

19 February 2024



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your family well, having enjoyed the half term break last week. I am writing to you with information about a number of improvements that have been made in school to enable students to be in an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all students can learn and thrive.

There have been a number of site improvements over the half term break, including some re-decorations, groundworks and installation of new furniture. We are particularly looking forward to installing new computers into two classrooms within the coming weeks.

Last term, we asked for your feedback on the student bathrooms in school and were pleased that a number of parents and carers joined a Bathroom Improvement working party. This was to discuss ideas as to how we could improve the student experience in our bathrooms.

The survey and working party agreed that, while the majority of students behave sensibly and responsibly in the bathrooms, their experience is negatively affected by a small minority who misbehave. This causes some students to worry about using the bathrooms in school, and makes the environment less pleasant for everyone else.

The working party was pleased that unlike many schools, we remain committed to allowing students to use a bathroom at any time of the day they need to. I know of many schools who have addressed problematic behaviour by prohibiting students from using the bathrooms during lesson time. The option of locking the bathrooms during lesson time has been considered, however we do not think the well-behaved majority of students should lose the right to use the bathroom if they need to, due to the poor choices of a small minority. Students are encouraged to go to the bathroom during break and lunch time, but are allowed out of class to use the bathroom if they need to.

The working party was impressed by the wide range of strategies already being implemented by the school and suggested we share these with you. We have implemented different bathrooms for each year group, so that younger students are not worried by encountering older ones in bathrooms; there are senior members of staff on duty at each bathroom during break and lunch; children who have medical conditions who need to use the bathroom more often or urgently have printed cards, so that all staff allow this at all times; vape detectors have been installed in bathrooms; bathrooms have been refurbished to make them a more pleasant environment and we have trialled a system where a member of staff monitored the bathrooms during lesson time.

Our working party of parents and carers confirmed that, despite all these efforts, there are still issues caused by the behaviour of a small minority of students, which makes some

students less likely to use the bathrooms in school. The working party agreed that cameras should be installed in the bathrooms to deter the small minority from engaging in poor behaviour that makes the bathrooms less pleasant for everyone else.

I am pleased to inform you that cameras have now been installed. These are fixed view cameras which only show the sink areas of the bathrooms. Toilet cubicles and urinals are not visible on the cameras for privacy purposes. The cameras will be accessible to a restricted small number of staff, and will only be checked if there has been an incident in a bathroom. I would like to thank all the parents and carers who gave up their time and helped us consider a range of views in deciding to take this appropriate action for the benefit of all students.

Mobile Phones

You may have seen in the media that schools in England have been given new guidance from the government intended to stop the use of mobile phones during the school day. I would like to assure you that this has been an integral part of our behaviour policy for a number of years. We know that mobile phone use in the school day brings unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion.

Our policy is that mobile phones must not be used, seen or heard. If a student breaks this rule they will receive a break time detention, their mobile phone confiscated and returned to them at the end of the school day.

Students must have their phone switched off on arrival at school. If you need to contact your child during the school day in an emergency, please do so via the school reception.

We will be sharing further information this half term with you on how to help your child to use mobile phones and in particular social media safely and responsibly.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Caroline Whitehead
Principal