

20th October 2023

Dear Families,

I am writing with my end-of-term update for Term 1 - and I am delighted with how the term has gone! From the heatwave of September to the autumn leaves falling down in October, our students have excelled in their learning and settled successfully back into the routines of school after the long summer break. It has also been great to see so many parents, carers and family members at our parent information, tutor contact, presentation and Year 7 and Sixth Form open evenings over the course of this term, and to hear your messages of support and feedback to us.

In this letter I will give you a brief update on our approaches to behaviour, what has been happening this term, and a look ahead to Term 2.

## Successes with behaviour

We introduced our new behaviour policy at the start of September. The policy was laid out to parents and families in my [Headteacher's Update letter of 13th July](#), and then reiterated at our [parent information evenings](#) in September. Students had the policy explained to them in July and September through assemblies and tutor sessions.

As ever with the launch of any new system, there was a period of adjustment on all sides. We are very grateful to all families who have worked so hard to support the new arrangements, whether that is through correcting uniform issues or supporting the Academy when sanctions have been issued. We are also grateful to all the families who have contacted us directly to provide feedback, come in for meetings and discussions, or made time for telephone conversations to address any concerns or issues. We would always advise any families who have concerns to contact the Academy directly so we can respond appropriately.

I am delighted to report that the policy is working well. Behaviour in lessons and in social time is significantly improved. Teachers are reporting excellent responses in classrooms and progress through the curriculum. House points are exceeding behaviour points in a ratio of over 6:1.

In particular, we have seen the vast majority of uniform and equipment issues resolved over the course of the term, so that we are now issuing very few consequences for these matters. We would urge all families to continue to support us by ensuring that students are properly dressed and equipped for school, particularly with jewellery (studs only in the nose or ears) and false nails or eyelashes (not permitted).

## Moving down refocus tariffs

In the behaviour policy, students increase their time spent in the Refocus Room for repeated visits as follows:

- First time in Refocus: two lessons + one social time
- Second time in Refocus: three lessons + one social time
- Third time in Refocus: four lesson + two social times
- Fourth and any subsequent times in Refocus: five lessons + two social times

Feedback from students and families suggested that we did not provide sufficient opportunity for moving down this scale following improved behaviour. This meant that students who made a strong commitment to improving their behaviour would remain at a high tariff, spending a full day in Refocus even if they had gone several weeks without an incident occurring. We listened carefully to this feedback, and as a result we have changed this aspect of the policy.

Moving forward, all students will have their Refocus tariff reset each term. This means that all students will have the opportunity for a fresh start after each holiday period. Students will also move down one stage on the tariff if they complete two full school weeks without being sent to the refocus room. We hope that these changes will encourage students to improve their behaviour, knowing that we will recognise and reward those improvements. These changes will apply from the start of Term 2.

## Sports Centre update

[Informed families in June](#) that North Somerset Council had agreed to hand the Churchill Sports Centre over to the Academy for our use during the school day. Work has now begun to make it ready for our students, starting with repairing the roof to ensure that the building is watertight. We are grateful to the Lighthouse Schools Partnership for supporting this project, which will bring significant benefits to our Academy. We anticipate a handover in the spring of 2024. In the meantime, we are grateful to all families for their forbearance with any disruption to the car park as contractors complete their works.

## Looking ahead: focus on homework

At the start of term 2, we will be having a whole-school focus on homework. Homework has many benefits, including:

- Encouraging independent study
- Contributing to self-discipline, self-motivation, and determination
- Supporting the learning process, reinforcing content covered and addressing strengths and weaknesses in understanding
- Extending learning covered in the classroom
- Extending learning time beyond the school day
- Feeding students' curiosity, broadening interest and knowledge beyond the taught curriculum
- Contributing to the progress and assessment of all students
- Providing feedback to students, parents and teachers

The [Education Endowment Foundation](#) suggests that homework has a positive impact on learning, with an average impact of +5 months on learning progress, particularly with students in secondary schools. We will be talking to students about homework early in Term 2, helping them to understand the benefits and discussing strategies to make the most of their homework time.

We would like to ask for your support with this focus on homework. Please talk to your children about the homework they have been set, and help them with completing it to the best of their ability. You can do this by:

1. Ensuring they have a quiet space at home to complete their homework, or encouraging them to use the library or homework club at school
2. Avoiding distractions (for example looking after their mobile phone for them until they have finished their homework)
3. Discussing a regular routine for study time

4. Supporting their learning - but making sure they complete it by themselves
5. Checking Google Classroom "Guardian Summaries" for regular updates on homework set, completed and coming up
6. Discussing their homework with them
7. Praising hard work and effort

Thank you for all that you continue to do to support your children's learning at home.

## Staffing update

We wish Mrs Pattison well as she starts her maternity leave today. Mr Smith (Geography) will take over as Head of Year 13 during Mrs Pattison's leave.

Today also marks the retirement of Mr McQueen from the Art department. Mr McQueen has been at Churchill since 1998 as a newly qualified teacher. In his career at Churchill he has been a Senior Tutor, acting Head of Year, Head of Art, and Director of Art, Design and Technology. During his time at Churchill, Mr McQueen has helped countless students to develop their abilities to express themselves through art, as well as fostering a culture of excellence within the subject. We wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Enjoy the half term break. We look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 30th October.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Hildrew

Headteacher