



West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'

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Dear West Park Families

I hope that you are enjoying the change in weather. Christmas is now very much on its way.

We are incredibly fortunate to work in a school which is fully staffed, with committed individuals who want the best for our children. Sadly, this is not the case in other schools, both locally and nationally. Staff give up their time freely to facilitate catch up and mentoring sessions after school, ensuring that pupils don't fall behind and increase pupils' chances of being successful during their one shot at secondary education. As a proud parent myself, I am very aware of the significant positive impact that this approach can have on our children, as they navigate their way through secondary school years.

Our detention system is equally important. Successful schools rely on clear systems, allowing pupils to feel safe and know exactly what is expected of them. At times, pupils may get things wrong and a detention is used to highlight this and to encourage better decision making in the future.

The Department for Education supports the administration of detentions and offers the following guidance:

A detention is a commonly used sanction, often used as a deterrent to future misbehaviour.

What the law allows: Teachers have authority to issue detention to pupils, including same-day detentions.

Parental consent is not required for detentions that satisfy the condition mentioned in 'What the law allows'.

With lunchtime detentions, staff should allow reasonable time for the pupil to eat, drink and use the toilet.

At West Park we always aim to work proactively with families and alert parents/carers if their child is being detained after school. This system is understood by all and supported by the vast majority of our stakeholders. Sadly, there is a small but growing number of parents/carers who call in to take their child out of detention/academic catch up. Alongside being very frustrating for staff who are giving up their time, it also undermines everything we are doing to keep your child safe and supported in an admirable learning environment. With this in mind, and to be consistent with all families, we will now be asking for evidence for pupils who are missing detention/catch up/academic support for medical appointments. This could be an emailed copy of a hospital letter or a screen shot of an appointment slot offered by a GP/dentist. Simply stating that your child will not attend will not be accepted. I have also taken the time to liaise with local sports teams and community groups who have confirmed that sessions do not start at 4.00 p.m. and in the main, take place during the evening.

As you will have seen in the media, schools can be very challenging at the moment and this is impacting both on staff and pupils' engagement. By working together, we can ensure that the West Park family remains strong and our wonderful children have a school experience which prepares them for future successes.

Kind regards

Scott McGregor
Head