

26th September 2024

Dear Families,

I hope that this letter finds you well and that you are back into the swing of the new term. Having children myself I know that it does take a bit of time to get into the new routines and remember the PE days, homework days, being organised with packed lunches etc. We have had a very smooth start to term and so I want to thank you sincerely for all that you have done at home to support your child with the return to school. I'm delighted to say that the school attendance is sitting at 95.4% and so far 54190 epraise points have been given out to students. As we move towards the fifth week of the half term I thought it a good time to provide you with some useful reminders. Please see these below:

Start of the school day: The start of the school day is so important and the vast majority of our students arrive on time to school enabling them to access their lockers and receive important information during form time and assemblies. This enables them to feel organised and have a calm start to their day. As I mentioned at the start of term we have made some changes to arrangements around the start of the day and these commence from Monday 30th September. Please see the details below:

Highfield Entrance: From Monday 30th September the Highfield entrance to the school will be locked at 8.40am. After this time pupils will only be able to access the school via the Clifton Gardens entrance.

Clifton Gardens Entrance: Our new pedestrian gate will be locked from 8.55am. Pupils will then only be able to use the buzzer at the gate to gain access to the school premises.

Any late arriving pupils will be required to sign in at student services. Parents and carers will be informed by text message if their child has arrived late to school. For the reasons given above punctual attendance to school is very important and thank you for supporting with this.

Uniform: On the whole we are pleased with pupils' uniform – thank you for your support. Now that the warmer weather has passed can I remind you that students should have a waterproof coat (of any colour) in school with them every day. They should not be wearing hoodies which will be confiscated if seen. Please also note that students should be wearing their blazer around school rather than carrying it. We have seen an increase in students wearing bracelets and these again will be confiscated if seen. We urge you to work with your child to follow the uniform expectations to avoid sanctions being given. [The uniform policy can be found on our website by clicking here.](#)

Canteen and Free School Meals: We have introduced an additional till and rearranged the layout in our canteen over summer. We are pleased to report that this is having a positive impact on reducing queue times. Our autumn canteen menus and price lists can be found on the school website. [Please click here to view the Hot Meals Menu](#) and [click here to view the Cold Station Menu](#). Hot meals are prepared freshly every day by our in-house canteen staff and always include a vegetarian and halal option. For any pupils in receipt of free school meals, please note the allowance per day is capped at £3.10. This can be spent at break or at lunch.

Clifton Gardens traffic: the school has been working with the StaRs and Transport Strategy teams at Hillingdon council to address road safety concerns. Council officers are investigating possible engineering improvements which will be subject to consultation with residents and the necessary road safety audits. If approved, this should bring in some enhancements to the Snowden Avenue junction. Traffic remains busy at pick up and drop off time and our staff are supervising the car park every day. If you choose to drop your child directly at school rather than a short walk away, we request that you please follow our team's directions to facilitate a safe environment and smoother flow of traffic as your children arrive and leave school. For any parents on foot, we are introducing a dedicated parent waiting area, by the zebra crossing, at the end of the day. This will help to encourage our children to cross the road in the safest place and stay on the pavements.

Parental engagement events: We had a fantastic turnout at both the sixth form welcome event last week and the Year 7 safe and successful evening last night. Follow up information will be sent out to those who were unable to attend. I am very much looking forward to meeting you in person over the coming weeks at the remaining parental engagement evenings. A reminder of the dates and times can be seen below:

Year 8: Tuesday 8th October 6–7pm

Year 9 & 10: Thursday 7th November 6–7pm

Each of these sessions will be carefully planned with the relevant year group in mind and give you an opportunity to meet your child's form tutor, year learning coordinator and other key staff. I will be sharing with you the foci for our school development plan and you are able to spend time in the school.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA): My own children's school have an excellent PTA who make significant contributions both in terms of time and towards the school's budget. This benefits the entire community. We are keen to have a PTA at our school. If you are interested in joining Swakeleys PTA can we ask that as a first step you express your interest by completing the following form: <https://forms.gle/nWrVI7VL2DB6LpHt5>. We are looking for parent volunteers at the Winter Bazaar which this year takes place on Wednesday 20th November after school. We have some second hand uniform to sell and would love to have parents to support with this. Our aim is to use the PTA to raise funds to provide a breakfast service at school for children over the colder months. It would be lovely if you have an hour or two to spare to help Swakeleys PTA. The member of staff leading on the PTA this year is Ms Allan, YLC for Year 7. She can be contacted via the school office: office@swakeleys.org.uk

Absence from school: Please do try and encourage your child to attend school every day – we conducted some analysis from this year's exam data and I can share with you the following interesting (and not surprising!) data correlating progress and attendance:

Students with 95% & higher attendance = +0.77 progress score
Students with 90% & lower attendance = -0.22 progress score

This means that there was almost a grades worth of difference in progress for those who attended school consistently throughout Year 11 compared to those who didn't.

If your child is really too unwell to attend school please contact the attendance team on each day of absence. We would encourage you to use the attendance e mail address attendance@swakeleys.org.uk rather than phoning in. You can also inform us of any appointments through this e mail address, but please do your best to ensure that these are made outside school hours. Medication can be left with welfare along with a medication form (available on the web site or from welfare) if needed. Please ensure that any epipens or inhalers held by the school are up to date as well as those your children carry.

Dates for your diary: A reminder that Wednesday 9th October is an INSET day when school is closed to students. Friday 18th October is the form tutor 1:1 day where children come into school for an appointment with their form tutor – further information will be sent out in due course. Year 7 parents are also invited on this day so we can get to know you on an individual basis. Year 11 have English and maths WAVE exams week commencing 4th November and to support this they have two sessions in school focusing on revision on 14th and 15th October. Your child should be conducting revision at home in preparation for these important exams.

I will send out our Autumn 1 newsletter before we break for half term and a reminder that half term runs from Thursday 24th October to Friday 1st November inclusive. We return to school at the normal time of 8.30am on Monday 4th November.

Yours faithfully,



Kelda Stevenson
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