



BYDALES SCHOOL

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Dear Parent/Carer

End of Term Newsletter – December 2014

I write to you at the end of a very busy term for students and staff alike, as we embed a whole raft of changes designed to ensure the school moves at an unrelenting pace to excellent outcomes for our students. Thank you for your support as we accelerate that journey. You have been patient with us at times, particularly with regard to uniform supply, and I appreciate that a good deal. Thank you too for your responses via the online Ofsted 'Parent View' this term which have shown, for example, a 33% increase to 83% agreeing or strongly agreeing the school is well led and managed, a 38% increase to 94% agreeing or strongly agreeing the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved, and a 21% increase to 75% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their child is taught well. There is still much to do, but the momentum generated by the whole school community of staff, students and parents working together is making a huge difference. It is a genuine privilege to work with your young people such is their talent, motivation, warmth and humour!

I give some information below that I hope will be helpful.

End of Term/Start of Term

Term ends for students at 2.30pm on Friday 19 December. Enrichment is not running on Friday, except for Choir, Y11 German (and Technology and Art C4 Detentions). Term resumes on Monday 5 January at 8.20am.

Parental Emailing List

Following on from the 'Parent Voice Forum' event for parents to meet the governors and Principal on 24 September, we have created a parental emailing list using email addresses held on the school system. The mailing list has been running already to inform parents when letters have gone home via students, and for important reminders and/or information. If you would like to subscribe to our parent emailing list (or unsubscribe) please use the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/m9hwchd>

Bydales Social Media

Whilst the parental email list will be used occasionally, we do not want to fill email inboxes. If you would like to have more frequent updates about what is going on in school day-by-day, you could follow the school on Twitter using @OutwoodBydales or 'like' our Facebook page called 'Outwood Academy Bydales'. We will of course continue to send letters home too. Our current website www.bydales-tc.org.uk will soon become www.bydales.outwood.com and will include, for example, the most recent Tweets so it will not be necessary to join Twitter yourself.

Letters

We continue to send all generic letters home via students, although it appreciated some do not always survive the journey in the bottom of school bags. Letters are routinely posted on our website and can be accessed by following the LETTERS link on the current website home page or using this link: <http://tinyurl.com/q5lcsp5>

Key Staff Contacts

We recently published a list of the names and email of all teachers, learning managers and line managers to our website, mailing list and social media. This has followed suggestions from parents and governors on further improving the lines of communication so that queries, questions or concerns can be answered promptly and efficiently. You can download or view the full list here: <http://tinyurl.com/mzc5gk9>

Chair of Governors

You will be aware that the previous Vice-Chair of Governors, Mrs Tricia Taylor became Chair of Governors over the summer, during my arrival. She has been a fantastic source of energy for the school over the last term, and for me personally as she has supported every school event and activity, as well as several in the Marske community. I have appreciated her support and challenge a great deal. We have set up an email address should you ever wish to contact her, be it to pass on any particular praise you might have, or where there is a concern that has not been resolved by the usual channels of working with a particular subject teacher, head of subject, learning manager or member of SLT. Her address is chairofgovernors@bydales.outwood.com I was also delighted when Mrs Lynne Coleman was elected as our new Vice-Chair of Governors. She has worked very hard this term for the benefit of our students, supporting Mrs Taylor, myself and in particular colleagues leading on student attendance, behaviour and the Pupil Premium. She can be contacted via vicechairofgovernors@bydales.outwood.com

Student Voice

You will no doubt be aware of the fantastic atmosphere in school during the Student Voice elections, where we modelled the British electoral process. It is hoped students understand ever more clearly our values when it comes to democracy. The use of official polling cards, polling booths and ballot boxes seemed to help. Many thanks to Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council for kindly providing these, and to the Mayor Carole Simms for acting as returning officer. Morgan McFadyen was elected as SV President, with Leonie Welford, Callum Jones and Chloe Kacperski as SV Vice-Presidents. We now also have extremely active Student Voice sub-committees. Particular praise is due to the charity sub-committee, chaired by Sam Blackburn, for the large number of successful events organised, raising a total of over £6000 this term alone!

Academy Conversion

Currently the school is on track to officially convert and re-open as Outwood Academy Bydales on the 1 February 2015. The new signage is due to be installed in the first week of January. In terms of day-to-day running of the school, the changes are all already in place, such as the school day, the Praising Stars© reporting cycle, Enrichment, the Consequences behaviour system and so forth.

