

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a very different Autumn Term to the one we are all familiar with. Pupils arriving to school in PE kit on certain days, year group bubbles and designated social areas, enforced self-isolation and a further lockdown have all had an impact on how school usually operates. On the whole our pupils have responded very positively to these changes and it is a real privilege for me to be part of such a wonderful school. As we move towards the final weeks of this term, I would like to update you on a few pastoral matters and also remind you of our expectations on uniform, attendance and behaviour in preparation for the Spring term.

REWARDS:

I hope with the introduction of the SIMS App you are now able to see not only any behaviour points, but also the number of achievement points your child is receiving throughout the day. This year school intends to focus primarily on acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. There is a new rewards policy in place, which includes the introduction of a five stage Achievement Ladder. This mirrors the Behaviour Ladder and escalation of sanctions but has a pure focus on recognition for positive attitudes, achievement and behaviour.

Pupils who behave well and conduct themselves appropriately for majority of the time deserve to be recognised and rewarded for their actions. Form tutors are currently issuing weekly A1s for zero signatures on their conduct card, receiving zero behaviour points in a week and also for 100% attendance per week. Changes have been made to the Achievement Points Certificates and there is now a wider range of rewards available to students. I have attached an overview of the achievement ladder to this letter.

UNIFORM:

At Lacon Childe School, we believe that school uniform promotes a strong attitude to learning, enhances a sense of identity and community ethos. Uniform also helps members of the wider community form a positive impression of our school and the students who attend. Over the term I have been very impressed with the vast majority of students who wear their uniform correctly, with pride and look very smart. Thank you to all the parents and carers who have worked with the school by ensuring that their child leaves home correctly dressed or by providing us with a note if there are any problems with uniform.

With the need to teach in classrooms with doors and windows open, it was agreed that pupils could wear either a maroon V neck jumper under their blazer or the black Lacon Childe School PE hoody. A plain black hoody is also acceptable due to stock issues at the School Shop. No other hoody or sweatshirt is permitted. Failure to wear one of the acceptable variations will result in pupils being told to remove the non-uniform item. Further failure to comply with this request will result the item being confiscated. Coats are strongly recommended at this time of year and can be worn anywhere outside the school buildings. Once inside, outdoor clothing should be removed immediately and carried around school along with their school bag.

The length and tightness of some girl's skirts is causing me concern. Tight fitting, short skirts are still being worn despite previous intervention from staff. This can cause embarrassment and loss of dignity for female students whilst using the stairs, sitting on the floor or when engaged in practical

subjects. Whilst I appreciate that all students wish to develop their own identity and character, I am concerned that some girls' modesty, self-esteem and pride is being undermined by the choices they are making.

School skirts should be black, tailored and knee length. Lycra and other stretch fabrics are not permitted. We acknowledge that when skirts are worn with tights, they can often rise up and therefore this should be taken into consideration when selecting the skirt size. Mid-thigh and above skirts are not considered appropriate for school and could potentially lead to safeguarding issues outside of school. Therefore, can I please urge all parents and carers to ensure female students are wearing a black, tailored, knee length skirt. The skirt may be straight, pleated or skater style. I have included some photographs below of acceptable styles. These may be obtained from a range of retailers, including the School Shop at Kidderminster. Please also note that Amazon stock a range of David Luke and Banner school skirts in a variety of waist and length sizes. Black school trousers are also an acceptable alternative to a skirt as long as they are bootcut, straight or tapered. No skinny fit, combat style, jeans, leggings or cropped styles are accepted.



White socks are an increasing issue amongst some students, I would like to remind all parents, carers and students that socks should be black or grey in colour when worn with our school uniform. White sports socks are only permitted for specific activities during PE lessons.

Footwear is also a challenge for parents/carers as many high street stores are now marketing trainer styles as school shoes. The type of shoes that are acceptable are smart and will be comfortable and protective for students to wear all day in school. Footwear that meets our uniform policy should be considered acceptable in a 'business' work environment. Any parent/carer requiring further clarification on what is considered as acceptable footwear should contact myself or your child's Year Leader.

Shops very often sell items labelled as school uniform that do not meet our uniform expectations. If you are unsure about any aspect of our uniform policy, please contact your child's Year Leader who will be happy to discuss any queries you may have.

JEWELLERY & HAIRSTYLES:

I understand that there has been some confusion on what is deemed acceptable in terms of jewellery and hairstyles, and so I hope to make this much clearer for pupils and parents/carers.

