

Our Ref: HTSA/ltrs/BRE/JOD

Date: October 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

As I write it is hard to believe that we are only a few days away from half term – although this is one of the longest terms of the school year, the time seems to have flown!

On the whole, school has been very settled and purposeful, and the majority of students are making expected, or better, progress. Thank you for your support, and thank you to my colleagues who work hard every day.

Head Boy/Girl team and senior prefects

I am delighted to announce that, this year, Rebecca Emeny has been voted Head Girl and Michael Farmer is to be Head Boy. This is a fantastic achievement, and both students deserve this. They have been, and continue to be, excellent role models for students in everything that they do. Both work extremely hard, support the school regularly and have superb attitudes. Well done, Rebecca and Michael. They will be ably supported by Sarah Leeke, Lucy Rhead and Cameron Douglas who take on the role of Deputy. Again a wonderful achievement. There are also a team of 33 senior prefects who will support the work of the school in various ways. This leadership potential is very much valued at Ruskin and the staff and I look forward to working with them to ensure that the school continues to thrive and develop, taking account of student voice.

Governors

We currently have vacancies for Parent Governors. If you are interested, please contact Ms Jones at school. Governors play a vital role in the leadership of the school and, although there is certainly a time commitment, it is a rewarding job. Parent voice is essential so, please, do consider becoming a Governor.

Free School Meals

If you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals for your son/daughter, please contact Mrs Sherratt at school to discuss. No student is identifiable as we have a cashless system. Furthermore, the school receives additional funding which is then spent on the students.

Excellent behaviour for learning

We are very fortunate, on the whole, in that the vast majority of our students come ready and willing to learn. We try to praise and reward students for doing so because, although it is a basic expectation, it is always nice to be acknowledged for getting things right!

This term, having spoken to students and carried out questionnaires, we have introduced a 'time out' facility in school on a trial basis. Bluntly, we have not got time for any minor disruption to learning because it slows the pace of lessons and causes a distraction and so, where students are off task and do not immediately respond to the teacher, they are sent to this room for the rest of the lesson. The message that I want to emphasise is that learning is non-negotiable and cannot be interrupted. Student feedback has been very positive towards this initiative, and we continue to trial this arrangement.

Informal drop ins

In my response to the article about Crewe schools in the Chronicle, you will have noticed that I am very keen for parents and prospective parents to drop into school and ask for a guided tour during lesson times. I would urge parents to consider doing this. Our students relish the chance to 'show off' their school, and I think this gives parents an opportunity to see the school as it really is during the working day. Please, contact Ms Jones at school if you would like to visit.

School uniform

As the weather gets colder, a reminder that our school has a navy v neck jumper as part of the uniform. This can be worn at any time of the year, but particularly in the winter months. Hoodies are not part of the uniform and should not be worn in school or on the way to/from school. Please, support us.

Hairstyles

As the years have progressed; I have had to mention hairstyles and colours less. Thank you for your support in

ensuring that inappropriate colours and cuts are not a feature in school. For our newer parents, however, please check the planner or contact school before treating your son/daughter to a half term hair do! Students do know the expectations and there will be no allowances made. Thanks for your support.

Smoking

Unfortunately, some youngsters are smokers. Year on year, schools are concerned at the number of young people who have been smoking from an early age. Ruskin is no different. There are a small core of students across year groups who are habitual smokers. They find it difficult to manage the day without a cigarette, and 'vapours' are also growing in use. We regularly patrol before school on local streets and near the Gainsborough Road shops to ensure that our students are not smoking on the way to school. We are also vigilant at lunchtimes and we know where the smokers try to congregate. Nonetheless, this is a concern. The vast majority are clear that their parents allow them to smoke or know that they smoke. We need to be working together to ensure that students receive smoking cessation help. I will be asking the school health service to come in and offer support and guidance. I will also have to take additional more punitive action, I am afraid, and so please support us in ensuring that our youngsters are not exposed to the life threatening dangers of smoking. If you are concerned and would like some support, please contact Mrs Spencer at school.

Job vacancies

We are looking to appoint a Teacher of Computer Science and Business/ICT. We also have a vacancy for a teaching assistant who is able to support students who join us with little or no English skills. The ability to speak/write Polish or Slovakian would be very desirable.

We are also looking for exam invigilators to be available to support in our internal and external examinations at certain times of the year. More information is available from Ms Jones at school.

School events

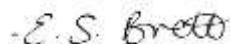
The termly newsletter will be issued before Christmas, and this is set to be packed with articles about some of the fabulous opportunities that students are able to be part of at Ruskin. This term, there have been a wide range of visits including the Year 7 teambuilding day at Stanley Head, the field trip visits to Llandudno and Castleton (with Mrs Jennings booking good weather in advance as usual!), Maths visits to South Cheshire College, a Harry Potter studios visit; the list is endless. Thank you to parents for supporting these events, and to staff for running the visits.

In addition, we have participated in outreach events such as the annual Macmillan Coffee Morning, which raised £150 and this week we have had Harvest Festival. The amount of donated produce for Harvest has been fantastic; many thanks to everyone who has supported. The parcels looked amazing and local neighbours always appreciate it when one of our youngsters visit with gifts. The theme for the assemblies has been 'sharing' and this willingness to share and be kind is certainly a feature of our school.

Forthcoming events (further information available from the Main School Office)

- 11th November – Remembrance Service (whole school event)
- 14th November – Children in Need (student fundraising event)
- 20th November – 2014 Leavers Certificate Event
- 24-28th November – Year 11 Work Experience Week
- 10th December – Year 7/8/10 Short Reports to parent/carers
- 4th December – Year 11 Parents' Evening
- 8th December – Senior Citizen Lunch
- 17th December – Christmas Concert

Yours sincerely



E S Brett (Mrs)
Headteacher

Please note: School returns on **Monday 3rd November** – Week 1 of the timetable.
The term 'parent' refers to parent and carer throughout this letter.