



Term 1b Newsletter 2019/20

Dear Parent/Carer

This is a busy half term for school as we head towards the end of the first term. Following our Y6 Open Evening we have our Post 16 Open Evening for students in Year 11 at The Joseph Rowntree School and other local schools. Year 11 students will be completing trial exam papers and we have our Christmas Concert to look forward to on the 17th December.

Staffing Update

Mr McGrath, House Manager for Rowling House, left us to take up a new career path at the end of half term. Mr McGrath has played a significant role in supporting many students during his time in school and I know he will be missed by students, members of staff and families. Miss Cambridge (Attendance Officer) will pick up his work once we have appointed a colleague to replace her role in attendance. Earlier in the half term, Mrs Foster was appointed as the House Manager for Malala House.

Miss Lee has been appointed to the role of Assistant SENCO and will play a lead role in our Wiltshire provision. Miss Lee is an experienced colleague and we are looking forward to her joining our team this half term.

Parent/Carer Evenings

We have trialled an online booking system for Parent/Carer Evenings with Year 13 parents and carers and found it made the evening work much more smoothly. We will be rolling this system out to all year groups over the course of the year. You will receive information about this system in advance of each Parent/Carer Evening which will allow you to log on and make appointments. Please stick to the timings of your appointments as these are busy evenings and members of staff often have a lot of people to see. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will be available if you require further information.

To help gather the views of parents and carers we will be handing out questionnaires at Parent/Carer Evenings. Please take the time to complete these and return them before you leave. Your views on the school are important to us and will help us identify areas to improve.

Uniform

We have been really pleased with the support that parents and carers have given us as we have tightened up our expectations of uniform at the start of this academic year. We will continue to have high expectations of uniform and ask that you do a quick check of uniform and jewellery before your child leaves home in the morning. If you are buying new uniform and are unsure if it will meet our expectations please contact your child's House Team to check before you buy.

A reminder that trousers should be formal black trousers, fitted and not elasticated or Lycra based, where they cling to the leg. Trousers should also not be cropped, and should reach below the ankle, and socks should be black ankle socks, and not trainer style socks.

Attendance

We continue in our drive to have excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Attending and taking part in learning is fundamental to making sure that our young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Lost days at school also result in lost examination grades. It is easy to think that an occasional missed day from school does not really matter but all missed days do count and for year 11 students, could have a direct impact on grades.

The law states that students must be here every school day of the academic year. The only exception to this is if they are too ill to come in or where permission has been granted in exceptional circumstances from the Headteacher. Where a student's attendance falls below 90% they are classed as a 'persistent absentee' and we are required to report on this to the Local Authority. Our school target is for every student to have above 96% attendance to ensure that they have the best possible chances of success.

Although we already have regular awards and rewards for attendance, we are running a very special competition this half term. All students who have over 96% attendance for this half term will be invited to join us for an afternoon out of school on a very special rewards trip.

For those students who keep their 100% attendance each week over this half term there will be special rewards and prizes all the way through this half term. These students really are giving themselves the best possible chance of success.

School Reports

We are in the process of finalising a new style school report which will be introduced across both KS3 and KS4 this year. KS3 reports will maintain Attitude to Learning information alongside Behaviour and Attendance data, whilst indicating whether or not students are making Expected Progress. The KS4 report will follow a similar theme in terms of the Attitude to Learning and Pastoral Information but this will run alongside Current and, where appropriate, Most Likely Grades. These will be compared against Target Grades for individual subjects. We are introducing a consistent colour scheme across both of the reports which will hopefully enable you to identify very easily which subjects students are performing better or worse in. I would like to thank the parents who have worked with us on the development process of these reports.

Student Leadership

Post 16 students have set up groups looking at Mental Health and the Environment. They will be leading on activities throughout the year and I look forward to updating you on their work during this year. Students will lead assemblies to help deliver some key messages to students in Years 7 to 13 about their work.

We are also in the process of launching a LGBTQ+ support group for students. This will be run by members of staff and will be a welcoming and fun group where students can meet, socialise and discuss any concerns or issues they feel are important.

Cycling

Unfortunately, we have had a number of complaints from motorists and pedestrians about the behaviour of a small number of students when they are cycling to and from school. We are doing work in school about the importance of being safe when cycling and paying attention to other road users. Please reinforce these messages at home. Students who are cycling in a dangerous manner are receiving sanctions in school. If students continue to behave in a dangerous manner when cycling to and from school we will contact home to ask that alternative arrangements are made for them to get to and from school.

Access to School grounds at the end of the day

I would like to thank parents and carers who have worked with us by picking up their children after 3.30 each day. This has made a significant difference to the safety of our students as they leave at the end of the day. Unfortunately, a number of parents and carers have continued to arrive before this time leading to significant congestion and on a number of occasions buses have not been able to come into school to pick up students. We will continue to monitor this situation but if this continues to be a problem we will shut the school gates to all vehicles other than buses at the end of the school day until 3.30pm. This will be in line with other local secondary schools.

Pick Ups and Idling Cars in Lucombe Way – Hartrigg Oaks

The school has also received complaints from residents of Hartrigg Oaks Retirement Village of a number of parents/carers coming into Lucombe Way to pick up students from the school. Cars are blocking access to the private closes around Lucombe Way and arriving before 3pm and so waiting for at least 15-20 minutes with car engines idling. Please can we respectfully ask that parents/carers abide by the no pick-ups before 3.30pm request, at which point they are very welcome into the school gates to the collection point to safely collect students once the vast majority of pedestrian, cycle and bus traffic has left site. Hartrigg Oaks will be putting up no pick up signs and are engaging with City of York Council who have a current initiative to reduce pollution from cars that are sat with engines idling.

Key Dates

Please see the attached sheet which has the key dates this half term on it. If you require any further information please contact school.

Regards



Dave Hewitt
Headteacher

Key Dates – Term 1b 2019/20

Monday 11 th November	Governors FS and R Committee Meeting
Tuesday 12 th November	Sixth Form Open Evening - 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Monday 18 th November	Governors T&L Committee Meeting
Thursday 21 st November	Celebration of Achievement Evening - 7pm – 8.30pm
Friday 22 nd November	Sixth Form Celebration of Achievement Evening - 7pm - 8.30pm
Monday 2 nd December	Year 11 Trial Exam Fortnight begins
Monday 2 nd December	Governors Full Governing Body Meeting
Thursday 5 th December	Year 7 Parents Evening - 4.30pm – 7.30pm
Thursday 12 th December	Year 9 Parents Evening - 4.30pm – 7.30pm
Tuesday 17 th December	Christmas Concert - 7pm
Friday 20 th December	End of Term – school finishes at 12.15pm
Monday 6 th January	Staff Training Day
Tuesday 7 th January	Term starts for all students at normal time