

11th November 2022

Dear parents and carers

I hope you and your families are well. Throughout the school year we closely monitor and evaluate our provision in order to improve our performance. We also need to ensure we are compliant with the latest government guidance. As a result of this, there are a number of items I would like to draw to your attention in relation to attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

Attendance – Following the pandemic, attendance levels in schools across the country have fallen. Thanks to our strong home-school partnership, our students still have higher than average attendance. However, this is still an area where we can strive to be better. Please note the government encourages schools to use a number of measures - including fines in some instances of unauthorised absence - to promote high attendance. Whilst the school has not issued fines for the past few years, we will be reintroducing them in the spring term. We have also updated our attendance policy, please click [here](#) for more information. There is a strong link between attendance and achievement so we look forward to continue to work with you in this area.

Behaviour (students in Years 7 to 11) - The vast majority of our students display exceptional behaviour and are a credit to their parents and carers. However, a small minority struggle at times, which is why we have a clear system of sanctions and rewards to help support them in becoming 'the best they can be'. We have all seen some of the struggles and challenges facing society following the pandemic, and it is inevitable that this impact is also felt in school. For this reason, we need a reset and a tightening of our behaviour expectations in certain areas:

1. Our students need to arrive at school and lessons on time and ready to learn. This means they need the correct uniform, the correct equipment, and the correct mindset.
2. Teachers and other adults are employed to help our students learn and to keep them safe. In order for this to happen, the most basic of expectations is that students follow instructions from staff and are accepting of any sanctions given.
3. Students need to be in class. Therefore, we only permit students to leave the classroom in exceptional circumstances. Young people need to learn to use the toilet between lessons, at break and at lunch. Similarly, students should only go to the medical room as a last resort – our staff are only there to provide first aid, nothing more.
4. We have a large site with a large number of students. Therefore, it is very important that all members of the community move around the school quietly and calmly, treating the school buildings and property with respect.
5. We are seeing an increasing number of issues in school as a result of inappropriate use of social media outside of school. The impact of these issues is minimised when students and parents inform the school of any potential concerns. The reality is that a number of our young people are not mature enough to use social media responsibly and need guidance from their families and the school. **I would also like to remind you that the vast majority of social media apps have a minimum age of 13 (Whatsapp is 16).** Therefore, I strongly encourage you to monitor their use of social media at home and to support them should any difficulties arise.

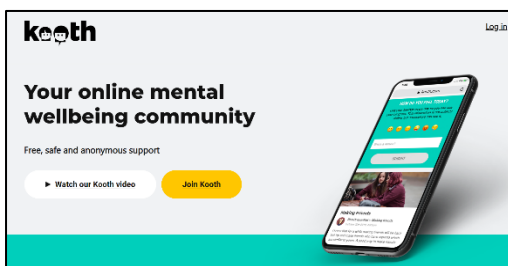
Mr Wilder and I will be leading assemblies on the above over the next two weeks, please reinforce these points at home.

Becoming the best we can be

The government have also introduced a large amount of guidance in relation to behaviour and so here is a draft copy of our new [behaviour policy](#) . We would welcome any feedback on the policy at the end of our survey.

Wellbeing

There are many stories in the press of how young people are struggling with their mental health. We have seen a rise in students presenting with concerns, as with all illnesses, early intervention is the most effective, and a proactive approach is best. Local services are stretched, as are our pastoral staff in school. However, our mental health lead (Miss Johnson) and our education social work (Mrs Magnien) have identified a number of remote resources (see below) that can be a huge help if your child is struggling. We encourage you to actively engage with your children in this area.



<https://www.kooth.com/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

[DMYH Dorset Mind Your Head](#) ; and

ChatHealth - NHS Dorset HealthCare – School Nursing Team on 07480 635511

Finally, we like to survey parents regularly, we would be very grateful if you could find the time to fill in this survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/e4mhSi4VFv>

Yours sincerely



Ben Doyle
Headteacher

Becoming the best we can be