Uniform – thank you!

I would like to thank you once again for your patience with regard to the uniform we have been issuing over the last term. I am sorry for the inconvenience caused. Our supplier Trutex was caught out by the receivership of the chain of shops that usually sell the uniform on their behalf. They responded quickly by modifying their online service, but have learnt a number of lessons in the process. Simple uniform issues can be dealt with by Learning Managers, however if you have more pressing issues or concerns please do not hesitate to contact our Business Manager Mrs Tracey West via t.west@bydales.outwood.com or by telephoning the school.

Full Uniform to be worn from 5 January 2015

From the first day of the new term, all students are expected to be in the full Outwood Academy Bydales uniform, including PE kit. Y8-Y11 students should wear Bydales blazers until the new ones are issued towards the end of January. Spare pairs of trousers, skirts, shirts etc should also be the correct Outwood ones. To order spare uniform you should register online with the code LEA00658SC (or school name) and your email address at www.trutexdirect.com A leaflet explaining this can be found on our website here: <http://tinyurl.com/ka8pngx>

Uniform (Miscellaneous)

I have been rightly impressed with how Bydales students conduct themselves to and from school. They are polite and friendly, and many residents have approached me in the mornings to compliment our young people and how they appear to wear their uniform with pride when out in the community. We rarely have any issues if at all with uniform but I am determined too that bad habits will not slip back. Purely as a reminder, students are required to wear plain black shoes (without metal attachments) that can be polished, rather than boots or canvas/suede shoes. Socks must be plain black. Hair bands/bobbles must be plain black or purple. All students must have a suitable bag to carry books, at least A4 in size to accommodate folders. Blazer sleeves must be down, and shirts tucked in, ties worn properly. Make-up is not allowed. It is rare that we need to reinforce these highest of expectations by issuing C4 detentions. Once again full details are on Pages 2-3 of the Planner.

Outdoor Coats

I am sometimes concerned that some students are not wearing coats on the way to school, particularly in poor weather. Can I remind parents that students, where they wear a coat, need one large enough to be worn over their blazer? Coats should be plain in colour, and generally dark. Fur trim is acceptable. Please note that 'hoodies', either worn under or over the blazer are not acceptable and will receive a C4 uniform detention from January.

PE Kit

Students are looking particularly smart in their new PE kit. Please note that all students will be working outside during the next half term. Students should attend appropriately dressed so they are warm and safe. Studded boots should be worn on the field and long hair tied back. Full Outwood PE kit is expected. Students who are ill or cannot join in PE lessons should continue, as before, to still bring in the full PE kit as they may be required to act in a coaching or scoring capacity. Every lesson students need black football socks and trainers with support (not plimsols). Field activities require studded boots. Long hair must be tied back. All Year 7 and Year 8 students choosing rugby and football will be on the field after Christmas. C4 detentions will be issued if PE uniform expectations are not met.

Detentions

SLT or Learning Manager C4 detentions are generally issued for the next day. If a student is absent, their detention will automatically be carried to the next day, and it is the students responsibility to record this in their Planner as no reminder will be issued. Departmental C4 detentions run on the same day each week, so a student absent from such a detention should write it into their Planner for the following week, as once again this is their responsibility. Failure to attend a detention results in a C5 day in the Consequences Room.

New Marske Bus Service

An additional bus service run by Stagecarriage now leaves New Marske at 7.55am, having been commissioned by the school. There is currently a system of discounted bus passes to simplify fare collection by the school, however ultimately students will pay the driver directly in the morning. Feedback from parents and students has been very positive. This now means approximately 40-50 students are no longer affected by the Arriva 8.05am service running late at times. This has also reduced the volume of traffic, sometimes moving at speed, when parents attempt to drive their children from New Marske when the Arriva bus is late.

