

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr S Garrity Chair of Governors: Mrs H Baker



31st January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Safeguarding Students

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of our school, to request your support regarding recent concerns relating to a small number of our students and our local community.

As you are aware, we work very closely with the police and many local groups to ensure we promote and support the best possible community environment for our students. We are very lucky to have so many fantastic students involved in such fantastic things; we regularly get feedback from members of the public about how well students behave on public buses, such as the Swift Bus; or how students ran to help a gentleman fetch his bike out of the river; or even the positive feedback we get from members of the public when our students go away on trips, ferries, or residential. However, the fantastic work of the majority of our school population is being tarnished by a relatively small group of students who are intent on causing problems through anti-social behaviour in and around the town.

We have recently received reports from various sources within the community that a small minority of our students have been smoking tobacco and/or cannabis, verbally abusing members of the public, misusing shopping trollies, riding bikes dangerously, causing property damage and pushing over signs. We have not hesitated in taking action and, with the cooperation of the public, we have been able to identify and punish those involved. We know that with your support we can continue to maintain our expectations of our students and your children to be good citizens at all times, both in and out of school.

If you will forgive the impertinence of the following questions; Do you know where your children are? Do you know what they are doing? Do you know who they are with? Do you know who they are talking to or communicating with? How are they using social media? How do you know? When did you last check your child's phone?

All of these questions are important, but the last questions are exceptionally important. Growing up in 2020 is very different to even a few years ago. There are many external pressures on young people, which have nothing to do with academic success; students are under pressure to conform, under pressure to respond on social media, under pressure to vape, under pressure to try drugs, under pressure to 'look good' all the time, under pressure to act and speak in a certain way, and under pressure to engage in acts, which are far too old for their level of maturity and are sometimes illegal. All of this is often played out in the gaze of social media, trying to keep up with Snapchat streaks or even engaging with people they have never met. In the past few weeks, we have issued sanctions for incidents both in and out of school and cooperated with the police when these concerns have been illegal. I will stress that this involved a very small number of students, however, they are involved and it would be remiss of us if we did not ask parents to think about where their children are and what they are doing.

I would also like to remind parents and students of our duty to respond and deal with matters, which occur on the way to and from school as outlined by the Department for Education. This is regarded as part of the school day and the school will apply sanctions accordingly.

With regard to items banned and prohibited from the school site, I have provided the list below (extract from our Behaviour Policy p8 section 12):

Items banned from school/academy premises (Prohibited Items)

- Fire lighting equipment: matches, lighters, etc.
- Cigarettes
- Tobacco
- Cigarette papers
- Electronic cigarettes and vapes
- Alcohol
- Solvents
- Any form of illegal drugs
- Any other drugs, except medicines covered by the prescribed medicines procedure
- Knives/blades
- Guns (including replicas and BB guns)
- Laser pens
- Fireworks
- Caffeinated energy drinks
- Offensive materials (i.e. pornographic, homophobic, racist etc.)
- Aerosols including deodorant and hair spray

With regard to illegal substances such as drugs, we will continue to operate a zero tolerance approach, resulting in the most serious sanctions available to the school. ALL incidents of possession and/or consumption of illegal drugs on the school site, or on the way to and from school will be immediately referred to the police.

We will be sharing these messages with our students in assemblies and in lessons over the next few days.

We want everyone at QEGS and in the wider Ashbourne area to be safe, happy and successful in life. We must work together in order to achieve this. If you are concerned about something in the community, contact the police on 101. If you are concerned about the immediate welfare of a child, contact Derbyshire Starting Point on 01629 533190. If you are concerned about your child, would like to pass on information, or find out more information on keeping your child safe, contact your child's form tutor or progress leader who will be able to direct your query.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Atkins
Deputy Headteacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead)