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Friday 7th September 2018

Welcome back!

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a fantastic first week back at school and I have been so impressed with the enthusiasm that our children have come into school with. Some of them were literally bouncing through the door!

As you would expect with it being the first week, I have a few things to mention and point out to you.

Welcomes

Firstly, and most importantly, I would like to welcome all our new staff and pupils. As I mentioned before the holiday Mr Hayes, Miss Dhooper and Mrs Wilson are new members of staff and have been enjoying getting to know the school and their classes. I hope they all feel very welcome and have happy and long stays at Heathlands. I would also like to welcome our new children to reception and the new children that have joined higher up the school. So far everyone seems very happy and settled.

Mrs Freeman had a baby called Harry in the holiday. We wish Mrs Freeman, Harry and all her family much happiness together.

Uniform

Most children have returned to school immaculately presented and in correct school uniform. I thank you for this. Some children are still arriving in trainers though. Trainers are allowed at breaktime so that shoes are not prematurely worn out by playing football etc. but should not be worn during the school day. Despite what some children may tell you, black trainers are not excusable as shoes.

Attendance

As you may remember from our Ofsted report, pupil attendance is below the national average. We have too many late children and too many children that have an attendance below 90%. I would again like to stress to you the importance of attendance improving for the school. We have had a lot of requests for time off school and although I understand and have sympathy about the price of holidays, they do not count as an 'exceptional circumstance'. Please do your best to support the school with this by not booking holidays in term time and by making sure your children are here promptly at 8.55am for registration and to start their day.



Car parking

Like most of schools across the city, we have issues at the start and end of the day with pupils coming to school and in particular, how cars are parked. You will have noticed that I have been positioning myself at the Ashville entrance both in the morning and afternoon. Further to polite requests in the newsletters and via text messages, I have again been contacted by residents and parents surrounding the school site about inconsiderate parking and dangerous driving. This has taken the form of blocking driveways, parking in inappropriate places and parking on the yellow zig-zag lines outside school. The zig-zags on Ashville seem to be used as a parking bay. This is illegal, and the police have and will, ticket offenders.

Over the next term, we would like to see an improvement so that our children are safer, our local residents are not inconvenienced, and congestion is reduced.

As such, we will be drawing up a 'code of conduct' for dropping children off and collecting from outside school. I need your support with this and will welcome any ideas and help.

Part of the code of conduct will be requesting that the **Ashville entrance is used for pedestrians only and that any vehicle drop offs and parking, take place on the Heathway or further away from school.** This will leave the Ashville entrance clear for families walking. This will start from Monday 10th September. I understand that this is a polite request and it may be ignored by a lot of parents. I believe that so far, we have been lucky that a child hasn't been knocked down by a car but based on what I have witnessed again this week, it could easily happen. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to make sure that they follow this request. I thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Hopefully this change will ensure that our children are safe when coming to and from school and that the risk of incidents is kept to a minimum. In the meantime, I have assurances from the local councilors that they are applying for funding to make the Heathway safer for pedestrians.

If you do have any ideas that you feel will help the school with this, then please come and speak to me or email the enquiry address which is at the top of this letter.

Coffee morning with the head teacher

I would like to invite all parents to come and share a cup of coffee with me on Tuesday 25th September from 8.45 onwards, in the school hall.

Emailing

In future the newsletter will be emailed out to parents on a Monday and placed on the school website and linked via the Facebook page. We will now be stopping paper copies although they will be available in the office to collect if you would like one. This is standard practice across school's nowadays and will save the school over 17,000 pieces of paper a year. Please make sure we have your up to date email address so that you don't miss out. The next one will be sent on Monday 17th September.

I wish you all a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Higgins