

Kettlethorpe High School

Standbridge Lane, Sandal, Wakefield WF2 7EL
Headteacher: Mr T Griffiths



Newsletter 8

15th January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer and Pupils

It has been good to return to school after a Christmas break that allowed families time to relax after the Christmas festivities and family gatherings.

The two half-term sessions before the Easter break are both short with each half term being only five weeks long. We will find the time goes quickly and it is important that all pupils make the best use of the time available to them in school.

Mr Denis Barry: As we have previously communicated with you Denis Barry, the school's Chair of Governors passed away just before Christmas as a result of invasive cancer. Denis had been on the school's governing body since 2008 and was well known and respected for his strong advocacy on behalf of our pupils and staff.

Staff from school were in attendance at Denis' funeral on Monday which was held at Wakefield Cathedral. In addition, staff from both Kettlethorpe High School and Mackie Hill Junior and Infant school lined the pavements at the front of each school as a mark of respect as his funeral cortege passed by.

In school our Eco-Garden group are looking to plant a cherry blossom tree and place a commemorative bench in the pupil's quiet quad later in the term in remembrance of Denis.

Year 11: This Friday our Year 11 pupils will be getting their PPE results in the school hall. This will be in exactly the same way they will pick up their GCSE examination results in August. They have been working hard and need to keep this focus going alongside being very clear about their future education and career plans for September next.

Staff in school are already well on with planning intervention and booster revision sessions, some of which will be offered over the February half-term break as well as the Easter holidays.

Keep at it Year 11 and make the August results something that you can really be proud of. Go for it!

Year 9 Parent/Carer Evening: Thank you to all the families who got into school last week for the Year 9 Consultation Evening. We had excellent attendance, and it really was super hearing from families about how well their children were doing and their thoughts on the work of the school. Thank you to all those families who responded to the parent view questionnaire and the questions concerned with mobile phones and uniform. Keep up the excellent work, Year 9.

Attendance: This continues to be a key area of focus and as a result all adults in school are looking to promote positive and improved pupil attendance. The school's attendance figures

are hovering around the national average. Historically we have seen overall attendance figures that were better than now.

Recent national press coverage has reported on attendance at schools and that some families feel that attending for 4 out of every 5 days is acceptable. Senior staff in school have reviewed pupil attendance figures against actual pupil success in GCSE examinations and the correlation is quite clear. For those pupils who are absent from school their results are below those expected of the same pupil. Pupils who miss learning are not able to catch up on knowledge content and importantly, the teaching that has been put in by the skilled subject specialist delivering key learning. As a result, their progress/results suffer.

Toilets: At Kettlethorpe High School pupils have access to open toilets throughout the school day. This is not the case for a number of local schools who choose to lock off toilets or use shutters to deny access. Pupils at our school are encouraged to use the facilities between lessons and at break/lunchtime.

For pupils who require access to a toilet during lesson time this will be a decision that is considered by the class teacher. Pupils will then leave, with their planner, use the facilities and return promptly to their lesson. This academic year we have employed additional toilet supervisors who will note which pupils are accessing the toilets during lessons. This information is then used to monitor and track toilet visiting during lessons to reduce 'lesson avoidance'.

School Uniform: Thank you to families for all your support and efforts with the school's uniform policy. The school has a uniform policy to support all pupils in being part of a learning community that is fully inclusive.

Whilst in school we do expect all pupils not to wear hoodies with the hoods up/or baseball caps. Pupils do not need to be wearing black gloves when inside the building. Any pupil doing this will be asked to comply with the school's uniform expectations.

The school has heard mention of a new school uniform that includes the blazer from a local multi-academy trust. Do rest assured here that there is no truth whatsoever in this rumour. It is a work of fiction!

Behaviour for learning: Unfortunately, a very small number of pupils have returned to school following the break with a negative and unreasonable approach. For example, they arrive late at school, truant form time and then group up to play hide and seek with staff whilst causing disruption to lessons and pupil learning. This is totally unacceptable at Kettlethorpe High School.

So that everybody is absolutely clear, pupils who behave like this will be removed from school through the use of suspension. Return to school will involve meetings with parents/carers and the signing of a behaviour contract. Repeat behaviours will then result in further suspension from school. Ultimately, as Headteacher, I will permanently exclude any pupil who causes continuous disruption to the working operation of the school and for disruption to the learning of others.

As a school we are making this point very clearly for this reason. Firstly, to be clear that consequences follow for inappropriate behaviours and secondly, so that those pupils and staff who have had lessons disrupted know that firm and direct action has been taken.

This week 14 pupils have been suspended as above. The vast majority of our pupils are exceptional in the way they work and conduct themselves. Very well done to those who behave and work as expected.

The spring term in school is always a time of optimism especially when we see the return to longer daylight hours. The long autumn term has gone and the school very much focuses on matters such as getting the best staff appointed and in place for September next, and ensuring pupils get the best learning experience.

School continues to be a very busy and purposeful place where the majority of our pupils make the most of what is on offer. Again, to all our pupils, get into school everyday and look to get fully involved in the working life of the school.

Thank you for your continued support for the school and very best wishes for the year 2024.

Yours sincerely

Tudor Griffiths
Headteacher

“It is very strange to think back like then, although come to think of it, there is no fence or hedge round ‘Time’ that has gone. You can go back and have what you like if you remember it well enough”.

A quote from ‘How green was my valley’ a novel written in 1939 by Richard Llewellyn that won an Oscar when it became a film in 1941. A story based around a mining village in South Wales and also a book which was quoted at Denis Barry’s funeral this week.

Key Dates:

- 19th January - Year 11 PPE Results Event
- 2nd February – Number Day
- 8th February - Year 11 Consultation Evening
- 9th February – School Closes for Half Term