



Our Ref: HTSAparental/BRE/JOD
Date: 22nd December 2017

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Dear Parent/Carer

The end of term is approaching with great speed and with it comes the end of 2017. As always, it is hard to believe that the time has gone so quickly. There have been many positive highlights this calendar year in school, but we have also had some sad, emotional events. At this time of year, I would like to extend our thoughts to the families of three particular young men: Lukasz Radomski, Jordan Steele and Mitchell Beadle. Lukasz and Jordan were both ex students of our school who were tragically killed in separate accidents during the Summer. They remain in our thoughts. Mitchell passed away suddenly at home due to an illness and we remember him every day. I pray that Amanda, Tony, Declan, Danielle and their families find strength at this very emotional time of year.

As I write, our school newsletter is being drawn up. Please, do find time to read it as it really does celebrate the multiple successes of our students. The articles demonstrate the range of opportunities open to our students and my sincere thanks go to staff for making this possible.

Thank you and farewell

After over 35 years, Pam Brooks retires from our catering team. This length of service is a major achievement and I can't begin to imagine how many meals Pam has cooked in her time here. Our sincere thanks go to Pam for all her hard work. Pam will leave a huge hole in our team. I will remember, with particular fondness, her chocolate crunch and I am fairly sure that I have consumed a small mountain of it! We wish Pam a long, happy retirement.

Music, dance, art, sport

I would like to say thank you to the Expressive and Performing Arts teams for the many events that have been put on this calendar year. Sports fixtures run regularly and the music, dance and art contributions are superb. There have been so many events that could be mentioned including: Christmas lights switch on; Clonter opera; Dance Alive; the art showcase during the Parental Engagement week. Thank you to everyone.

Intervention and Lesson 6

A huge thank you to staff for all of the additional work that goes on to ensure that every student has the chance to complete additional intervention or catch up work. This extra curricular support is not a feature in many schools, but I am indebted to my colleagues for undertaking additional teaching and mentoring in their own time. None of this is paid, and so I would encourage every student to take up this offer of free tuition whenever it is available to them. I am in no doubt that staff go the extra mile with this initiative.

Parking

Please, could I request that parents refrain from parking on double yellow line areas around our school gates. At the end of the day, the areas become very congested and I am concerned about the safety of our students. Your support is appreciated.

Uniform

The usual reminder about uniform, please. The expectations are clearly laid down in the student planner so do check before purchasing any new uniform. Please, pay particular note of the boundaries relating to hairstyles, piercings and tattoos. I would also ask that, now the inclement weather has passed, students should not be wearing hoodies or jackets under their blazers in school or on the way to and from school. Thank you for your support.

Mobile phones

Our policy on mobile phones has not changed. They are not allowed to be seen at any point during the school day on the school site. I am aware that a small number of students are attempting to flout this rule and that phones are being used in the school toilets. There will be serious sanctions if students disregard this school rule, not least because no one has permission to post pictures of any other student on social media. The rules for collection of confiscated phones remain the same. A phone must be collected by a parent/carer.



CCTV

Linked to the above item, we have some CCTV in specific areas of the school and there is a clear policy relating to this. I am going to propose to Governors that we look to extend the use of CCTV to more areas of the school. Further information will follow in due course.

Contacting home

Following a group text and a reminder in the planner, please be aware that we cannot contact home other than in an emergency. For this reason, please ensure that your son/daughter knows the arrangements for getting home and for pick ups following attendance at after school clubs. Thank you for your support with this.

Data sheets

Despite a massive effort by Mrs Dakin in the school office, we still have a small number of data sheets outstanding. These data sheets contain emergency contact details for parents and so they are extremely critical. If your data sheet has not been returned then you will find a copy enclosed with this letter. Unfortunately, if this copy is not returned to the office at the start of next term then it will not be possible for us to allow your son/daughter to be in mainstream lessons until it is returned. Nor will those students be able to go on any trips or visits. I am sorry to have to do this, but we cannot take the risk.

Student ambassadors

I would like to make mention of two students in this newsletter, just to highlight the talent that exists at Ruskin.

Jodie Manning is a talented dancer and Sports Leader. She contributes extensively to extra-curricular events. A strength of Jodie's is in choreographing meaningful, interpretive dancers. Many of these ideas have been used in public performances. As an excellent technical dancer, Jodie has wonderful poise and elegance when she performs. Jodie has also performed extensively on TV.

Kyra Davis is Ruskin's next Shanaze Reade! She competes in BMX races all over the country and has been selected to compete in the European and World Championships following her successes.

Social media

Please, may I draw your attention to the dangers of social media. I know that we are all well aware of the potential issues but, time and time again, we are finding that time is taken up resolving matters that have started out of school via social media. The police and agencies have asked all schools to be increasingly vigilant over 'sexting' and inappropriate posts. It is of major concern that a small minority of young people just, simply, don't understand the implications.

Facebook

Thank you to parents who have pledged their support for our school following an unfortunate series of posts on Facebook via a closed group. As is usually the case, the closed book posts were shared with me and I was able to take legal advice on behalf of the school. The matter has now been dealt with. However, may I just remind parents that, as professionals, we have no right of reply on such sites and so it is unfortunate that only one side of the story is shared. We would never seek to put our point of view and, potentially, embarrass or expose a student. I would like to ask that parents use the right channels of communication if they have an issue to resolve. Please, contact us at school if you have a complaint or concern. My email address is, as always, shared at the foot of this letter.

Rewards

As you know, we operate rewards events at the end of each term and this term is no different. However, this year I have been overwhelmed by the number of students whose attitude, work and behaviour has been exemplary. Therefore, following mentoring days for Years 8 and 9, we paid for over 40 students to go to Dunham Massey for the evening to experience a wonderful Christmas lights walk. It was just our small way of saying thank you. Needless to say, their conduct was outstanding and a great evening was had by all despite torrential rain! I would like to extend a particular thank you to students in all year groups who just, simply, come to school to learn and be positive. It sounds obvious, but it is appreciated.

All that remains is for me to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful holiday.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely



E S Brett

Headteacher

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Please note: School returns on **Tuesday 9th January, 2018** at **8.40am** – Week 2 of the timetable.
The term 'parent' refers to parent/carer throughout this letter.