

16 February 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Updates from Mrs Taylor

I would like to thank many of our parents / carers for the support you have shown the school following my last letter and we are welcoming greater engagement with many of you. I look forward to continuing to develop our close working relationships further.

Text Messaging Package for Parents / Carers

In response to feedback from you on how we can improve communication, I am very pleased to inform you that we have invested in a text messaging package. After half term, we will have the facility to text you when any information / communication is sent from the school. You will be directed to the school website or Facebook page to access this information. If you have changed your mobile number, please ensure that you let us know so that you can be sure to receive our messages.

Mobile Phones

At the parent focus meeting in January, the issue of mobile phones in school came up and we debated their use. The vast majority of parents supported the banning of mobile phones in school. Equally, when consulted, our staff have voted unanimously in favour of banning the use of mobile phones in school. We will therefore be banning mobile phones from **Monday 26 February**. The rules will be:

1. Mobile phones should be switched off and stored in bags at all times, any phone seen or heard will be confiscated: **“See it, hear it, lose it!”** They must not be in pockets.
2. Phones that are confiscated will be placed in a confiscation bag and stored in reception. Your child will be given a receipt. **The requirement is for a parent / carer to collect the phone on their child’s behalf at a time convenient to them.** They must have the receipt with them to collect the phone.
3. This rule is in place at all times while students are in the grounds of the school building, this includes when students arrive and leave at the end of the day. Phones should be stowed away before students enter the school site and not accessed until they have left the site.
4. Should students wish to contact parents/carers at the end of the day for collection following school-based activities they are asked to go to reception who will deal with any issues of contact.

Progress Day

A huge thank you to all of you who took part in our January Progress Day. We had 82% attendance which is the highest attendance we have ever had at Parents’ Evenings. Many parents emailed me to provide feedback on how we can improve. There was a consensus that the Progress Day is preferable to the Parents’ Evenings so we will be holding these again in the future. If any of you do have comments you would like me to consider, please email me your thoughts.

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Progress 8

As you may be aware, our Progress 8 (P8) figure for 2017 has been a topic of much conversation on the Drayton Crier. Due to the changes to school performance measures and curriculum reform, this measure is a very complex one to explain. Securing the best possible progress for our students continues to be one of our main priorities for our students. However, in summary, the Grove School's P8 figure was affected by the change in points allocated to different grades which measure progress in schools. For 2017 only, students who attained higher grades achieved 3 times more points than students who attained lower grades. This means that schools with large numbers of students in the middle and lower attaining bands were adversely affected by this point score. For the Grove, this resulted in a much lower P8 score compared to 2016. Without this change, the Grove School's P8 score for 2017 would have been -0.2 making the school average in terms of the performance tables. This will be rectified in 2018 when each grade will receive the same amount of progress points. This will benefit the Grove because every level of attainment will be rewarded equally.

Staffing

On my presentation to parents in January, I shared some of the challenges that schools are facing across the country with teacher recruitment and in particular at the Grove in recruiting Science teachers. I am pleased to say that during this half term we have made excellent appointments: a new librarian; an English Progress and Achievement coach which is a new post to further accelerate progress in English; two teachers in the Maths Faculty; a further Deputy Director for the Humanities Faculty who is going to accelerate progress in Geography and a teacher of Science who is a Physics specialist. We are also interviewing for an additional Science teacher and have a very strong field. The majority of these teachers will begin in September.

We are really enjoying receiving communication from you and value your feedback. If you would like to talk to me about anything you can contact me by email:

Sonia.taylor@groveschool.net

I will be writing to you in the future about my next information event as I intend to hold them on a termly basis.

I wish you all a very happy half term.

Yours faithfully



Sonia Taylor | Headteacher

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