

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to thank all parents and carers that have given me such a warm welcome to the school over the last 2 weeks. As an Assistant Head Teacher at Gravesend Grammar School I held the role of year 6 and 7 transition coordinator for nearly 10 years. This role gave me a unique insight into every Primary School in Gravesham. What is clear is that this school is exceptionally well resourced both inside the buildings and the learning spaces outside. The teachers care about the young people in front of them and are determined for the school to be successful. I have lots of exciting plans and I will attempt to keep you informed of any changes so that we can work together to help all our young people to be successful.

### **Communication**

I have 3 children of my own that are all at Primary school and I want for your children what I want for my own in that they are safe, happy and can make progress in a supportive environment. All parents want clear and effective communication. I think as a school we can do this better. For whole school communication I will be setting up a school Twitter feed so that there are real time feeds about what is going on at the school and also a termly newspaper that will not only go home but also be sent out to the local community. Whitehill Primary School should be at the heart of the community and we must be telling people about the wonderful things we do.

I have looked closely at our current working practices and think we can make a difference in the way we talk directly to parents. You have got to remember that class teachers are notoriously difficult to get hold of through the day, for the simple fact that they are in class teaching. With a few changes I think we can make the process more effective.

If you call in school time then I would expect the school office to give you a time that the class teacher will call you back, but do not be surprised if it is after 3.30pm. If the office staff feel that immediate action is necessary it will be referred to our Student Support Team (SST) and you will be called back at the earliest opportunity. The SST will look at the issue and help support the child or gather evidence to allow the teacher to deal with it later in the day. The SST will communicate with parents throughout and support the child going forward.

The SST will consist of;

- Mrs Manning – Family Liaison Officer
- Mr Lorraine – Senior Student Support Officer (Did you know that Paul was a former Captain of Ebbsfleet Football Club? A Local legend!)
- Mr Berthelsen – Student Support Officer

Most issues should be dealt with by the class teacher or the SST, however on the rare occasions that issues are deemed more serious, then the Head of Phase (HOP) may intervene. The HOP should be seen as the Head Teacher of the Phase.

Heads of Phase;

- Mr Watters – Head of Year 5 and 6
- Ms Lacy – Head of Year 3 and 4
- Ms Challis – Head of Year 1 and 2
- Ms Perry – Head of EYFS and reception

It is important that only very serious issues are referred initially to the Head Teacher. The school has grown considerably in size and it will be impossible to deal with every issue in a time frame that will suit everybody. Parents need to use the correct channels of communication although child protection issues are an exception and these will be dealt with as a priority for the Head Teacher.

### **End of the day arrangements**

A number of parents have expressed their concern as to how students are collected at the end of the day. If I am honest I think we can do this better as well. I have looked at the site and the exits from school and believe that the safest option is for parents to meet their children on the playground at the back of the school. I would like to start this process next Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November. I have outlined the new procedure below;

- Staff will walk their class down to the Blue marked playground at 3.15pm and parents can congregate on the Green playground by walking up the drive from 3.10pm.
- Children will line up in classes where the Staff will 'eyeball' parents and carers before handing over the children.
- I would appreciate it if parents and carers could walk up the main drive and not cut across the infants playground when picking up year 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- If you are picking up infants first could you please use the steps down to the Juniors playground.
- This is another opportunity to communicate with the teacher – just let them dismiss all students first and then you can talk to them.

### **Security**

Another change you will see this week is that all staff will have a blue lanyard and a badge with a photograph and the school logo. It is very important to me that I know who is on site. All visitors in school hours will be required to sign in at reception and will need to wear a red lanyard with a visitors badge to gain access to the school. Anybody without the correct security will be asked to leave the premises.

I hope that some of the changes are not too intrusive and that you will be able to see that they are there to ensure students are safe and happy.

Yours Sincerely

M D Moaby  
**ACTING HEAD TEACHER**