



10 March 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians

### **Snow!!**

I hope you all managed to navigate the snow this week. As a Headteacher the forecast of snow brings another layer of organisation but thankfully through the power of WhatsApp, e-mail and the dedication of the MECE team, communications and decisions can be swift. On Monday evening when the forecast shifted to heavy overnight snow myself and the Site Manager, Mr Agar, liaised about an early morning decision, which Mr Agar certainly provided, with photos of outside school sent at 05.12 showing me that things were not too bad. This was followed up with a quick leadership team communication just after 6am, confirming the current state of play and a post on the staff WhatsApp group and website by 6.20am that we were open!

It was lovely to see the students playing in the snow before school with lots of students enjoying the snow without being extreme. We did have to ask a few of the students who walked up from the village to put down some very large snowballs they'd rolled as they walked up!

Thank you also to all those parents and carers who made sure their sons and daughters attended school on Wednesday. The site was safe, the buses were running and the roads were clear so it is frustrating when a few parents say they aren't sending their children in because of the snow and sadly we will have to classify these as unauthorised absences.

### **Visits and Feedback**

We've had lots of positives this week. On Tuesday, the CEO visited on his tour of the schools meeting our students and walking the site. This was followed up by Charlotte Cant, our Chair of Governors, on her monthly visit who walked the site with me on Wednesday morning and a further tour for prospective parents on Thursday morning. All reported the same, that they saw students focused on their learning and teachers teaching in calm orderly classrooms which was great to hear. We also had a theatre company, Katch-22, visit on Wednesday to perform Macbeth to Year 9, 10 and 11 and the students were fantastic in their focus on the performers for 90 minutes and the actors were fulsome in their praise of the students.

### **Toilet Etiquette and Vaping**

In contrast, I did speak to Year 8, 9 and 10 students this week in three short assemblies regarding the matter of toilet behaviour. On Friday last week there was some damage caused to the Key Stage Three boys' toilets. I needed the students to hear that any repair costs incurred by the school affect them and to spend money on taps, pipes or cleaning equipment takes from the money we can spend on teachers, supporting trips, new equipment and books and supporting those students most in need with uniform and learning materials. This week has been better so far, so I hope the message has been received, not only regarding positive conduct in the toilets, but also that as members of a community any damage seen should be reported to staff immediately.

We have also used last week's poor behaviour to redouble our efforts on visiting toilets in breaktimes especially with the focus on stopping any vaping. As mentioned previously, anyone caught carrying a vape or vaping in school will be sanctioned. These devices, which very sadly are marketed at school children, with their bright colours and designs, contain harmful

chemicals which we currently do not have any data on regarding the long-term effects on adolescent bodies. We will keep up our education of the students through our PSHE and tutor programmes, but I would ask that parents are vigilant and keep an eye out for these devices, which are sadly being sold to school children in a number of local shops.

### **Stars of the Week**

My student star of the week goes to **Archie** in Year 9 for excellent effort in class, improved behaviour and a hat-trick for the football team in our 3-0 victory over Wallingford.

My staff star of the week goes to **Mr Harte**, our Head of Performing Arts, who navigated his way through a busy week with his Year 11 student practical exams on Tuesday, a theatre trip to Oxford with students on Wednesday and leading staff training on Thursday morning before school. All have been done with his usual aplomb and verve.

Please do not hesitate to leave any feedback using the link below.

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



Andy Hartley  
Headteacher