



Friday, 10 February 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope this letter finds you all well. Another term has flown by here at The Sittingbourne School and I can scarcely believe we managed to cram so many amazing things into just six weeks. If you haven't already, please take a few minutes to scroll through our Facebook page (just search for The Sittingbourne School) to learn all about what the students and staff have been up to since Christmas. This term alone includes updates on theatre groups visiting the school, Mental Health Awareness Week, Year 9 assessments, National Apprenticeships Week, Year 11 mock exams, a Sixth form trip to see a performance of Othello, Year 8 Maths excellence, a fantastic dance show by students from across the school and our Year 8s winning the Inter School Basketball competition, to name a few. There is so much to see and celebrate so I highly recommend you check it out.

Back in January we asked all parents and carers to fill in a survey to let us know how you feel we are doing as a school. Thank you to all of you who took the time to give feedback to us. The comments have been very positive: the overwhelming majority of parents say their child enjoys school, feels safe in school, does well in the school and would recommend the school to other parents. Your comments of thanks to the staff were well received too. However, we appreciate that there are things we can do better to improve the experience for your child and you. The comments you made on how we can improve have been very useful and we are in the process of bringing in changes to address these.

One issue that was raised was that parents and carers don't feel they are informed about what their child is learning in school. To help you get a better understanding of what your child is learning in each subject we launched our curriculum pages on the school website in October. The pages can be found [here](#). Once there, you get a breakdown of what is being taught in each subject, in each term for each year group. You will also see enquiry questions for that unit. These are overarching questions that students will be able to answer as they progress through the unit. By asking your child some of these questions, not only will you remove the "I dunno" answer you might get when you ask them what they learnt at school today, it will also help them move their knowledge from their working memory to their long

term memory. As always, if you have any questions regarding your child's learning, please contact their teacher(s) who will be happy to help.

Another concern raised by some parents was with regards to communication, in particular getting a timely response when you raise a question or concern. To address this we are currently devising and implementing a new system that will simplify how you contact key teams, such as the year teams. It will also allow leaders to track and monitor communication and ensure it is timely and supportive. Like all the best systems, this is taking time to make sure it works well. Once it is ready to go, we will let you know. Currently, we are looking for an implementation date of March but I will confirm this with you, after half term. I am confident that with this new system in place, we will see much smoother communication between home and school. Thank you in advance for your patience.

To further improve the communication between parents/carers and school, I will be holding another Headteacher surgery on Thursday, 2 March 2023, from 3.30pm to 6.30pm. If you would like to come into school to speak to me about any issue to do with you or your child's Sittingbourne School experience, please call reception and book a 15 minute slot. If they fill up, I will set up another follow up day.

Finally, some parents raised concerns about poor behaviour in lessons and around the school. Whilst the vast majority of students are hard working and the percentage of lessons disrupted because of behaviour continues to be low (and dropping further), we accept there is still room for improvement. To address this, will be maximising the use and impact of our detentions. We will continue to issue break time detentions for students whose behaviour disrupts a lesson. These students will then be placed on report to monitor their behaviour in subsequent lessons. However, for students who do not learn from this and go on to disturb a second lesson in a day, or fail their report, they will be issued with a same day, one hour, after school detention. This is in line with our Behaviour Policy that was approved by governors and shared with parents/carers before the summer holidays. Parents will be informed by 2.15pm if a detention has been issued. We appreciate that this may cause families some inconvenience so we appreciate your support in advance. Whilst the government's guidance on issuing detentions state that "Parental consent is not required for detentions" we understand that there may be extenuating circumstances that mean some students are unable to stay after school. On these occasions, we will work with families to find an alternative. Again, I am confident that this strategy will see a further decline in the number of lessons being disrupted.

As always at the end of term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff here at The Sittingbourne School for their tireless work in providing the best possible education for every student. It isn't always easy, but they don't stop giving it their all to make sure every child has everything they need to succeed. Both the children and I are very lucky to have such a great staff.

Whatever you have planned over the half term break, I hope you have a great time and I look forward to seeing all the students back in school on Monday, 20 February 2023.

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large capital 'N' followed by a period and a cursive signature that appears to be 'Smith'.

Mr N Smith
Headteacher