Only one stud earring is permitted in each ear lobe. Additional earrings and piercings in other parts of the ear, including the helix, tragus and conch, are not acceptable. Students may wear a watch and one small ring. Pandora bracelets and other wrist accessories are not permitted. If students are seen with additional jewellery items, they will be asked to remove them and they will be confiscated.

With reference to hair, we do not permit any extreme styles such as tramlines, shaven hair **below grade 2** and fade or stepped hairstyles where there are noticeable differences in hair length. Any

coloured hair should be of a natural tone, and dip dyed / ombre hair is not acceptable. I have included photographs below as a guide to hairstyles which do not meet our expectations.



It is important to note that students who do not meet our uniform standards in terms of jewellery and hairstyles will lose their social time (break and lunchtime) until the issue is rectified. There will be no allowances made for breaches to these rules. In order for your child to avoid these sanctions, please contact me or your child's Year Leader to check if you are in any doubt about what is deemed acceptable.

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY:

I would like to thank all students who make every effort to be in school on time ready for tutor time. I strongly believe that being punctual to school prepares all students for the day ahead. It is an essential part of life and is good training for the world of work. Thank you to all the parents and carers who continue to support this. If your child is persistently late in the morning, you will be receiving a letter making you aware of this and the actions we would like you to take to ensure that your child is in school on time.

School begins at 8:50am and any pupil arriving after this time will be considered late.

Any student who arrives late will be required to make up the time during lunchtime. If late more than once a half term, an after-school detention will be issued.

BEHAVIOUR:

The majority of our students are absolutely brilliant at following the school rules. They rarely break them and are proud of themselves and their community. With COVID-19 restrictions placed on school, we found it necessary to make certain changes and, once again, the students accepted the changes well. An example of this is the one-way system in school and the wearing of face coverings as they enter the building and move around the corridors. Whilst this may seem a small matter, it fills me with immense pride at how well our wonderful students have adapted to the new rules and regulations. I cannot thank them enough for making these difficult times much easier to get through. Unfortunately, there are some pupils who are still struggling to manage these basics. Failure to wear a face covering unless covered by exemption is a serious breach of safety and will be dealt with severely. School has implemented a whole range of measures in an attempt to keep everyone safe. School will not tolerate the irresponsible behaviour of some students.

As you will be aware from previous letters, we have organised the school into Year Group Bubbles and each bubble has a Designated Social Area. This allows pupils the opportunity to socialise safely within their year group. It also means that our students are able to go outside and get fresh air, rather than being forced to stay in one place all day as implemented by some schools. Again, the majority of pupils have accepted these rules and has become the new normal for them.

Unfortunately, we do have some individuals who are unable to follow these basic safety rules and are regularly moved to the correct Designated Social Area by members of staff on duty. Should a pupil fail to follow these basic safety rules, parents or carers will be contacted and asked to take their child off site during social times. As a school, we appreciate that this level of action will be incredibly inconvenient for parents and carers, but the safety of all our students is paramount.

Since our return to school in September, the school has been forced to deal with a considerable number of online issues ranging from cyberbullying to the accessing of inappropriate material. The majority of these issues have started outside of school via social media, but the extent of the issues has meant that it has impacted on both the teaching and learning of the students involved whilst in school. I am bringing this to your attention from a safeguarding point of view and urge all parents/carers to regularly monitor your child's online usage and, in particular, the apps they are accessing and the content. I fully appreciate the fine line parents/carers tread between both privacy and trust and the need for careful monitoring in order to protect your child. Having open and honest conversations about device content, the amount of time spent online and agreeing time limits for usage are good ways to avoid conflict. Introducing ground rules such as devices being turned off or handed in at a certain time or household Wifi being turned off at an agreed time will allow your child to maintain a healthy balance. Modern technology is a wonderful thing, but we are seeing more and more students unable to switch off as a result of 24/7 contact and communication. Almost all of the issues dealt with in school this academic year have social media at the heart of problem. Please help support your child's mental health and well-being through the careful management of social media.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on our after-school detention arrangements which were suspended during the latest lockdown. These detentions will recommence from Tuesday 1st December. There is currently no after school transport available and therefore should your child behave in a way that results in an after-school detention, you will be expected to collect him/her at the end of the session. After school detentions will continue to be communicated by telephone and email.

It has been an interesting and challenging term for us in school and I would like to thank parents and carers for the kindness and support you have given school and individual staff. I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Guise,

Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral Support.