would like to thank our parents/carers for their support when we have had to challenge unacceptable behaviour. We believe behaviours are learned and that by working together we can encourage our students to be respectful of themselves and others. While those truanting lessons do not have a direct impact on the learning of others, the impact is nonetheless serious for those who are truanting and for those members of staff who are spending time looking for them and challenging their behaviours.

Earlier this year, the DfE announced that mobile phones should not be seen or heard in schools. They have given clear guidance for all school leaders, and I know that other schools in the local area have had processes in place for some time to deal with this. At Guilsborough we have spent the last two years encouraging our students to work with us and keep their phones out of sight during the day. Where they have been seen, staff have confiscated them for the remainder of the day. Unfortunately, some of our students continue to ignore our requests.

I do not believe it is appropriate to ban mobile phones from school. Given our location and the transport required to get to and from school, I would want my own children to have a mobile phone for their safety. However, they should not be seen or used during the school day.

We have recently completed a survey of parents/carers regarding our next steps as we challenge the use of phones in our school. While we are currently collating the written responses, the majority of parents suggested they would prefer any escalation of consequences to include the Academy keeping the phone until they (parents/carers) are able to collect it. After Easter we will be working with the students so that they have also contributed to this important debate. However, the message is clear. Mobile phones cause issues in school and removing these issues will support a more productive learning environment.

In other, more positive news, our students have really engaged with the new Wednesday Wheel rewards. All students achieving 100% attendance, 5 positive behaviour entries, or no negative entries are entered into separate year group specific draw. Good attendance not only offers the opportunity of entry into the weekly prize draw, it also improves progress.

When we return after the Easter break, our Year 11 students will have 4 weeks until their GCSE examinations begin. This is a stressful time for them, as it is our Year 13's who start their exams the following week. There are a number of Easter revision classes running in school and I thank my colleagues for giving their time to support the students.

Finally, our parent/carer newsletter now contains a monthly update of the actions we are taking post Ofsted. The next update will be included at the start of the new Term.

I wish all our families a Happy Easter. For those observing Ramadan, may I also wish you a happy Eid al-Fitr on Tuesday 9 April.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Frazer
Principal

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