



3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you had an enjoyable and restful festive season. As we begin the new term, we are filled with a renewed sense of purpose and determination to continue building a school environment that fosters respect, consistency, and high expectations. The start of a new year provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on our goals and refine our approaches to ensure that every student is supported to thrive both academically and personally. We are incredibly proud of the progress our students have made, but we remain committed to striving for even greater standards, particularly when it comes to behaviour and creating a positive, disruption-free learning environment for all.

In my Friday update prior to the break, I spoke about our 'lines in the sand'—clear boundaries that define the behaviour we expect and the consequences for not meeting these expectations. This framework has allowed us to make significant strides in promoting fairness and clarity across the academy. This term, we aim to build on that foundation, ensuring every student has the structure they need to succeed in a calm and welcoming school environment.

This letter outlines the next steps we are taking to further enhance consistency across the academy. Beginning Monday, 13th January, we will implement updated behaviour expectations and consequences, focusing on punctuality, appropriate language, and respect for staff. To ensure all students are fully prepared, we will use the week prior to communicate and teach these expectations within the academy. This will also give you time to discuss them with your child at home.

#### **Punctuality to lessons:**

We have worked hard to maximize learning time within lessons through initiatives like our ready-to-learn packs and structured lesson episodes. While the vast majority of students arrive to class on time, some still arrive late, which disrupts the flow of the lesson and delays progress for students who are already settled and on task. Our goal is to ensure that every hour-long lesson translates into a full hour of uninterrupted learning, rather than being reduced to 50 minutes due to lateness.

To illustrate the importance of punctuality, consider this: if a student is late by just two minutes per lesson, this adds up to 10 minutes of lost learning each day. Over the course of a school year, this is equivalent to 6.5 days or 32.5 hours of missed learning. This figure only accounts for the impact on the late student, not the additional disruption caused to their peers when teachers have to repeat instructions or restart lessons. This example underscores why punctuality is critical to ensuring that all students can fully benefit from their education.

#### **Punctuality line in the sand:**

- **Stage 1:** If a student accumulates up to **40 minutes** of lateness over a week, they will receive a **40-minute lunchtime detention on Friday**.

- **Stage 2:** If lateness totals 41-90 minutes, the student will need to make up this time after-school on Tuesday of the following week. Parents/carers must arrange transport, as failure to attend will escalate to Stage 3.
- **Stage 3:** If lateness exceeds 90 minutes, the student will be placed in isolation, and a meeting with parents/carers will be required.

We recognise that many of our students rely on bus transportation to get to and from school. To accommodate this, we will measure lateness over a Thursday-to-Thursday week. This allows us to notify parents/carers by Friday if their child has reached Stage 2, giving you time to make any necessary arrangements for transport.

It is important to stress that students who reach Stage 2 must attend the catch up session on Tuesday of the following week. As a parent/carer, it is your responsibility to arrange transport for your child if needed, as this will not be accepted as a reason for non-attendance. Failure to attend the Stage 2 detention for any reason will result in an automatic escalation to Stage 3.

### **Swearing**

While we understand that swearing may occur in informal settings, it is important to recognise that school is a professional environment where such language is inappropriate. Swearing can undermine the respectful and welcoming atmosphere we work hard to maintain and can set a poor example for others within the school community. Moreover, as part of our commitment to preparing students for their future, we aim to instil the skills and habits necessary for professional and social situations where swearing is unacceptable. Whether in the workplace, during formal education, or in other settings, the ability to communicate respectfully and effectively without resorting to inappropriate language is a vital life skill that will serve students well throughout their lives. By addressing this behaviour now, we can help students develop the self-discipline and awareness they need to succeed in various professional and social contexts.

### **Our line in the sand:**

- Swearing in conversation will result in a T3 break detention, a reminder to students that they should not swear in a professional environment.
- Swearing in response to a sanction will result in an isolation. For example, if a student is asked to put on their blazer or move seats in class and they swear in response to this such as “that’s F\*\*\* rubbish”.
- Swearing directed at a member of staff will result in a suspension, as this behaviour is unacceptable in any professional context.

### **Defiance:**

Respect for staff and compliance with reasonable requests are fundamental to maintaining a positive and productive school environment. Defiance, whether through refusal to follow instructions or walking away from staff, disrupts the harmony of the school and undermines the authority of those working to support and guide students. While we acknowledge that some students may occasionally struggle to regulate their emotions, especially when heightened due to challenges in class or within their peer groups, it is essential that they learn to manage these feelings constructively.

As a school, we are committed to providing students with the time and space they need to calm down, when necessary, as well as offering support to address underlying issues. However, there are times when students, even after this period of regulation, continue to display defiant behaviour. This not only impacts the individual student’s progress but also sets a negative precedent for their peers. To ensure a respectful and orderly environment for all, it is crucial that students understand the



importance of following instructions and engaging with staff in a constructive manner. Defiance cannot become an accepted norm in a school that values respect, responsibility, and readiness to learn.

#### **Our line in the sand:**

- Defiance 1: Walking away from a member of staff and not returning within 5 minutes to rectify the situation. In this situation the member of staff will seek the student out to address the initial concern and the walking away whilst checking that the student is ok. If a member of staff has to seek the student out and the student does not return on their own accord then this will result in a detention.
- Defiance 2: Walking away from a member of staff, failing to engage in a conversation once given regulation time (10 minutes) or defiance towards multiple staff. In this situation of continual defiance, a student will be placed into isolation.

I understand that, to some, our rules may appear strict, punitive, or binary, I do not apologise for this. It is our firm belief that setting and upholding the highest expectations for our students is essential for their success. By maintaining clear boundaries and consistent standards, we can create a school environment where lessons are truly disruption-free, and every student feels safe, supported, and able to thrive. A warm and welcoming atmosphere, paired with a focus on discipline and respect, ensures that students not only excel academically but also develop the habits and behaviours necessary for future success in life beyond school.

Research consistently highlights that students achieve their best in environments characterised by clear rules, strong boundaries, predictable routines, and unwavering consistency. These elements provide a sense of security, structure, and fairness that helps students to focus on their learning and personal development. Our 'lines in the sand' framework is a critical part of this approach, establishing a consistent and transparent environment where students know exactly what is expected of them every single day. This clarity allows students to grow in confidence and understand that rules and expectations are applied fairly and equitably across the entire academy. By setting these high standards, we are not just enforcing discipline; we are building the foundation for a school community that supports and nurtures success for every individual.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make our academy the best it can be. By setting high expectations and maintaining a clear and consistent approach, we are creating an environment where every student has the opportunity to excel. Your partnership in reinforcing these values at home is invaluable, and we are grateful for your commitment to helping us provide the best possible education and environment for all our students.

Yours faithfully,



Mr J Morris  
Vice Principal

