

Headteacher: Mr D. Whales | Chair of Governors: Mr A. Brown

6th December 2024 - Letter to Parents/Carers

As we reach the end of term, I wanted to write to you with a few reflections on the Autumn term and some further updates for the Spring term.

The first term of the school year is always disproportionately long. In percentage terms, it works out at almost 40% of the year, if you are a year 11 more like 50% as their exams will start mid-May!

Throughout this term, we have seen more improvements in conduct, manners/politeness and approaches to learning. The data we collect supports a reduction in behaviour issues and an increase in academic success.

Through the staff and parent/carer survey we conducted, we received incredibly high levels of satisfaction and a sense that as a collective of parents/carers, staff and students we are heading into levels of unchartered excellence for Ken Stimpson Academy.

As we reach the end of the term a couple of reminders: on the 12th December it is Christmas Jumper Day and the Christmas Dinner is on the same day for those that signed up. The last day of term is Friday 20th December, finishing at 3.15 pm.

Moving into 2025 – (was the millennium really 25 years ago!)

The next two terms will see an increase in assessment. Term one we focus heavily on learning content with as few disruptions as possible, we now alter a little more towards checking what is working and what needs to be corrected/adapted and identifying where the gaps in learning exist.

For year 8 and year 11, they return almost straight away to an exam series. The year 8 exams are to assist with decisions around subject choices, starting in year 9. For year 11, they sit their Finals which will give us a clear indication as to where they are and what needs to be done in preparation for their GCSEs.

We are also holding our Safer February initiative again, this is a month of targeted workshops, assemblies and lessons focusing on many different aspects designed to help keep your children safe. These range from staying safe online to local clubs that are available for students to join and everything in between. There will be lots more details shared around this fantastic initiative.

We have raised standards in almost all areas of the school. Our attention now turns to improving expectations around homework and focusing on Character Development. As I say repeatedly, we want to ensure that your children leave school with the best possible exam results, and as good people who approach life with excellent attitudes and manners.

I am determined to put this school in a position to deliver the best possible education. A very important part of achieving that is making sure we all have a clear understanding of what that means. To make it a reality requires a united team approach made up of school staff, parents/carers

and students working together to push boundaries. That doesn't mean we will always agree about everything, but we will achieve a lot more if we pull in the same direction.

From the school's perspective, we have been out visiting some of the best schools in the country to compare/contrast and to help us focus our improvements. What this has shown us is that standards and expectations are the common theme. It also shows we are heading in the right direction. For the highest achieving schools nationally, the formula is extremely high levels of attendance, excellent behaviour and a determined and relentless focus on academic achievement. The silver bullet for doing well is simple: no excuses and a mindset that sets no limits. The problem with that is, it requires lots of very hard work from all of us.

But, not at Christmas! Please take the opportunity to get away from the routines and take a break. In the Spring term, we can get back to high standards and education.

Thank you for all your support this term.

If you want to share any feedback directly with me, you can do so via this form.

<https://forms.office.com/e/wMd0nSMAsp>

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Whales', written in a cursive style.

Mr D Whales
Headteacher