

Ref: DD / PW
Date: February 2010

Dear Parent / Carer,

Snow Closures

As you will no doubt recall, at the beginning of the term we found it necessary to close the college for three days due to the extreme weather conditions. I am acutely aware of the difficulties that this can cause parents let alone the disruption to learning and I would like to assure parents that any decision to close in such circumstances is not taken lightly. In this instance it was our view that opening the college would have presented a risk to the safety of our students not only whilst moving around the college site but perhaps more significantly travelling to and from college on roads which were clearly unsafe.

Text Messaging

Accompanying this newsletter is a letter to inform you of a new text messaging service which we have now introduced. We have decided to use this system in an attempt to further improve our communication with parents. Typically it may be used to inform parents of emergency closures, forthcoming events, examination date reminders etc. It is important that parents keep the school notified of any change to contact details in order that these important messages are not missed.

Uniform

Whilst college staff continue to work with architects on a daily basis to ensure our new building provides us with an environment that will inspire effective teaching and learning, we also intend to take this opportunity to consider the introduction of a new uniform across the college.

At this stage we are exploring a number of alternatives, before beginning to consult with students and parents (via parent governors). However, whilst this process will take a little time, I did want to point out to parents that as we will look to introduce the uniform from the beginning of the new academic year in September, that replacement college sweatshirts / polo shirts should not be purchased unless absolutely necessary as these are likely to change from September. The exception to this will be current year 10 students who will continue in existing uniform during their final year at Sedgefield.

We currently have in lost property a number of school uniform sweatshirts. These items cannot be returned to their owners as they have no identification. These items have been laundered, are in good condition and are available free of charge. Should you require an item please contact the school office. First come, first served!

Sweatshirt	Number Available
Age 11-12	2
Age 13	4
XS	1
S	16
M	2
L	2

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Behaviour for Learning (BfL)

In January I wrote to inform parents of the introduction of our new behaviour for learning policy. It would appear that parents have overwhelmingly welcomed this introduction and we thank everyone for their support.

It is very early days but the procedures we are using to reduce inappropriate behaviour and recognise positive behaviour are showing encouraging signs.

It has been brought to my attention that in our eagerness to keep parents informed of significant incidents, some of our letters home contained errors. We are in the process of adjusting procedures to minimise errors such as this and hopefully this will be resolved in the coming weeks, in the meantime I appreciate parents patience.

Should parents have any comments or observations that might help us improve our procedures further, then I would be grateful if these could be passed on to Mr Baird (Deputy Headteacher) who has responsibility for our behaviour management policy.

Exam Timetable and Revision Programme

The next five months will see an intense period of pre examination preparation and coursework completion ahead of final examinations in the summer term. Information will be provided to those students who are required to attend catch up sessions either during school hours, after school or during holidays. All students will be given specific advice from teachers regarding revision.

Information relating to February half term holiday coursework catch up sessions are posted on the college website.

Main Entrance Gates

Those parents who drop off or collect students by car will notice that gates have been fitted to the main entrance to the college. All parents should note that gates will be locked during morning break and lunch break to prevent traffic through school grounds whilst students are circulating at this time. May I take this opportunity to ask those parents who pick up / drop off students NOT to come onto school grounds at any time, this includes before school starts and after it ends. This is for health and safety reasons.

Flexible Learning Day

On Friday 12th February all KS3 students will be involved in a special learning activity in which they will be working on a variety of projects with teams from the wider community. Students in Year 7 and 8 will be participating in theatre productions and team-based tasks which explore how the democratic system allows them to shape their communities. We are hoping to receive a visit from the local MP in the afternoon. Meanwhile, Year 9 students will be participating in a crucial careers advice and guidance day. Again, students will enjoy a theatre production as well as being introduced to an ICT based programme which will help them learn about the careers open to them and the skills and qualifications required. In addition, they will have the opportunity to work with employers from a wide range of work sectors to find out about different career options.

Anti-Smoking Policy

The school anti-smoking policy is available on the school website. If you have any comments on the contents, please contact us on office@sedgefield.durham.sch.uk or 01740 625300

Yours sincerely

Dave Davies
Headteacher