



January 2024

Dear Parent / Carer,

Welcome back to school in 2024. We are very excited to share our new website with you which we think will really improve our ability to communicate and share information with you. It should go live early next week.

The challenges that many people are facing with the cost of living continue into 2024, and, you will be aware that we have modified our uniform expectations. All students now have to wear either a Lyng Hall blazer, a Lyng Hall jumper, or, a Lyng Hall fleece. Students can wear any combination of these three items but they must be wearing at least one. Cat Ballou have a good stock of these items, now including reasonably priced Lyng Hall fleeces. Other jumpers, hoodies or fleeces are not acceptable. Students must also wear a white shirt and their college tie. Black skirts or trousers are part of the uniform and these must not be excessively figure hugging or very short!! Denim or leggings are not acceptable. Footwear must be plain black shoes or trainers. If trainers are worn, they must be plain with no coloured logos etc.

We think that this is a very smart uniform option and is much cheaper than the expectation from some other schools so we will insist that students wear it and look smart. Sixth form students should also be dressed smart / casual as though they were going to work in an office environment. Students who turn up in denim or are otherwise unacceptably dressed, will be sent home to change.

The high standard I am describing is the same across all schools in the Multi Academy Trust, it is important as there will be lots of opportunities for collaboration with students from the other schools.

We will be continuing our big emphasis on reading into the new year and there will be opportunities for students to read using books and electronic devices. We are also looking at ways to encourage more students to read for pleasure and will be buying books from the Tik Tok recommended reading list for teenagers and subscribing to a range of magazines.

Our phone policy will continue to be rigorously applied. Students must not have their phones out or be using them (including to listen to music) at any time during the school day, including break and lunchtimes. It is very clear that removing this huge distraction

allows them to focus much better on their learning and removes the constant need to check their phones. Pupils who have their phone out will have it taken from them and they will have it back at the end of the day. If the problem occurs persistently, you will be asked to come in to school to collect the phone and we will put in place a plan moving forward.

There has been a lot of research published recently about the terrible impact that negative social media and messaging has on children's well-being. If students send or receive unkind messages, we need you to act to stop it. If we find out about it at school, we will support you. If the problem continues, we may involve our link Police Officer, or, we will give you the contact details of the parents of the child sending the messages, so that you can contact them directly. Too much of children's time is being lost to unhappiness caused by negative social media.

The Pulse app which we introduced, which allows the students to share how they are feeling and to ask for help and support if they are worried about anything has been hugely successful. The app will also give students the opportunity to send positive messages to each other, to you, or, to their teachers. The messages are selected from a menu, so can only be positive. We hope this will help students to see how you feel much better when you send and receive positive messages.

Our SENCo and Deputy SENCo do not have a teaching timetable and can work all day supporting the students. They have created a lovely space for the students they work with which has proved very popular.

Behaviour in school is very important and we spend a lot of time focussing on student's attitude to their learning. I firmly believe that all students are entitled to be in lessons that are calm and purposeful and where they are not distracted by other students, or distracting themselves through the use of their phone! We have a simple set of classroom expectations that we use to measure student engagement with the learning. From time to time we may need your support to ensure that your child(ren) behave appropriately and do not disrupt their own or other children's learning. We use a comprehensive system of codes to log positive and negative behaviour and we intervene to maximise the positive! You can check on your child's conduct record using the TALAXY app. Attendance, punctuality and homework are all also recorded on this app. If you have any problems with this, please contact the school.

A concern during last year was the number of students who wanted to leave lessons to go to the toilet. We have to find a balance between those who really need to go and those who are just seeking to get out of lessons! Since September, we have had a list of children who have a medical reason to go to the toilet more often. Other children will be expected to use the toilet during the social times. We have build a small "toilet window" into the middle of our 2-hour lessons but access to this is strictly monitored. I am sure you will appreciate that in order to get the best outcomes, children need to be in the classroom!



Attendance continues to be a huge priority for us. Too many students are missing, on average, more than one day every 2 weeks which gives an overall attendance below 90%. The Government classifies this as persistent absence and requires some further action. Please make sure that your child(ren) attend school every day and arrive on time. We are going to be sharing information with you each week about your child, if they are persistently late to school or lessons. We will tell you exactly how much time they have missed and how this can be made up. We are doing this because all the evidence shows that students who have an attendance below 95% are likely to fail to meet their targets. Obviously the lower the attendance the lower the grades a student is likely to achieve. We rely very heavily on you to make sure that your child comes to school every day and arrives on time for an 8:50 start.

The extension to the dining room is due to be completed at the end of February and we are introducing a food servery in the covered courtyard. There will then be four places where the students can access food at break and lunchtime; it will make queues smaller and increase the options we can offer.

Y11 and Y13 students are working hard now in preparation for their exams in May and June. We will shortly be introducing new schemes to encourage them to attend intervention classes and to do more homework. The evidence is clear that students who come to school every day, work hard in lessons, attend the after-school classes and do homework every day on one of our apps get fantastic results in the national exams. Please help us and them by making sure they are working hard at home in the evenings and weekends. Subject staff will be happy to advise which areas they need to focus on if you are unsure.

Please discuss this information with the students so they are fully aware of what we all expect from them.

Best wishes

Paul Green

Headteacher