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END OF TERM NEWSLETTER 16/12/20

Dear parent/Carer

We are coming to the end of what has been a difficult year and I would like to thank you all for your continued support and wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope we all have a Happy New Year. School officially closes at 1pm on Friday 18th December and reopens for pupils at 10am on Tuesday 5th January. COVID restrictions will still be in place and pupils will be reminded about hand hygiene and keeping a safe distance from others when they return. Most pupils have coped very well with all the restrictions, but sometimes reminders have been necessary about physical contact with others.

School Uniform

May I remind parents that pupils should be wearing uniform to school except on days when they are on Outdoor Education or Key Stage 3 pupils on days when they have P.E. Uniform is available from the office and can be funded out of Pupil Premium if required.

Free School Meals

You may already be aware that the government are funding food vouchers again this holiday, but this time it is the council providing them, not the school. Derbyshire County Council has asked me to make you aware of the following:

If you are a family on a low income you could get food vouchers for your children over the Christmas period. The money to pay for these vouchers has come from the government through its COVID-19 winter grant scheme which is over and above the other support schemes already provided by Derbyshire County Council.

The family of every child who gets free school meals in Derbyshire schools because of low income can get a £30 food voucher for the Christmas holidays. You will get another voucher in February if you are still eligible, the amount will depend on the number of children who qualify at that time. Some other families are also eligible based on financial hardship.

You will receive vouchers if you meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a child aged 3 to 18 in a Derbyshire school (nursery to year 13), eligible for free school meals because of low household income.*
- Have a child aged 3 or 4 not in a Derbyshire school nursery that receives free childcare and qualifies for 'pupil premium' based on low income (this is sometimes called 'economic funding').*
- Have a child aged 2 that is eligible for free 2-year-old childcare because of low household income.*

You do not need to do anything if your child already meets these criteria (see our website for full

terms and conditions). We will contact you and you should receive a payment by email or text message that should arrive by 21 December 2020.

If you have children and you do not currently claim free school meals or means-tested free childcare you may still be eligible. For full details of the scheme or to see what help and support is available, please visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/winter

Behaviour Policy

Schools have a legal obligation to set out Behaviour Principles and a behaviour policy explaining how they intend to: Promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect; Prevent bullying and ensure that pupils complete assigned work. It also requires the school to explain how it will 'Regulate the conduct of pupils'. As Head Teacher, I have a duty to publicise our behaviour policy to staff, pupils and parents. The Governors of Holly house have recently agreed a set of behaviour principles which I include with this newsletter. We are also close to agreeing an updated Behaviour Policy and I also include a one-page summary. All pupils placed at Holly House have had issues with behaviour in school prior to coming here and our approach to 'discipline' has to be different from those employed in mainstream schools. If any parents would like to express any views on behaviour before the final draft of the policy is approved by governors, please look on the website at the draft policy and get in touch.

Online Safety

Over the holidays, I am sure that pupils will spend time online, either on phones or tablets or on their games consoles. Children can be particularly vulnerable while online and I would ask all parents/carers to be certain of who your child is communicating with and what they saying in order to keep them safe. If you have any concerns about online safety, there are links on the Holly House website that will take you to organisations that can help. Whether it is online abuse or bullying from other pupils, you can get help. If you are concerned that your child is at risk online or that someone is committing a criminal offence, you must ring the police on 101.

I am aware that groups of pupils have been playing online together recently and problems have arisen when they fall out with each other. This then becomes an issue in school when they start name-calling and threatening each other. If you have concerns about this, let us know, but we have little jurisdiction outside of school.

Damage

Since September, pupils have caused over £1,000 worth of damage on site. This includes broken windows, broken doors and locks, holes kicked in walls and displays being ripped down. Any money spent on repairs and replacements is money that is not available to spend on pupils.

Christmas Jumper Day

Well done and thank you for your support last Friday with Christmas Jumper Day. We raised £58 for Save the Children.

Here's hoping that 2021 is a better year for all of us.

Iain Williams