

08 June 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,



As we approach the end of another exciting year at The Grove, I have been reflecting on how hugely proud I am of our students and their efforts, especially at this time of the year when our Year 11 and 13 students are taking their examinations. I wish them well and look forward to celebrating with them on our results' days: **Year 13 - 16 August, 09:00** and **Year 11 - 23 August, 09:00**. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support. I also want to say again how much I value parental feedback so what follows is a further update on developments we have been making as a result of your comments.

SIMS InTouch

As you know, in response to feedback from parents on how to improve communication, we invested in the SIMS InTouch text messaging package. Since half term, we have been using this package to inform parents about their children's attendance and following half term we will be using the package to broaden communication to send messages about how well our students are doing. We hope you will find these useful.

Mobile Phones

You will be aware that at the parent focus meeting in January, we debated the use of mobile phones in school and as a result of this, in February, we introduced the "See it, hear it, lose it!" policy. We are delighted with its success and how well the students have responded. We have had fewer incidents of issues related to social media and are proud of our students' commitment to being mobile free in school.

Progress Day

Our first Progress Day was a great success with high attendance and positive feedback; we look forward to meeting you again at our next Progress Day. Parents were very pleased with the information we provided but some made interesting observations about the data that we produce so we have been working on refining this in the light of parental feedback and will be introducing a new system in September.

Staffing

I have shared with you some of the challenges that schools are facing across the country with teacher recruitment and in particular The Grove in recruiting Science teachers. In this faculty there have been issues with staff illness over the past seven years. This coupled with a national recruitment crisis, where the government has failed to meet its recruitment targets, has made for a challenging time. Despite this, you will be pleased to know that we have recruited five excellent Science teachers over the year. Two colleagues joined in January and have settled in well. Three further colleagues will be starting in September. I know that many of you are concerned about the time it appears to take to recruit however, it is more difficult in teaching than many other areas of employment to make appointments. Regardless of when teachers resign, there are specific recruitment dates that we must adhere to, with only three resignation points within each academic year. When we have staff absence, we do not rely on day to day supply but appoint fully qualified teaching staff on long term fixed contracts where we can. We have been busy making a range of other appointments to ensure that your children have the highest quality teachers and are excited about our September starters.

Student Voice

We value our students' views and they regularly work with staff on the issues important to them. I was very proud to see two of our students give an excellent presentation to the staff at our last training session on teaching and learning. Our students have also been helping us redesign the school planner which is in production as I write, ready for its launch in September.

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Uniform

At The Grove we are proud of our school uniform and firmly believe that the wearing of a smart uniform encourages pride and demonstrates that each student is a committed member of our community. As it is the time of year when you will be purchasing uniform and equipment for your children, I would like to draw to your attention the School Uniform Policy that can be found on our website. When purchasing items, please avoid the following:

- Skinnies, jeans and trousers made from canvas material.
- Studs and decoration on the pockets of trousers and large belts with decorated buckles.
- Short, tight-fitting skirts.
- Canvas pumps and shoes, decorated dolly shoes.
- Hoodies.

There are many retailers selling items in their uniform ranges that are not in line with our uniform policy so please do consider the policy carefully before making your purchases. Our uniform supplier is Trutex Meir, Newcastle-under-Lyme. You can order PE kit and all other items **online** at: www.trutexmeir.com Uniform Sales will take place at school at the following times:

- Monday 09 July and Tuesday 10 July: 15:15 – 18:00
- Sunday 29 July and Sunday 12 August 10:00 – 14:00
- Tuesday 21 August: 16:00 – 20:00

Some parents have asked if it would be possible to have a summer uniform so governors have considered this. They have agreed that if a heatwave is officially declared, black, tailored knee length shorts may be worn. If shorts are to be worn, this will be communicated to you via SIMS InTouch.

Equipment

Students require the following equipment to ensure that they are prepared for their learning each day:

- Pencil case with black, blue, green pens and a highlighter pen.
- Pencils, a pencil sharpener, ruler and eraser.

End of term arrangements


The School term will end at **13:30 on Friday 20 July. Please note the earlier finish time.** For those students who use school transport the buses will arrive at school at 13:30. Lunch will not be served but there will be an extended brunch from 11:00 – 11:30.

Start of term arrangements in September

School opens on **Wednesday 05 September** at **8:40** for all students. The term dates for the next academic year are available on the school website www.grove-school.co.uk

I very much look forward to working with you in September when I will be sending out details of our next Parent Forum and wish you all a wonderful summer holiday.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Sonia Taylor | Headteacher

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