

Dear all

Firstly, I apologise that I am late in contacting you with an update. It was a particularly hectic week, and I was picking up some issues with my own daughter in the evening.

As I hope you are finding, I believe in being open and transparent with everyone involved with the school, and you will never see me trying to shy away from issues or feedback. Your child may or may not have told you but in the last couple of weeks, we have seen a spike in physical altercations which are taking place on the school site. These are still uncommon; however, we have seen an increase of late. I tell you this in the spirit of honesty and to outline to you how we are responding to this.

The first thing to say is that we are clear that no form of fighting is acceptable. It does not meet the core values of the school and is not something we tolerate. We will always look at the context surrounding an incident; however, we do not subscribe to the view that children should take matters into their own hands and respond with violence to an issue. I understand that as parents you may take a different view, but I think it is important that we are clear about our ethos and values as a school. This is outlined in the home-school agreement and is part of being a student at KSA. This is not a position which the school will move on. Sanctions will always be given for students who participate in physical fights, and it could result in a child being permanently excluded from the school.

Of equal importance to us is the way that other students respond. Unfortunately, in the last week or so, we have had to speak to students about the inappropriacy of inflaming the situation (pre, during or post any altercation), actively watching and goading the situation, sharing the incident on social media and so on. Please be aware that any student who is seen participating in any of these activities should also expect to receive a sanction. Again, this may not be a view you subscribe to as a parent, but it is the stance we take as a school.

In addition, we have spoken to students about the importance of telling an adult if they are aware of something which could cause harm to another student – we are a telling school and we have several ways students can report any concerns to us either in person or anonymously. As a community, we all need to work together to resolve any issues (which are inevitable in any walk of life) in a productive manner.

From speaking to you, I know that some of you have frustrations about the way in which certain incidents have been handled, and as always, I would encourage you to contact me so that I or a member of my senior team can work with you to resolve this. Please email Jennifer.giovanelli@ketteringscienceacademy.org as soon as you feel you are becoming frustrated so that we can sort the issue before it escalates. I would much rather be involved at an early stage than it getting to the point where you feel you have no other option.

I talked in my last letter about some things we were going to put in place, and we will be sharing these with students in an assembly before the end of the week. I have outlined these below for your information.

Staggered Finish Time

In order to control the students' exit from school, we will be operating a slightly staggered end to the day for the foreseeable future. This will see students dismissed from their lessons by

members of the senior team in an orderly fashion, and students will be directed to leave school either by the main entrance or the community entrance. Students will be dismissed between 2:55-3:05pm.

Litter

The litter around the school site has become more noticeable and we will be reminding students of the importance of looking after our school environment – students that are seen to be littering will be sanctioned and may be asked to undertake a short period of community service during their social time to help them understand the importance of working together as a community and looking after our shared spaces.

Consequences

I want to undertake a full review of the behaviour and rewards policy over the course of this academic year, and I want this to be done in consultation with you and our children.

In the meantime, any student who receives two removals in a day will be asked to go to a reflection room for the remainder of the day and will serve an on the day detention until 4pm. If this impacts your child, you will be notified via the Edulink app. We understand that sometimes there are issues and context around students who receive a remove, and we will always work to understand these and make appropriate adjustments where required. However, if after any consideration, we believe a student has breached our core values and is not meeting our expectations, this process will be followed.

Reception

Lots of you have let me know that sometimes you struggle to get through to reception. At the moment, it is an incredibly busy place, and we are looking at redesigning spaces elsewhere within the school to help support students if they require first aid, or other assistance. To help ease the pressure and enable us to offer a more consistent experience for those of you trying to reach us, we will be making reception out of bounds for students during the school day. There is no need for students to move through reception as all classroom areas can be reached by other routes.

Caught Doing The Right Thing

I am aware that the tone of this letter has been somewhat negative, and I want to reassure you that most of our students will not be impacted by the above. I also want to say I absolutely recognise that many, many of our children do the right thing day in, day out. We will therefore be starting our Caught Doing The Right Thing (CDTRT) initiative. This is aimed at students receiving a CDTRT ticket every time they meet our expectations throughout the day. This is in addition to K points and is aimed at encouraging the sort of behaviour and positive values that we wish to instil in all our young people. Staff will be told to be generous and frequent with the giving of these tickets as it's important to me that children who quietly get on should be rewarded for their attitude and efforts. We will be asking all students to vote for the prizes, and we will then put prize boxes for each item in the reception area where students can choose which prize draw they wish to enter their ticket into. The more tickets, a student receives, the more chance they have of winning! We will do spot prize draws, as well a draw in the final week of term.

I will leave it here for now, but as always, please do get in touch if you need to.

Mrs Giovanelli