

13 September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for getting our students off to such a positive start this term as we return after the summer. I will say more about this on Friday in RoundUp. Thank you also for the feedback we have received about the new uniform and appearance strike card system. It's important to say that we have had positive feedback, as well as from those expressing some worries or concerns. Mr Pettengell and I thought that it would be helpful to address some of the concerns raised by answering some of the "Frequently Asked Questions".

Q: Why are we introducing this system when uniform is already smart?

We have chosen to do this to increase the quality of learning time. Our teachers felt that they spent too long having the same conversations with the same students as they transferred from lesson to lesson. These conversations have grown considerably since the pandemic. Our first two days show that when a student is challenged on their uniform, they correct it and don't need to be spoken to again, as they know that this may incur a sanction. It is important to remember that any C1s given are simply a warning that, if heeded, will not result in any sanction.

Q: My child is anxious, has SEND and is worried about losing their card/picking up sanctions. How can this be a good thing for them?

Students who have never had any reason to be challenged on their uniform will not notice any difference. We suggest that cards are kept in blazer pockets, just as lunch passes and bus passes are. If a card goes through the wash or a student is worried about a lost card because they are learning to be well organised, a quick email from parents to the form tutor, pastoral office or SEND will resolve this without sanctions being given. Our teachers, who know our students well, have been asked to use their professional judgement, just as they do if there are extenuating circumstances about missing home learning deadlines. If a card is lost, staff will check with the Form Tutor or Head of Year to see if this is out of character. If it is, a replacement will be issued and no C3 given. Mitigations are in place in both the SEND office and the pastoral office so please give us the "heads up" if a lost card is an issue. We are working on a "card exempt" system too for SEND students who are struggling repeatedly to keep their card safe, or who have sensory issues connected to clothing.

Q: Why have you changed the rules?

We haven't. This is just a different, less bureaucratic way of ensuring that students look smart.

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Q: Are you going to keep the system under review?

Of course. As with all things we do, we will monitor it to see if it works well. If there are any protracted issues to do with effectiveness or increased anxiety levels, for example, we will make further changes. We ask that parents and carers allow the system a few weeks to bed in to see how it works in practice too.

Thanks once again for your feedback and for your support as we help to further build the resilience of our students and help them to focus on their learning. You have placed your trust in us as parents because you know that everything we do is based on research and because we keep our practices under constant review. Let's give the system several weeks to "bed in" and then we will review.

Yours sincerely



Alan Henshall
Headteacher



Glen Pettengell
Deputy Headteacher