

Dear Parents / Carers,

Perton Middle School Update

Now that we are nearly at the end of the first half term of the new academic year I thought that it might be useful to update parents on a couple of matters that have emerged over the last few weeks.

New intakes

Our new intakes in both Year 5 and Year 7 have settled incredibly quickly and are very much part and parcel of the Perton Middle family. It's been a treat to see so many happy faces in the classrooms and corridors. All pupils have benefitted from a significant amount of work undertaken by our site teams during the summer holidays, with the school looking better than it has done for years.

Communication

One of the issues that became evident last year was the hit and miss nature of the apps we were using for communicating with parents. Parents made us aware that some of our text messages were not getting through and that there were, on occasions, issues with the amount of information and ease of access in SIMS app. To that end we have been trialling the Synergy app at Codsall High and it has proven to be very successful with our parents reporting that they like the app and the ease with which they can access key information from school. It has been decided that we roll out the Synergy app for both Perton Middle and Bilbrook Middle (both Partnership middle schools) in the near future. We also think that parents would prefer the familiarity of using the same app for their child throughout their education in our schools. Further details will follow in due course.

A plea

Whilst dealing with the subject of communication it has become apparent that since the pandemic there has been an increase in aggressive and abusive behaviour towards our staff. This has been reported by colleagues across the county, not just within our schools, but it is an issue that I need to bring to your attention.

Please be mindful that all of our staff deserve to be treated with respect and courtesy in the same way that I would expect them to treat parents and carers. They do not deserve to be shouted at, sworn at or threatened and we will not tolerate any such abuse.

We understand that, on occasions, there will be issues that may make some parents frustrated. We genuinely want to help so if you have a concern, please make sure that you follow the processes we have put in place to resolve issues quickly. If you have a complaint, please ensure that you follow the Complaints Policy and address your complaints to the school in the first instance rather than the Partnership. Ninety nine percent of issues can be quickly and amicably resolved by talking to the right people in the first instance.

Curriculum

You will be aware that we provide a wide and varied curriculum and whilst we look to fill the very big shoes left by Mr Pritchard we have developed our wellbeing offer for our students. This has received some really positive feedback and will continue to develop the ways in which we support our pupils and in how we enable them to be resilient and caring people.

We have also adapted a more primary based model for our Year 5 and 6 pupils for the next term or so. This is to ensure real strength in their English and Maths skills. However, please be reassured that this is not to detriment of the wider curriculum and our extra curricula offer which remains as wide

and varied as ever. This past academic year alone our pupils have the chance to experience all of the following:

- Visits to the Space Museum,
- Saw the Lion King,
- Went to Shrewsbury Prison (and were let out for good behaviour!)
- Baggeridge Country Park
- Standon Bowers
- The Royal Opera House and Covent Garden
- Think for the Future Wolverhampton University
- The Science Museum
- Robotics finals at Cambridge University...
- The Rubbish Shakespeare Company came to school along with a French Theatre group (they were good and tres bon!)
- Chester Zoo
- And some author visits at Wolverhampton Grammar School!

Catering

Last year we moved to a new catering company to provide the meals at Perton Middle. Whilst we have received some very positive initial feedback we have had some parents express their concern about a perceived decline in standards since the new team took over. Please be reassured that we will be monitoring the situation closely and working with the necessary partners to ensure that the same high standards we had at the beginning are returned to. You will be aware that food inflation over the last eighteen months has placed an enormous strain on household budgets. It is exactly the same in schools with funding levels not keeping up with inflation and presenting a real challenge when it comes to protecting families from the worst impacts of price rises.

Finally, our goal as a partnership of schools, is to offer our pupils the best possible educational experiences throughout their time in our schools. I'm grateful for the wonderfully supportive work of our governing body and for the large number of parents who take the time to thank the teachers and staff in our schools. It means a lot!

Yours sincerely,



Alun Harding
Executive Headteacher
South Staffordshire Learning Partnership