

15th December 2017

Dear Parent

As the autumn term marches on and Christmas draws near I thought I would update you regarding a few matters relating to the school and our key areas of work this term.

School Closure Arrangements

It was unfortunate that we had to close the school recently in response to excessive amounts of rain. Very quickly we learned that a number of parents did not receive a message from our internal messaging system. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those parents that got in touch to point out that there had been an issue and I am pleased to say that this has been rectified so that all parents will now receive such an emergency message. Unfortunately, the problem was caused by a change to our online system and this caused a mismatch with our internal records which has now been resolved. It is helpful at this point for me to remind all parents that we use a number of methods to inform you of an emergency and this information can be found on our website by following the link [here](#). Whilst forecasters are predicting a cold and possibly snowy winter we of course hope that we will not need to close the school to students in the future.

Traffic and Pedestrians at the Front of the School

As you will know, the front of school is quite busy first thing in the morning and at the end of the school day and this can sometimes bring together a mix of students and vehicles and this situation requires a huge amount of care on behalf of car drivers and bus drivers. Our current traffic management works well and after several reviews during recent years it is best for our students to be boarding buses right in front of school. However, it would help enormously if parents could drop off their children on the road leading down to The Lakes School leaving your children to walk the final short distance into school. Whilst there are clearly demarcated crossings and pedestrian walkways at the front of school, it is of course always preferable to reduce the amount of traffic flow where this is mixed with pedestrians. Please could we ask all parents to give consideration to this request by dropping your children off outside of the school gates where possible.

Cyclists Must Wear a Helmet

A small number of our students cycle to and from school and we make available a space for students to secure their bicycles at the rear of our technology workshop. We have noticed recently that some of our cyclists are not suitably equipped to safely ride their bike. In January, we will be starting the year with an assessment of each student's cycling equipment. Specifically, students cycling to and from school must wear a helmet and have lights to the front and rear. If your child cycles to school, please can you ensure that your child is suitably equipped with a helmet and lights for when we return on 3rd January 2017. Thank you for helping us keep your child safe.

Social Media and Internet Safety

Staying safe online is important for all of us but particularly so for our young people. We have recently updated the [e-Safety](#) page of our website which can be accessed by clicking on the link. The [Children's Commissioner](#) has recently released a set of documents which summarise the rules and rights for users of Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook which is essential reading for parents and children. These documents clarify a number of terms and conditions that may come as a surprise to many of us and in turn raise questions about how our children use social media and the internet. The summaries can be found by visiting the [e-Safety](#) page of our website and we will be sharing this information in an accessible way with our students in the New Year through lessons and assemblies.

Sarahah App

It is been brought to our attention that a website and mobile app called Sarahah is being used as a social media tool by some young people to send hurtful and hateful messages. The app claims to help users receive honest feedback from work colleagues and friends but it has become clear that the app also enables people to use the privacy of Sarahah to express unhelpful and hurtful messages. I would like to reassure parents that we are not aware of anyone currently at The Lakes School who is using this app in such a way but we felt it was important to share this information so that you can talk about it with your child.

Parent Forum Update

The Lakes School Parent Forum held its most recent meeting on 20th November 2017 and there were positive discussions about the impact of the new fencing on site security and the punctuality of our students. The Forum also discussed homework and will be helping the school to develop and launch a revised Homework Policy during the spring term of 2018. The Forum were united on the following key points which we intend to incorporate in to our new policy;

1. Students should not receive homework for completion during holidays in recognition of the fact that parents and students need time to engage in family orientated activities.
2. Students should be given a minimum of a 3 night turnaround time for homework as this provides flexibility for parents and students to achieve a balance between family commitments, attendance at clubs & societies and the completion of homework.
3. The planner should remain as the key method for students keeping organised with their homework as this enables parents and the school to also see what homework has been set.
4. Homework tasks should include some key information that should be consistent across the school such as the main theme or question being answered, criteria by which the homework will be marked, where a child might look for help or inspiration about the homework and a suggestion about how long the task should take to complete.

As you can see, the Parent Forum continues to make a significant contribution to improvements at The Lakes School and there is always space for new members so take a peek at the [Parent Forum](#) page of our website and we look forward to welcoming you to our next meeting which takes place on 5th March 2018.

As the autumn term draws to a close we make preparations for our end of term celebration assembly when the whole school comes together to share in the joy of each other's' achievements. During recent years, we have seen an explosion in the number and range of awards we present to our students and lesson 5 on the last day of term continues to be a joyous occasion for staff as well as students. Alongside a wide range of subject awards, we will be rewarding students who have achieved 100% attendance this term and demonstrated great progress and attitude to learning across the subjects that they study.

On behalf of the governing body and staff of The Lakes School, I would like to thank you for your continued support of our work as we march confidently onwards towards our goal of becoming a great school. We are already well on the way to achieving a grade of Good at our next full Ofsted inspection in 2019 and we very much look forward to sharing that journey with you. I would also like to wish you a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a restful break over the festive period. We look forward to welcoming all of our students back to school on Wednesday 3rd January 2018.

Kind regards



A Cunningham
Headteacher



Excellence through a caring, learning community