



Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School

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Success with Care

Headteacher: Mr M. J. Cooper

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Headteacher Update Letter 2 – Term 1 Week 8

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Working at a school throughout the year brings many memorable experiences and the creation of wonderful moments that stick in the mind for a long time, often becoming times that are talked about during leaving assemblies and parties. At times, some of these experiences and moments that stay with us are for the rarity or unusual nature of the event. Last Friday's Storm Babet and the fallout of it will be one of those times that stick with us.

Climate change is creating a new host of issues that we face as a society, from the extreme heat of recent times to the unbelievable intensity and amount of rainfall we all faced last week. The difficulties and challenges that climate change and extreme weather are leading to means that we will probably have to face these situations more often and consequently, will have to have varied management strategies in place to combat the issues presented.

Credit should go to the students and staff who battled the elements so well on Friday. There were numerous flooded areas around the site which were impassable and inevitably, leaks that had to be contained and managed. The school community battened down the hatches, put up the hoods and umbrellas and gamely went about our school business.

However, it became apparent as the morning wore on that local areas, road networks, rail services and public transport were being severely affected and that there was a growing need to get people home safely whilst they could still travel. The closure of networks and cancellation of transport services as time went by illustrated how dire the situation was and how complicated matters became.

I would like to thank all the students, staff, parents and carers who pulled together in awful conditions to ensure we could all get home without incident, injury or anything worse. I would also like to thank staff that remained at school to ensure all were home okay and then had journeys to their own homes which took hours. In particular to the staff who spent over three hours doing a round trip in school minibuses to sustain this service and get children home safely to their families. Pulling together at times like these are what make our community so special.

There are a number of messages below for your attention which provide information about the school. Please do read the sub-headings to access those that are most pertinent for your context.

Yours sincerely

Mr M J Cooper
Headteacher

School Closure Procedures

There are times when schools face the difficult decision to close early, or sometimes not open at all, due to exceptional circumstances. This could be related to adverse weather, site conditions or lack of service or provision availability. We fully appreciate the implications and impacts of a closure.

Managing a closure is complex and challenging, especially considering we have nearly 2000 children and over 200 employees. This means we have to implement a controlled and managed procedure, which is House led. Students return to their Mentor Room where they are checked off for prior permission – these students are released first. The second wave is students who do not have prior permission – these students are enabled to contact their parents and carers who give verbal permission to the Mentor. The remaining students are then taken to the ELC where a team of staff contact families. Those who are left after these steps have been taken remain with those staff who stay on site until all children have left.

As you will appreciate, the management of such a large operation has to be carefully executed. We cannot simply release students, manage groups of students in different ways or respond to personal requests that emerge as we implement the plan. Therefore, the best steps families can take are to prepare for a school closure eventuality – give prior permission, have a go to place, have a go to contact and have a plan ready to roll out should it be needed. Many families do this really successfully and it makes the process extremely smooth for children and their parents and carers.

Remembrance Service

Each year, the school holds a Remembrance Service in the Memorial Garden, which is attended by student representatives, staff, local community leaders and other visitors. This year's event will be held on Friday 10th November 2023 at 10.45am. We will be once again broadcasting this service live across the school and a link will be available on the school website should families wish to join in the service. As is tradition, the school will also light up the Bell Tower stained glass memorial window in honour of the fallen.

Catering News – Price Increase and Staffing Opportunities

Some parents and carers will be aware from either local media or Derbyshire Primary schools that the Local Authority have substantially increased the price of school meals from September. Although a Local Authority Maintained School, DHFS does not subscribe to the LA Catering Service, alternatively delivering its own in-house provision. This is not to say that we do not face similar financial pressures of two-years significant wage rises coupled with high food-inflation prices. However, our in-house Catering Service is not run-for-profit and our Governors are conscious of the impact the suggested price rises are having within our community.

A current Meal-Deal/FSM is priced at £2.60, with the LA increasing the cost of this to £3.55. DHFS Governors have decided to increase the cost of the Meal-Deal/FSM to £3.00 with effect from the start of Term 2. This is a 15% increase and will be applied across the board to all products. We appreciate that this is yet another increase on household expenditure but hope that parents and carers understand that DHFS is consciously keeping the increases to a necessary minimum.

On another note, DHFS regularly posts vacancies on its website for vacant positions in the school. We have recently been recruiting team members for our catering service, so if this is of interest to you then please do check out the website for any available posts.

Early Help Financial Support

The cost of living crisis continues to affect lots of families. As a school we can support families through our early help offer of signposting to external agencies and support groups. Should there be a need or interest in this please contact Rebecca Johnson, rjohnson@dhfs.uk

Use of Class Charts for Messages to House Teams

Reception at the school can often be busy and it is not always possible to respond immediately to all calls and enquiries. Consequently, we wish to draw your attention to the use of Class Charts where you can notify House Teams of any booked appointments, uniform issues or late arrivals.

Lost Property

Schools always end up with a significant amount of lost property. Where possible, we reunite this with the owner through our systems and processes. Parents and carers ensuring that clothes and other items are labelled with student names makes a massive difference to this. The amount and cost to families of lost property is huge and we wish to support families in managing this as well as possible.

Makeup and Appearance Expectations

The vast majority of our students conform to the expectations over uniform and appearance. Those that don't are dealt with according to our policy. Please ensure you know the expectations by checking on the website and talking to your child(ren). We would like to emphasise that the only makeup allowed is light mascara and students will be informed to remove any other make-up they are wearing.

House Academic Mentor Newsletter

Our termly newsletter for Y13 students will be sent to students later this week. It's full of guidance and advice for students applying for the next step of their journey, whether that be an apprenticeship, job or university course. The newsletter also has a section dedicated to parents and carers, offering advice on how you can support your child with their application. Please ask your child to share the newsletter with you when it arrives. Remember your child's HAM is there to support you both with whatever they apply for next and we're always happy to give advice and answer questions.

Eating Issues or Concerns

There are times when students can face issues or concerns regarding eating. Sometimes this can lead to the need for support from professionals within the health sector. Within school, where cases are known, we work with all parties to ensure a relevant and appropriate approach is taken within school. If you do find yourself as a family dealing with eating issues or concerns then please contact the House Team in the first instance to support the implementation of responses.

E-Scooters – A Message from the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team

Thinking of buying an e-scooter, electric motorbike or electrically assisted pedal cycle for Christmas?

STOP!

Although you can buy an **e-scooter** from many retailers they are illegal to ride on a UK public road, area, cycle lane, pavement or play area.

The only place an e-scooter can be used is on private land with the owners permission.

This is because e-scooters are classed as Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs) so they are treated as motor vehicles and subject to the same legal requirements such as MOT, Licensing, Tax and Insurance.

If you get stopped by the police it will be seized and destroyed.

The rider may also be liable for prosecution for traffic offences.

The same applies for electric motorbikes. (Sur-ons etc)

In regards to electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs), you do not need a licence to ride it and it doesn't need to be registered, taxed or insured but you need to be at least 14 years old to ride one, the bike cannot have a power output of over 250w and cannot have electric assistance over 15.5mph.

The bike must have pedals to propel it, 'twist and go' throttles are not allowed and the battery voltage and maximum speed needs to be shown on it.

We don't wish to be a bah humbug at Christmas, but please bear in mind this information before deciding to buy anyone something that not only is illegal but could also cause injury or death to the rider or a pedestrian.

Dronfield Safer Neighbourhood Team
Derbyshire Police