



Ref: EasterLetter/CTY/hll

31st March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Important Information

We have reached the end of the spring term and I am sure you are looking forward to the Easter holidays. It has been an exceptionally busy term with lots of positives such as our Challenge Partners Review and many trips and visits, with lots more coming up. Below I address some key issues and hope you will find time to read the information prior to students returning after Easter.

Standards and Expectations

I often talk to the students about 'getting the basics right.' These are not just 'rules' for the sake of them; I and the staff believe the expectations we have will set our students up for the rest of their lives. Our motto is 'Aspire for Excellence' and part of our mission is to 'create well rounded young people who are prepared for life beyond the school.' These are fulfilled by students following our basic expectations.

Some of the most basic expectations are around punctuality, appearance, readiness for learning and behaviour. None of which I believe are unreasonable or are any different from other schools:

- Good punctuality prepares students for the world of work where the expectation is you turn up on time for your shift / job and fulfil your working hours.
- Wearing their uniform with pride is about ensuring students not only look smart, but are prepared for the future, where most jobs require some form of uniform; whether that be steel toe cap boots, a nurses uniform or a dress code in retail establishments such as McDonalds or B&M
- Having a school bag and equipment each day is equally important, with students expected to have a pencil case with the key items and enough room for their books and PE Kit. Again, this helps develop students' organisational skills, preparing them for employment
- We also ask that students follow REPS. We ask that students are Respectful, demonstrate Excellence, Persevere and are Safe. When students are in our uniform and travelling to and from school; they are representing us and you. We expect them to be model citizens and look after this community

Social Media and Mobile Phones

Due to the change and uncertainty of the pandemic we have seen an increase in the use of social media. Over recent weeks we have dealt with an increasing number of issues relating to students' communication on social media outside of school time. These issues, often stemming from children using apps like Snapchat or TikTok, can cause considerable upset, anxiety and distraction for students. Friendship problems, arguments or disagreements are commonly made much worse and harder to resolve when social media is involved. Our priority in school is to ensure our students recover quickly from the disruption they have experienced over the last two years; we do not have time to waste addressing issues that do not relate to students' learning and progress and often have nothing to do with their time in school. While we understand that social media plays a significant part in young people's lives and that it can be difficult for parents and carers who are unfamiliar with it to understand, it is important that children are guided to use it sensibly, safely and respectfully. Students hear this message in school regularly and they take part in assemblies and personal development activities related to this issue. They are reminded frequently of their responsibilities and our expectations.

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Unfortunately, there is only so much that we as a school can do to prevent issues arising without your support. It is important, particularly in the case of younger students, that the use of social media is monitored closely by parents and carers and that children understand what to do if they feel upset, uncertain or uncomfortable about what they read or see. Please consider removing apps or blocking contacts that cause concern and be mindful that most social media apps have age restrictions of 13+. We have made sure our rules about the use of mobile phones in school are very clear to students: they are not allowed their phones at all during the school day; they should be handed in during form time or in assembly.

If students choose not to meet our expectations their phones are confiscated and collected from Reception at the end of the day. If this is repeated, we will ask that you come to school to collect the phone on your child's behalf. A letter will be sent on the first occasion outlining the outcomes of future confiscations. To support us further, we ask that parents and carers do not communicate with, or send messages to, students during school hours. If communication is needed, please contact school and allow us to pass on messages to students at an appropriate time. Likewise, we will ensure that your child can contact you if they need to. While issues involving phones are rare, they can be highly disruptive.

If you need further information on how to monitor and keep your child safe on-line then you can find lots of information on our website.

<https://www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk/parents/safeguarding/>

Behaviour in the Community

It is also important to recognise that as we approach the summer months, this can lead to children being out in the community. Unfortunately, a small minority of children can become involved in anti-social behaviour. If it is reported that any of our students are involved in such behaviour, we adhere to the section of our policy 'behaviour outside the school gates,' which states, '*At The Grange Academy we will impose reasonable sanctions for any student taking part in a school trip, travelling to and from school, wearing school uniform or in some other way identifiable as a student at the school. This may also apply to students that pose a threat to another student or member of the public or could adversely affect the reputation of the school.*

Finally

Like all schools, we have our challenges and we are always seeking to improve and develop our provision. However, the responsibility for the basic expectations fall on you, as parents and carers and your child, just as much as they do on us. I have asked students to take personal responsibility for the 'basics.' I fully understand the impact the pandemic has had on local families, hence why we distributed hampers, we have a school shop, distributed Christmas hampers, provide uniform, shoes and equipment where needed, but that should not be used as a reason for low standards.

This school has changed since September 2018, for the better, and I believe the education we provide for our students is excellent. I know this from the students I speak to everyday, the parents and carers I meet on the Plaza and the increase in admissions we are seeing from the local community. This does not happen by chance; this is down to the hard work and dedication of the staff and students; and crucially your support.

I am asking you as parents and carers to work with us. Support our school rules, ensure your children are fully prepared and equipped for school. Staff work incredibly hard for your children and I will not tolerate abuse from parents and carers towards any staff. Unfortunately, some members of our community have found it appropriate to swear at staff via e-mail and on the phone; this will not be tolerated.

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It is important to recognise and thank the overwhelming majority of students who rise to our expectations every day by working hard, behaving respectfully and engaging positively in the life of the school. Thank you for your partnership, understanding and support.

Have a lovely Easter and enjoy the break.

Yours faithfully



Mr Ian Critchley
Principal

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