



Pensby High School

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

14 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

The last day of term is Thursday 17 December 2020 and students will leave the school to go home at 12.30pm. Normal school uniform will be required on the last day of term. On the last day, students who have been taking hot lunches will have an opportunity for 'brunch' and so will have had the chance to eat before they come home. If your child has been bringing a packed lunch, they can do this on the last day and will have the opportunity to eat this in their form room.

It is important to note that there will be no school buses when students leave school at 12.30pm, so it is vital that arrangements for travel home have been made in advance. The longer we leave the finish, the closer we are to Christmas and the possibility that any additional cases of COVID will impact on Christmas. I have recently written to you with regard to the possibility of track and trace continuing after school has finished. Please emphasise at home the need to wear suitable face coverings, clean hands and maintain social distancing. For the most part our students have been brilliant at this; we just need a few more days to get us all to Christmas.

Can I remind you that the new term starts on Monday 4 January 2021 at 8.40am.

It is hard to quantify success for a school this year, there are no 'accountability tables', we did not sit the normal exams and even attendance cannot be compared 'like for like'. However, despite some difficulties this term, the students have for the most part demonstrated the very best of qualities, in what are for them very trying times. There has been a heightened level of anxiety and stress in schools since before the first lockdown. I know that parents feel this, but your children live it on a daily basis. My own children are tired like they have never been tired before, I would imagine many of you see the same thing and this only growing on a daily basis. I see this same tiredness on the face of staff too. I often tell the students that we are the best school on the Wirral and we are at least one of the best by the objective measures we use to compare schools.

However, good exam results and being a higher performing school than the majority of schools locally doesn't tell you everything. I think school is the very best place for our children, but I would. I think it is as safe as it can be, that it is where they find their friends, get away from parents 'pecking their heads' (although we all do that here) and as they grow they start to find out who they are and what they really think about things. Sometimes that means they push at boundaries, sometimes it means they try to break everything, but for the most part students today, certainly in our school, are far more tolerant, forgiving and generally nicer than they were when I was at school.

However, for both students and staff it has been an unrelenting and unforgiving period of time, with the prospect of next term be potentially harder than this term, certainly the start of it will be more strained than even this one, but we keep on.

It has been a time of very mixed messages for all of us with something invested in schools. It is safe to come to school, but every day you have to wear a mask, clean your hands as you enter a room and before we serve you lunch. It is safe to come to school, but you have to be in a bubble, you cannot go in that toilet, it is not your bubble and you cannot do PE inside. It is safe to come to school, but every Year 11 has been sent home at least once.

I think it is safe and I think it is the best place to be, but I worry if I am doing the right thing and I have all the emotional reserves and resilience that an adult builds up. I am not sure what of all of this contradictory messaging would have meant to me as a teenager, but I cannot imagine that my behaviour would have been as good as the overwhelming majority of your children.

I am always proud to be the headteacher here, but I am especially proud this year. I am proud of the support so many of you give our community on a daily basis by just being there and doing the right thing. I am proud of your children and I am proud of my staff, it has not been an easy time for them and they are still giving freely of their time. We could not have opened up the whole curriculum and maintained the same daily pattern of lessons without their support. We even have period 6 for Year 11, free tutoring from staff who are not paid to do it! I know that many schools haven't had this whole curriculum approach and that we have taken what might have been seen as a risk, but one I feel that has made a very positive difference to the quality of education and daily lived experience of your children and its success is down to your children, and my staff.

So, I would like to thank all of you who have contributed positively and supported the day-to-day, all of your children, please pass my thanks on and all the staff.

I hope that you have the Christmas and New Year that you deserve, you've earned it. May you find some peace and calm alongside all of your family.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Flanagan', written in a cursive style.

Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher