21 November 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you to outline changes to the school’s pastoral system and the rationale for these changes. The changes will take effect fully from January 2018, but there will be a process of phased handovers in the final two weeks of this term.

I have been concerned for some time now about the increasing demands we see on our pastoral system and I have worried if we have enough of our resources centred around the day-to-day support of all children as well as those who need additional support in Years 7 to 11. Alongside this the school is seeing the number of students on roll expand for the first time in a number of years, the school is growing in numbers. I believe that the first call of a pastoral system is to ensure that everyone has a level playing field, that everyone knows and understands the expectations of the school and that the pastoral system exists to support all students. As a school we are very lucky, we have a supportive parental base and for the most part our students come in every day and get on with their learning, essentially they are really good kids. However, we are finding that increasingly a small number of parents and students demand more of our time and attention, and it is important to me that everyone has support available, therefore I am increasing the capacity of the pastoral team.

As a school we currently have a small, but very dedicated pastoral team in Years 7 – 11 consisting of:

* SENCO/inclusion manager – Mrs Price
* Behaviour manager and Head of Year7 – Mrs Holmes
* Head of Year 8 & 9 – Mr Berry, with 8 hours of pastoral time per fortnight
* Head of Year 10 & 11 – Miss Coyne, with 8 hours of pastoral time per fortnight
* Four progress mentors – Mrs Cantillon, Mrs Clarke, Mr Jones and Mrs Mills.

These staff are then supported by the general admin team, but specifically Miss Norton as attendance officer and Mrs O’Hare who supports contact with external agencies and provides support with multi-agency team meetings etc. Furthermore each key stage is led by an assistant headteacher, Mrs Gauntlett and Mr Rice.

As I am sure you are aware, school budgets are under incredible pressure and we are expected to work with less money, as a direct result the scope of what we can offer and what other schools can offer is being squeezed. However, so are most other aspects of the public sector, as well as most families, and I believe that as a school we need to ensure that we help provide the support our families need to the very best of our ability. To that end we are going to restructure the pastoral team and put more time into the pastoral system within the school, with the new structure being:

* SENCO/inclusion manager – Mrs Price
* Assistant SENCO – Mr Berry
* Behaviour manager (Head of Year7) – Mrs Holmes
* Head of Year 8 & 9 full-time – Mrs O’Hare
* Head of Year 10 & 11 full-time – Mr Woodward-Booth
* Four progress mentors – Mrs Cantillon, Mrs Clarke, Mr Jones and Mrs Mills

Alongside the continued support of the school’s admin team, plus the school’s attendance officer continuing in their role. We will move from the current allocation of 16 hours of allotted time across years 8 to 11 in any given fortnight to 72 hours across the fortnight and an additional special educational needs coordinator. We will also retain the pastoral link to the assistant headteachers and they will continue to have direct responsibility for their key stage.

I do realise that for many students and families a familiar pattern and relationship has been built over time with Mr Berry and Miss Coyne. Both members of staff are very good at what they do, but as teachers they are only ever going to have limited time with students and families as their main role will be in the classroom. In fact Miss Coyne is moving to support Mr Braitch as second in science. As a very strong teacher in an area that nationally schools find it difficult to recruit in, I am more than happy that Miss Coyne will now have increased time in the classroom with your children, as I am sure her students will be.

I realise that change is not always welcomed, but I hope that all of our students and families will see a positive outcome from this change. If you have any questions with regard to this matter, please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan

Headteacher