Road Safety and Parental Parking

Two colleagues from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council conducted a site visit with myself during October to observe my on-going concerns about the speed and nature of traffic on the Coast Road, particularly in the mornings before school. They acknowledged issues I've identified, but described the arrangements we have put in place, such as staff in high visibility jackets manning points along the road, as excellent practice. We are hoping they can find funding for creating a layby drop-off near the bus stop to ease congestion within the school site, and to help the flow of traffic along the main road. This would also prevent inappropriate parking by parents outside the school on surrounding streets. Can I respectfully remind parents that Churchill Drive is for residents' access only? My main concern is parents driving on the narrow residential road/cycle path directly opposite the school as a place to drop off students or in some cases bypass the traffic lights. Clearly this places students using the footpath, and indeed my colleague supervising the crossing, at risk. I will not hesitate to pass on details to the police and/or council officers where driving is obviously dangerous or intimidating.

Attendance, Punctuality and Car Drop-offs

Thank you to students and parents alike for their support in vastly improving punctuality to school, and to improving attendance to the highest levels ever in the past four years I have looked at. Introducing the New Marske bus has reduced congestion on the main road, but we still have some parents arriving with students by car and entering the car-park just before or just after the 8.20am cut-off. I am keen to avoid the need for a purple line on the road too and resulting C4 detentions! Please can I ask parents to build in an additional 5-10 minutes for the journey to school, so we don't have a rush at 8.20am that leads to a full car park and traffic backing onto the coast road. I will be monitoring this more closely in January, and ask for your support in solving the issue.

Litter and Junk Food

We have considerably improved the look of the site and students are self-regulating now with regard to picking up any rare litter dropped. Food cannot be taken outside and C4 detentions are issued where this happens. I have noticed occasionally that some students are bringing in crisps and chocolate bars within packed lunches, or from

local shops in the morning. These items are not allowed on site, indeed cannot be sold in schools by law. It would be unfortunate if I needed to reinforce this by issuing sanctions. Such items also contribute to litter of course. Parents can register for ParentPay, and therefore reduce the need for students to carry cash which could instead be spent on inappropriate energy drinks, for example on the way to school. Parents can also log on and monitor what is being eaten, which has proven helpful when ensuring healthy diets! The school catering is run by Carillion. For further details on using ParentPay for meals please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/qczswt/>

Enrichment Fayre – 6 January 2015

We continue to have a fantastic uptake at over 50 Enrichment activities occurring after-school each week at Bydales, and I want to thank staff in particular for volunteering their time to run them. Mrs Wing and Mr Collins organised a successful 'Enrichment Fayre' after October half-term, to make it easier for students to sign up. Students have just been issued with a booklet list of the Enrichment sessions due to run for from January to February half-term. A copy of this can be viewed and/or downloaded from our website here: <http://tinyurl.com/opu7cgk> The Enrichment Fayre to sign-up will be on Tuesday 6 January at 2.30pm. There is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet about Enrichment on our website here: <http://tinyurl.com/oa2m2jn>

Praising Stars ©

The second Praising Stars report, known as PS2, was issued via students on Monday 15 December via students. The envelope also contained a cover letter explaining the codes on the report. Such reports, which aim to give a simple summary of the progress and effort your child is making, are issued six times a year, towards the end of each half-term. We respectfully ask for a prompt return of the reply slips so we can then check all reports have made it home. The reports also indicate any homework or coursework concerns, and whether there is a Parents' Evening request to see you, in each subject. If you have not received the report, please contact your child's Learning Manager via email. A copy of the Praising Stars 2 cover letter can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/obfosxx>

Parents' Evening - 12 January 2015

Our second of three Parents' Evenings this year will run on Monday 12 January from 5.00 – 7.00pm. This follows the Praising Stars© 2 report. Such evenings are most important for parents of students who are behind targets in several subjects, or where there are effort concerns. Teachers will have indicated with a 'tick' on your child's report whether they would like to see you on the 12 January. Parents can of course meet subject teachers where they have any questions or concerns. Students are responsible for making the appointments with teachers. They have already started, using Page 133 of the Planner. Please strongly encourage your son/daughter to press on with this, particularly in the first week back, if you are intending to come to the evening. It works best when parents check the Planner on several occasions to ensure Page 133 is being populated.

Year 8 Options Evening – 19 January 2015

There will be a Year 8 Options Evening for parents and students on Monday 19 January 2015. Further details will follow shortly via an Options Booklet of subjects being offered, via Assistant Headteacher (Deep Experience) Mr McGhee. It is an important occasion, particularly in terms of understanding our three year Key Stage 4, in that students study for their GCSEs from Year 9 right into Year 11.

I wish you and your family well for the Christmas break, and look forward to your continued support in January.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Wappat
Principal