

## Secondary School

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Dear Parents,

### Disciplinary Issues

Following my successful recruiting trip to London over the last two weeks I was very disappointed to find that I arrived back in school to a host of disciplinary problems.

These problems include:

- A student who brought a group of his friends to school to beat up another student has, subject to ratification by the Board of Governors, been permanently excluded.
- A student who displayed threatening body language to one of my staff has been suspended.
- Four students who brought weapons into school have been suspended.
- Two or three Year 12 students smoking in the common room have led to Year 12 losing their common room privileges, a loss which will remain in place until the culprits own up.
- A toilet has had to be locked since some of our male students seem to gain some kind of pleasure from vandalizing it.
- Several students seem to consider that uniform regulations do not apply to them.

It is not uncommon in schools for students, at this time of year, to try to push the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The school is a social community and, in common with every social community throughout the world, there are rules which we expect the members of our community to follow.

If students make the choice not to follow the rules of our community then they must expect to face the consequences. Our rules are not difficult to follow and the vast majority of our students follow them simply because that is what comes naturally to them. Many of our rules are not even written down, they are the common rules of decency that the majority of social communities follow. We do not, for instance, expect to have to explicitly state that students should not bring weapons to school, most people would not consider such a rule necessary!

Unfortunately I now need to make such rules explicit.

### **Weapons**

With immediate effect, any student bringing any kind of weapon into school will be immediately permanently excluded from the school. Weapons include but are not limited to:

- Knives
  - Modeling knives, pen knives, flick knives, lock knives, kitchen knives, Stanley knives etc
- Bats
  - Baseball bats, rounders bats, cricket bats, clubs, sticks etc – note that bats which are used specifically for sport may, *with express permission*, be brought to school and lodged with the responsible teacher.
- Projectile launching devices
  - Catapults (either home-made or professional), cross or other kinds of bows, any kind of gun etc.
- Domestic tools
  - Hammers, screwdrivers, chisels etc

I will stress again, this list is not exhaustive and, simply because an item does not appear upon it, that does not preclude the item being classified as a weapon.

### **Smoking**

It is absolutely forbidden for students to smoke whilst on school premises, whilst on school transport, whilst representing the school or whilst on a school trip. Students can expect serious consequences if they choose to ignore this rule.

### **Alcohol**

With immediate effect the consumption of alcohol on school premises whilst on school premises, whilst on school transport, whilst representing the school or whilst on a school trip, or coming to school under the influence of alcohol will result in immediate and permanent exclusion from school.

### **Drug Abuse**

The rule covering drug abuse is stated explicitly in the students' homework diaries.

### **Vandalism**

Students who indulge in vandalism to school property can expect to face severe consequences for their anti-social actions.

### **Uniform**

The uniform requirements are shown clearly in the students' homework diaries. These are not negotiable requirements and they apply to all students with the exception of Years 12 and 13. Please ensure that your children are coming to school dressed in accordance with the uniform requirements. With effect from Monday 14 February we will expect all of our students to be appropriately dressed and we will ask you to come and collect those students who choose to disregard this.

## **Buses and Clubs**

It is clear that some students are choosing to catch a different bus at the end of the day than they are supposed to catch. Similarly it is clear that some students are telling the bus company that they will not be catching the bus because they have clubs to attend whilst actually not attending a club at all. Our bus company has a duty to ensure that your children reach home safely. Children should not change buses, please do not phone the school to authorise your son or daughter catching a different bus than normal for any reason, in the interests of their own safety we will no longer allow children to catch any bus for which they are not registered. Also, if students are claiming that they are attending a club but not actually doing so, or if students have registered for a club but are not attending it then we will have to review their privilege to attend clubs at all.

I am sorry that my first letter to you since my return is on this topic, I had hoped to tell you about my trip and the new teachers that will be joining us and about the improvements we have made in the last few weeks. Perhaps I will leave this for a while. I know that for the vast majority of our students nothing in this letter applies to them and there are just a few students who are spoiling things for everyone else. However, I ask you for your support in improving the discipline in our school and I would ask you to go through this letter with your son or daughter in order that our school can be a better place for *all* of our community.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.