



Striving for Excellence

Cirencester Kingshill School

Head: Christine S. Oates

17th February 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

After what has been a very long term, we have now reached half term. Hopefully the weather will start to improve and it will start to feel warmer.

ATTENDANCE

If your child has been sent to the medical room, our first aid trained staff will make a decision as to whether the pupil needs to be collected from school or not. We will not rush to send a pupil home from school unless we deem it absolutely necessary. In our view, if you have assessed your child to be fit to attend school, then we will also maintain that stance. COVID has increased a sense of caution in all of us and rightly so during the pandemic, but we now need to focus on ensuring pupils are in class and focusing on their learning wherever possible. Like all schools, our attendance remains about 4% lower than it was prior to COVID, that is a lot of education pupils are missing out upon.

MOBILE PHONE USE

We would look to our Parents'/Carers' support in discouraging pupils use of mobile phones during the day. Our policy is very clear on this; mobile phones are not allowed to be in sight during the school day. Pupils who are seen with a mobile phone openly in their possession should expect to receive an after-school detention. If a pupil has forgotten something e.g. PE kit, they are allowed to go to Reception and use a school telephone to call home.

NEU UNION STRIKE DAY – 2ND MARCH 2023

It would appear that talks this week, between the government and the Teachers' Unions, have broken down and the planned teachers' strike on Thursday 2nd March 2023 will still be taking place.

We are very aware of how these continuing strikes will start to have an effect on learning, especially for those in Year 11, who are coming up to their GCSEs. To this end, we are proposing the following attendance for the day on 2nd March 2023.

- The School will be open to all Year 11 pupils
- The School will be open to vulnerable pupils

Pupils attending school on 2nd March 2023 should be in school uniform. We will send out more information after half-term but we felt it important to let you know as soon as possible, so you are able to make alternative arrangements. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you again.



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OFSTED REPORT

We have received a lot of support from parents and carers, and even grandparents, following the release of the Ofsted report last week. We have shared these comments with staff and we are very grateful to those of you who sent in your positive remarks. As mentioned in my previous letter, we will send out information on the Action Plan once it has been finalised.

YEAR 7 VALENTINE'S DISCO

To celebrate Valentine's Day, Year 7 pupils danced their socks off at our Valentine's disco. A couple of highlights being the perfectly executed Macarena and the longest Conga line ever seen. The flexible bunch were also extremely competitive taking part in the Limbo competition. I would like to say thank you to the volunteers from all the other year groups who gave up their time to organise and facilitate the event. Everyone had a great evening and raised a whopping £350. We have decided to donate half the funds to Save the Children Charity helping with the Syrian/ Turkey earthquake appeal and the other half will go towards our school production fund. We hope all those who attended had a lovely time.

PARENTS' EVENING

Thank you to those who attended the Year 10 Parents' Evening online on Wednesday 15th February 2023. It is always encouraging to see so many parents taking an interest in their child's education.

The next Parents' Evening is for Year 9 pupils and is again on line. This is taking place on Wednesday 8th March 2023. Thank you for your support with this.

YEAR 9 OPTIONS DAY

The Year 9 pupils took part in their Careers Option Day on Tuesday, 14th February 2023, where they received an introduction to the options process and guidance to help them make the best choices in their GCSEs.

Mrs Hicks, Careers Co-ordinator, ran a session on careers and post-16 education, including how this links into the subjects that they will need to choose for their options. Mr Macaulay, Head of RE and Social Studies, ran a session looking at the differences between a job and a career. Mr Stillman, Assistant Head and Year 9 Options lead, introduced the subject choices we offer at Kingshill and issued the pupils with their Options Curriculum Booklet.

Good Luck to all Year 9 pupils this year on making the right choices for their options. Support and encouragement from teachers and tutors will be given to help them make the right choices, before the deadline on 27th March 2023.



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SCHOOL FIELD AND UNIFORM

After the February break, we will be hoping to open the field once more for pupils to use at break and lunchtime. We will also be requiring all pupils to remove their coats in the school building. Their layers of shirts, jumpers and blazers should be more than sufficient to keep them warm.

VAPING

As you may have learnt through the national media, there has been a sharp and startling increase in the number of young people vaping across the country and there are growing concerns around how easily accessible they appear to be to purchase from some shops. The range of flavours and overall packaging of vapes can add to their appeal but as we all know, there are issues around both physical health and addiction that are comparable to cigarettes.

As a school, we have always been proud of what we have regarded as a zero-tolerance approach to smoking and have had very few incidents of pupils smoking cigarettes on the school site or during their journeys to and from school.

Sadly, like most other schools, we are conscious that with the increased figures of children who are vaping, we do have a small number of pupils who are choosing to bring vapes into school and are smoking them in what they regard as 'hidden places' such as the toilets. This is clearly completely unacceptable and is something that is outlined within our Substance Misuse Policy: which states, *'The school is a no smoking site. This includes a ban on the use of electronic cigarettes. Vaping is not permitted. It is not permitted to bring tobacco in any form or electronic cigarettes on to the school site.'*

Whilst we respect the need for a level of privacy in areas such as the toilets, our concerns around vaping are significant enough that staff are monitoring things as closely as we are able to.

I would like to clarify that any pupil who is discovered to be smoking, whether a cigarette, vape or any other electronic device, will automatically face a 1-day suspension from school.

In cases where we have evidence to believe that a pupil may be in possession of a vape or other smoking related paraphernalia, and in line with our policy, the pupil may be asked to empty their pockets and have their bag searched. If they are found to be in possession of such items they will be issued with a day of internal suspension in our Student Support Room. If there is a repeat incident, this sanction will be escalated to two days of internal suspension with any further incidents likely to result in external suspension from school.

I hope that this provides reassurance that this national issue is one which we are taking extremely seriously and would ask that you reinforce this message with your child, as well as staying vigilant in terms of how easily accessible vapes are to young people.



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FRIENDS OF KINGSHILL SCHOOL AGM

Friends of Kingshill School's AGM was due to be held on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 6.30pm. Due to the NEU strike taking place, it has been decided to move the meeting to Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 6.30pm. Further details will be sent out after half-term.

HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT

I will be retiring from Kingshill School in August 2023. It has been a privilege to be the Headteacher at Kingshill and I will miss the pupils, parents, staff and governors.

Please be reassured that the governors are an experienced team and have put a detailed plan in place to recruit a new Headteacher. The post will be advertised in March 2023 and interviews will take place in April 2023. This will give ample time for me to liaise with the new Headteacher, to ensure that there is a smooth transition in September 2023.

Kingshill School is a special school and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been part of its development. I will, of course, remain committed to my post of Headteacher until I leave. I wish all pupils, parents, staff and governors continued success at Kingshill School and I hope that the school goes from strength to strength.

School starts again on Monday, 27th February 2023, when I look forward to welcoming all the pupils back.

I would like to wish you all a restful half term. As always, thank you for your continued support, it is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Miss C.S. Oates
Headteacher