



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

8th April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. This term has seen everyone working really hard in continuing to re-establish the routines and practices which have been so badly interrupted because of the pandemic. I am immensely proud of our students, staff and the whole community in pulling together so very well. At the end of a very busy term, there are just a few things to share with you.

Covid

Since Christmas, we have had around 250 children off at different points with confirmed Covid. The vast majority of those were in January and early February. Happily, the numbers have really reduced over recent weeks, probably as a result of the fact that very few of us now will *not* have tested positive at some point, showing we all have a degree of immunity. For those of you who are unaware, you can now seek a Covid vaccination for children aged 5-11, arranged in the normal way via the [National Booking Service](#) or by calling 119. You can also [check the walk-in finder website](#) to see whether you can get a walk-in vaccination.

Attendance

Outside of Covid, this continues to be a concern, and we are focusing on this in school. Alongside Mrs Metcalfe, our Pastoral Deputy Headteacher, I'd like to bring the following to your attention:

As we come out of the pandemic it is essential that we, as a school, recognise that we have a responsibility to support good attendance of students. We have planned the following;

- Regular monitoring of student absence which may result in formal letters being sent home alongside follow up phone calls from Form Tutors.
- Regular texts being sent to parents/carers reminding them of the benefits of good attendance
- A raffle rewarding students who have 100% attendance in a week
- An attendance league table where the Form Group in each year with the best attendance receive a half termly reward
- Form tutors will provide students with a lesson absence form when they return to school which teachers will sign off when they have caught up with any work missed
- Regular attendance meetings with a member staff who will explore reasons with students who have poor attendance

If your child is struggling to attend school for whatever reason it is important that you contact your child's Form Tutor as soon as possible so any problems can be dealt with swiftly. The following websites can help students who may be struggling with their mental health.

www.annafreud.org

www.nspcc.org.uk

Good attendance is paramount for students to achieve their best, evidence shows us that students with the best attendance make the most progress.

Achievement, rewards and detentions

This week we have held daily rewards and prize giving assemblies, with hundreds of students receiving certificates and prizes for their hard work, adherence to our school values, and their effort. It has been a joyous week and we have all enjoyed sharing their success. I meet regularly with the elected officials of School Council and they tell me how much they appreciate the enhanced focus we have given to celebrating success. Your children's Records of Achievement are starting to fill up nicely with evidence of their success.

Whilst the majority of our children have received huge numbers of merits, a few have also received demerits for behaviour, attitude or lack of effort. Our key sanction for this is to receive an after-school detention. When this happens, we always contact you to let you know, even though there is no legal requirement for us to do so. Even if they have done wrong, we care about our students and therefore making sure you know where they are is important to us. Just in case you were not aware, please note that we do not need parental permission to issue a detention.

We make clear to students that if they have received a detention it is because of their wrongdoing and we will only make exceptions to students attending their detention in *exceptional* circumstances. Using school transport is not an exceptional circumstance. Over recent weeks my Office Team have had to handle more than one conversation from a parent or carer which has been rude and even on occasion offensive, all in connection with detentions. To those parents, I urge you to remember that your child's detention is due to *their* conduct, and to support the school in trying to amend that conduct. Please do not take out your anger on my staff, no matter how inconvenient a detention may be to you or your family. Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated. Instead, work with us to try and ensure your child never receives a detention again. Everyone wins then.

Summer term

When your child arrives home tonight, would you please help us by making sure their uniform goes away safely, so that ties/shoes etc are not lost over the break. If the weather becomes very warm later in the term, we will let them know when they are allowed to leave ties and/or blazers at home. Until then, they should be worn. Summer term will see GCSE and A Level exams taking place for the first time in three years. Thank you so much to all our parents of Year 11 and 13 who are supporting your offspring so well. I am delighted that so many students are coming into school over Easter to work with our teachers on revision activities. It will definitely be worth it in the end.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a pleasant and happy Easter break. I hope the lighter days and warmer weather will bring us all the tonic we need at the moment.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Beck

Very proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School