



Darland High School

Ysgol Uwchradd Darland

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Headteacher P. Agnew BA NPQH

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Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I am writing to you at the end of our second week back to term, with news of a number of different issues and events.

Behaviour Monitoring in Lessons

As you may be aware, all pupils are registered electronically for each of their five lessons in the school day. From Monday 16th January, in place of a normal registration mark, all pupils will be given a grade for each lesson they attend. The grades given are the Attitude To Learning grades, which appear on the pupils' half termly Progress Reviews. I am enclosing a copy of the definitions for each of the grades, but it is important to note that each pupil will start the lesson with a grade 2, the expected standard. At the end of the lesson, the teacher can then adjust the grade to a 1 if the pupil has excelled, or downgrade to a 3 or 4, if the pupil's behaviour and attitude has been found wanting. Parents will receive an average of the ATL grades for each subject at the end of each half term, on the pupil's Progress Review. This system of lesson by lesson monitoring is being used by an increasing number of schools nationally and the consensus is that it helps to focus pupils better and improve behaviour. Our Progress Coordinators and Faculty Heads will be analysing the data from this system regularly and using it to reward those who meet and exceed our standards as well as putting in place sanctions for those who do not. As a parent, you can of course, request a report of your child's ATL lesson grades at any time, by telephoning the school office.

Year 11 Trial Exam Results and Parents Evening.

If your child is in Year 11, you should receive along with this letter, a copy of the exam results from the Trial Exams which were held just before the end of last term. Year 11 parents evening will be held on Thursday January 19th, where parents will have a chance to discuss with teachers, these results together with your child's progress. Given the importance of the coming GCSE exams later this year, it is vital that all parents attend this evening.

Written Accuracy Targets

If your child is in Years 7, 8 or 9, you should have received a letter about the single target for improving the accuracy of writing, that all KS3 pupils are having.

Changes to the school day

The governors of Darland have authorised me to consult parents about making a minor change to the school day. From 1st September 2017, I propose that lunchtime is shortened by 5 minutes. The morning timings would be unchanged and lunchtime would start at 12.35pm as it does now. However, lesson 4 in the afternoon would start at 1.15pm and the school day would end at 3.15pm. At present, all our children are able to finish their midday meal by 1.10pm and this summer we are due to make improvements to our canteen, which will increase the efficiency with which we can serve pupils. The reason behind the change is to reduce the amount of unstructured time in the middle of the day in order to improve standards of behaviour and also to ensure that pupils are more settled for afternoon lessons. The change will also have the benefit of allowing students to start the journey home at a slightly earlier time. If you wish to discuss this matter in more depth with me, or register a formal objection, please write to me. Alternatively, the Parents Forum, meeting on 2nd February will be discussing the proposal in detail. Consultation will close on 17th February 2017, after which the governors will make a decision.

On-line Payments

Next week all parents will receive a letter with the access codes for the new on-line system for making payments to the school for school meals, trips and bus passes. This is a welcome initiative from Wrexham, which is being rolled out across the Borough and I urge you to take advantage of it.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Agnew
Headteacher