



29th June 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you with an update on some of the next steps in our improvement journey. We are absolutely focused on taking the action needed to address all the priorities raised by Ofsted and I will continue to keep you informed about the steps we are taking.

Interim Executive Board

It is important to know that an Interim Executive Board has been appointed to start on the 4th July and has replaced the Governing Body as the interim strategic leaders of our school. An Interim Executive Board (IEB) replaces the governing body of a school that has been placed in special measures and its focus is to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school and promote high standards of educational achievement until the new Academy sponsor is appointed.

We are very lucky to have a very-experienced chair of our IEB: Jane Acklam, OBE. Ms Acklam was, until recently, the CEO of the South Pennine Academies' trust and has worked with schools like ours for many years, with some very impressive results. I would like to thank all of our parting Governors for the support they have given the school over many years, and also to welcome the new members of our IEB. We continue to get daily support from a successful local Trust in Tameside, too.

Mobile devices

We wrote to you earlier this term to explain our plans to improve student safety with a phased removal of mobile devices from school, with an eventual 'gate to gate' no-mobile policy in the new academic year. The students have responded very positively to the first phase of the plan and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their mature and sensible approach, including those who have had to hand them in.

From Monday 3rd July we will begin phase 2 of our mobile devices plan. **This means that from next Monday, mobile devices must not be used, heard or seen anywhere inside the school buildings.** There will be no wriggle room on that if we are to ensure our students are safe. It is best you know that now and we know you will give us your full support for all the children, including your own. Mr Day has written to you with the details and I would encourage you to discuss the changes as a family. We are giving all students a new paper copy of their timetable – please could you check they bring their timetable on a PE day, as well as all the other equipment needed for school.

The Denton Way

We are also changing the way in which lessons begin, introducing consistent routines that we are calling The Denton Way. You will see that there is an emphasis on a strong staff presence, checking the corridors are calm and orderly, as well as a real focus on explicitly modelling courteous behaviour and learning-focused classroom routines. Learning will start promptly each lesson and so our students and staff have to be very prepared.

Before **every** lesson begins, students must line up quietly and ensure their uniform is correct. Their teacher will greet them at the door, ensuring there is a greater staff presence checking the corridors are calm and students are well-behaved. When students enter the classroom they must sit in their allocated seat, get their equipment out and begin the 'Do Now' activity, which they will be able to do independently and silently. The

HEADTEACHER: Mr G Rule

teacher will then take the register, check for equipment and begin the lesson. This is very basic: and is the minimum expectation from any school.

At the end of **every** lesson, students will be awarded their Class Charts' points and thanked for their contributions. Students will stand behind their chairs, check the room is tidy and then the teacher will dismiss them calmly, row by row: just as all parents and teachers would wish and just as happens in good schools up and down the land.

Research shows that having consistent routines has a significant positive impact on learning, particularly for teenagers. It allows students to focus on the learning – there is simply a calm and prompt start to every lesson. The teacher presence improves safety on corridors and the emphasis on courtesy teaches the good manners and the positive behaviour we all want for our children. The design of the end to all lessons also means that students leave lessons in a controlled and calm manner. All of these things are, I am sure you would agree, the very minimum we would all wish for our children.

We have introduced this to all groups in Years 7, 8 and 9 through assemblies and will be beginning The Denton Way from Monday 3rd July. Our new Year 6 students will also be taught The Denton Way on their transition day. Year 10 will have their introduction to The Denton Way when they return from work experience.

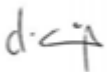
It would be very helpful if you could talk to your child about The Denton Way this weekend. It is something new and if there are consistent messages from home and school, particularly about why we are introducing it, it will have a positive effect. There will be no wriggle room on this.

The Sharp System

Students have told us they sometimes feel reluctant to report poor behaviour that affects how they feel about school and lessons. To encourage them to always feel confident to report concerns, we have invested in something called 'the Sharp System'. The Sharp System allows students to report later any concerns around safety and poor behaviour when they are not in school using an online form. They can do it anonymously or by sharing their details. It has already made a difference, for example giving students the confidence to report poor behaviour and derogatory language in the community/on the way home. If we know about an incident we will always tackle it. This is on top of them already being welcome to tell us during the day, face-to-face.

I hope you will agree that these are not only necessary and the most basic of first steps, but also steps that will lead to a significant improvement in safety and learning in school. I will be writing to you again shortly with information about the National Industrial Action next week (over which we have little control), and then with a further update about changes for the new school year in September.

Yours faithfully,



Donald Cumming
Acting Headteacher