



20 June 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing with information following recent events. Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to say how pleased we have been to see that all the students who have been taking Public Exams, have approached the process with commendable maturity. The necessary organisation to support girls in and out of the Sports Hall and to get them seated in the right desk enabled a smooth start and end to all exams. We are nearing the end of the exam window for our school and we will look forward to receiving results in August. Students in other year groups will be having some form of assessment, with varying degrees of formality, before the end of term. We will feed back outcomes and areas for development in due course.

You are aware that the school has been consulting with stakeholders on two uniform points. The outcome of the consultation is that less than 20% of families are against a tights only rule for the Autumn and Spring terms and 25% of families are against a single kilt uniform for both KS3 and KS4. Therefore from September 2016, uniform leg wear for girls in Year 7 – 11 will be opaque black tights during the Autumn and Spring terms. Any girl with a diagnosed medical condition which prohibits the wearing of tights should contact the school. Also, from September 2016, girls will retain the sky blue checkered kilt, currently worn in KS3 only, through to Years 10 and 11. Current Year 10 girls will of course be able to wear their dark navy plain kilt until they complete Year 11 at the school. We are pleased that we will have a single distinctive uniform going forward. Feedback from families also demonstrates that there will be a degree of benefit from not having to replace a skirt unnecessarily or for only a short time.

Most recently, our transition team for students starting Year 7 in September have been visiting our feeder primary schools and making preparations to receive our new intake. We are delighted to be oversubscribed for the first time in a number of years and have enjoyed meeting our new students, siblings of current students and girls from new families to the school, in equal measure.

As happens in all schools, we will be losing some staff members at the end of this term. Happily they are leaving for all the right and understandable reasons: retirement, relocation and promotion. One or two are leaving teaching for personal reasons. We will be sad to see them go but we wish them all well in their new ventures. At the same time, I am delighted to have recruited strong replacements; specialists in each field. I know there will be a number of opportunities for you to meet with new staff early in the Autumn term.

The school has recently been upgrading its CCTV system. The existing system has been in place for over a decade and I am pleased to have updated cameras and software as part of the school's improved security and safeguarding. I am aware that some camera changes have led one or two families to believe that CCTV is new to school. Please be assured that this is not the case. CCTV has been in existence and documented as required in the school's Data and information policies. However going forward there will also be a specific CCTV Policy. The policy is due to be ratified at a Governors' meeting this week by which time updated signs will have been installed as necessary. Also, as necessary annually, we have informed the ICO that CCTV is in use at the school, that I am the designated Data Control Officer and that we operate the system in accordance with legislation. Cameras are installed at school entrances, exits, some indoor and outdoor areas and in the washbasin areas of toilets. There is no possibility of activity inside a toilet cubicle being viewed or recorded; in compliance with legislation. Appropriate restrictions are in place so that only a small number of designated members of staff can access the camera pictures. Access to all areas is only available to myself and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is not possible to enable constant viewing of the images and we have a number of security arrangements in place to prevent unauthorised access. The system operates generally to support follow-up to events as necessary.

Looking ahead to next year, work is underway to redevelop the courtyard area. Last week we appointed new caterers and contract cleaners following a thorough tendering and presentation process. Students, parents, staff and governors were part of the final decision making process to appoint new caterers. There will be a fresh approach to catering from 1 September. Changes to the provision and operation of the dining area will improve service to our students. Also from 1 September, there will be an outdoor catering pod to provide a hot grab and go service for outdoor eating in the covered courtyard area, and a dedicated sixth form service in the sixth form common room. We look forward to hearing your feedback as these changes are experienced and developed over the coming months. We will continue to keep you up to date on these and other matters via the school website and on twitter.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or matters to raise, helpful comments or suggestions to make; the staff and I are always pleased to hear from and meet with our families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Violet Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Violet Walker
Headteacher