



ORMISTON DENES ACADEMY

2nd October 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

As I said at the end of last week's email, one of the things I enjoy the most is being at the school gate in the mornings and evenings. I am not out there every day but I do go out when I possibly can. It is the perfect time to chat briefly with students, welcoming them into school or saying goodbye to them. I also say "see you tomorrow" - as one of the most important jobs I have, and indeed you have as parents, is getting children to attend school. As I have said before, it costs a lot of money to run a school and none of us would think of going into a supermarket, using our card to pay for something then walking out without the goods yet that is what happens when students don't go to school. Their place in the classroom has been paid for through taxes but the child is not benefiting. Indeed missing a day means extra stress as they walk into a lesson already behind everyone else in the room. Of course we work hard to support them as you would expect but the best is for them to attend every single day. So, behind my casual comment of "see you tomorrow" lies a much deeper message; come to school.

We are doing a lot of work with students helping them to catch up on their missed learning. When I go into our Raising Achievement Centres, there are always students in there working hard. Every year group bubble has one so it is good to see them all being used effectively. It is an incredibly difficult time for young people as life is so different these days - both at school and probably at home as well - so these Raising Achievement Centres are also used to support them emotionally. The significant shift this year is that we are solely focussed on students catching up on their work if they are out of a lesson for any reason.

On a personal note, Thursday was one of those days when I had quite a few meetings; it happens sometimes. What is useful is that they are now virtual meetings and that has many benefits including reducing travel and me still being in school. Those meetings are also much more succinct including our Senior Leadership Team meetings in school. However there are downsides to it as well. I enjoy visiting other schools and seeing what they do first hand and as I've said many times, I think social interaction is an important part of wellbeing for all of us.

When it is difficult for our students is wet weather and that has always been the case. Such an old building does not lend itself well to large social spaces for students so that is why we have to be quite versatile in how we utilise space. Again my thanks to both staff and students for making it work, every break and indeed between lessons, there are a number of staff out and about chatting with students and checking they are ok. This, to my mind, is an important part of school.

As mentioned last week, in addition to the choice of sandwiches available to our students, we have introduced a variety of hot food this week which so far seems to have been received well. This arrangement will therefore continue until half term, when hopefully our catering situation will improve considerably.

For your information, YouTube has recently updated its own terms and conditions and now requires that anyone under the age of 13 must have parental consent to access YouTube content. We understand the value of YouTube and the educational content available through its channels, so we will update our own Acceptable Usage Policy to



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reflect this requirement. You will receive a copy of this revised policy next year.

We would like to assure you that YouTube videos are appropriately controlled and filtered at Ormiston Denes Academy, and videos are carefully selected to enhance teaching and learning. If you would like any more information regarding this alteration to our Acceptable Use Policy, please contact the academy office.

I am really excited about my weekend ahead. You will have guessed by now what I will be doing as there is nothing that I look forward to more than seeing both my boys. We visited Richard last Sunday - Robert was in Wales for the weekend – so we are going back down again to see them both on Sunday.

I hope you all have a nice weekend and stay safe.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Nixon".

Jim Nixon
Principal