

18th April 2023

Dear parents and carers

I hope everyone enjoyed a lovely, peaceful Easter break, and it has been lovely this morning to welcome back KLA's amazing pupils for the final term of the year.

This final term is a very busy one, with lots of parent consultation evenings, end-of-year exams, school trips, sports fixtures, new Year 7 transition into KLA, as well as making final revision preparations for GCSE exams with Year 11 – followed of course by our annual Year 11 leavers' celebration and prom!

As part of the normal rhythm of school life, the start of a new term is always a time to take stock – the resetting of our expectations and protocols after a break is an important process, and so I wanted to take a moment to just send this gentle reminder of our rules and expectations. It is important to stress that none of this is new, the rules are as they have always been, and this is simply a restatement of them! Pupils have been reminded again this morning so that we can all begin the new term strongly. The strength of KLA is the sense of community and shared values that we all share, which is so apparent to anyone who visits, and I strongly believe that the basis for that is honesty and clarity when communicating what we do and what we expect...so here goes!!

- It has been great to see almost every pupil arrive today in perfect, full school uniform. In the very rare cases where pupils are not fully dressed appropriately, Heads of Year will be in touch with families to discuss the reasons for this, and to offer any support that we can to help achieve this. As a reminder, we do expect pupils to wear black, leather shoes, appropriate loose cotton trousers (no denim) and the KLA blazer. While we appreciate that children may well need coats for their journey to and from school, these should be removed during the school day, and 'hoodie' style tops are not permitted in school at any time. We absolutely rely on the great support we get from our parents that helps us maintain uniform standards, for which I am very grateful.
- In common with almost all secondary schools, KLA is a mobile phone-free building for children, and their use is banned on the school site. This rule is designed to help protect pupils from safeguarding and bullying risks, as well as being there to support their ability to focus on learning during lesson times, and to develop their social skills during breaks. This rule was very heavily supported by parents when we consulted prior to introducing it. We have noticed a slight, but definite, increase in the rate of pupils breaking this rule, so we are enforcing it more strongly this term, with the mantra being 'If you use it, you will lose it!'. Phones, when confiscated, are kept securely for the rest of the school day and returned to the pupil after the 3pm bell. If a pupil has to have their phone confiscated three times, then we will contact parents and ask them to come to collect it from school, and help us to reinforce the importance of our rule. From this term, this will also be the case if a pupil refuses to give their phone to any member of staff who has asked to confiscate it. Once more, I am hugely gratefully to parents for your consistent support of this policy.
- Over the half-term, the site team worked incredibly hard on painting, decorating and repairing our building – many classrooms have been refreshed and the school looks great! I also feel that I need to share that so far this year we have had to spend several thousand pounds in

refurbishing toilets across the school, especially those used by Year 10 pupils. This, of course, would be intensely irritating and hugely disappointing at any time but is even more so at a time when the school's budget is so tightly squeezed – I had hoped to be able to replace the school minibus this year for example, but of course cannot do so when this level of money needs to be spent on repairing deliberate vandalism. While we do work really hard to supervise our toilet facilities, those are the one area of the school where staff cannot just follow pupils and for obvious reasons there is no camera coverage in the cubicles, which is where the majority of the vandalism sadly takes place.

We really need our pupils to act responsibly and look after the facilities we try so hard to provide and to keep as nice as we can; we have no toilet 'policy', nor do we lock toilets at all during the school day – but if this level of mindless vandalism continues I literally will not be able to afford to continue to maintain them in the way we would like – we really do need our pupils to take responsibility and treat these facilities in school as they would at home! I would be very grateful if parents could take a moment to reinforce the importance of this message at home, as I know that your help always provides a better and quicker solution than us acting alone.

- Attendance and punctuality remain a key expectation for all pupils – our attendance in Year 7 is spectacularly high (and very well above the current national average for Year 7) and then declines in each year group down to Year 11. Clearly, it is so important that all of our pupils attend school every day, unless they genuinely are medically unable to do so, as this is so critical for every pupil's academic progress. Where attendance drops below 90%, we are obliged by the government to begin taking action to address this, which we would much rather avoid, so it is important that your child's attendance at school remains above this mark. Finally, a reminder that the school day begins at 8.30a.m, and that all pupils should be on site with us by this time, please.

Please accept my thanks for taking the time to read this letter, and for your help and support with the four areas I have outlined. I am really looking forward to the final term of 2022/3, and I know that with your valuable support, we can continue to drive forward the pace of the improvements we have seen at the school over the past several years. As always, if you have any queries please do contact your child's Head of Year who will be happy to help.

With best wishes and warm thanks



Alan Fletcher