

4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We return to school following our half term break for the second part of the Autumn term and I hope your child had a lovely break and managed to recharge their batteries. The purpose of my letter today is to update you on our messaging to all pupils this week where we will be reminding them of our high expectations around behaviour and some small changes we are making to our behaviour system.

We feel this is necessary at this time of year as experience tells us that the latter half of the Autumn Term can be a challenge for some pupils in terms of consistently making good choices – and we want to avoid this for as many pupils as we possibly can so they have a positive and settled half term.

In summary, what we have communicated to all pupils is:

- **Respect:** Respect remains the golden rule of our school and adult authority is paramount and must remain so for the safety of pupils and the smooth running of the school. Essentially, children must follow instructions from any adult. The vast majority of pupils do this every single day; however, this is the most common way some pupils get in to trouble in our school. Defiance in relation to simple instructions is something we will never ignore or let slide and when all our efforts to help pupils to make good choices fail, the sanctions issued will be strong in order to help pupils make better future choices.
- **#nobystanders:** Ahead of national anti-bullying week next week, our call to all young people to never ignore unkind behaviour was reiterated again this week. Not being a bystander is our collective commitment to look after each other by passing on to an adult something that a pupil may see or hear that they know is not okay. Unfortunately, sometimes pupils are not kind to each other, and we reminded pupils that if they ignore this and don't tell someone, it makes it much harder for adults to do something to make this stop.
- **Requests to use the toilet during lessons:** In order to reduce the number of pupils using this as an excuse to get out of lessons, go for a walk and meet with others, pupils were informed that visits to the toilet during lesson time will not be allowed, unless pupils have a toilet pass / medical reason. Pupils were reminded that they should use the toilet before school, during break and during lunchtime. Please be reassured this is not about causing distress for pupils with a genuine need to use the toilet, more about seeking to address the issue of some pupils taking advantage of the goodwill of our staff at times. Staff will be allowed to use their discretion where appropriate if it is apparent that there is a legitimate need for a pupil to use a toilet.
- **Slight changes to sanctions applied for deliberately missed after-school detentions:** In order to address a growing issue of pupils thinking they can simply walk away from C4 or C5 after-school detentions, from this week if a pupil fails to attend their after-school detention, without a valid reason, then they will be issued with an immediate suspension from school the following day. This will be then be added to their permanent school record. When pupils return to school after their suspension, they will be issued with another after-school detention that same night which will be 30 minutes longer than their initial detention. The strengthening of our response to pupils walking away is because it has become apparent that a short period in our Reflection Room is not a sufficient deterrent for many pupils. We don't ever want to issue detentions or suspensions and hope this change (which will be kept under review) will be successful in helping our pupils to accept responsibility for their actions and make good future choices. Pupils were reassured that if they have a valid reason about missing a detention, they must tell a member

of the pastoral team in advance and their detention will then be transferred to the next school day, without any additional consequence added.

All of us at St Antony's are so proud that the work we have put in to take our school forward is beginning to bear fruit – with real and significant improvements witnessed in the level of challenge within the curriculum we teach your children, the quality of our teaching in lessons, the progress pupils are making in their learning, the positive culture of recognition and achievement, pupil attendance, pupil punctuality to lessons and engagement in extra-curricular activities. As I have expressed to you previously, I acknowledge we make mistakes, do not get everything right and still have much more work to do, but I want to reassure you that we continue to work flat-out to drive improvements to our school for the benefit of your children. As we remind our pupils regularly, we are here to help guide them to be on the path to become the best version of themselves – and we are very lucky to witness this happening every day. Our job in supporting your children does have its challenges, but it is truly a privilege. Thank you for your suggestions and support – I know our progress as a school would not be possible if we didn't have your insights and your backing.

I hope this short update helps you to stay up to date about what we are telling your children, meaning you feel empowered to continue to work with us, in partnership, to ensure all pupils behave well, meaning pupils can get on with learning and adults can get on with teaching and supporting.

Finally, if you feel we can do things better at St Antony's, please get in touch with us directly or join us at our regular Parent Forum – the next meeting is on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November, from 4pm-5pm. This formal channel helps you to influence school policy and have your voice heard as a parent or carer and can be a very effective way of addressing any concerns you might have so that our provision for your child is improved.

Thank you for your ongoing support

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JA Campbell'.

Mr. A Campbell  
Headteacher