

Our Ref: JWa/GCo

September 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

A warm welcome back to all of our families from last year and a particular welcome to anyone who is new to our school. I hope you have had a great summer break and your child(ren) are all refreshed and ready to continue their learning journey with us.

Oulder Hill promises to be a very exciting place again this year. We have already had a very smooth transition day including rewards trips, in-school activities and of course our Year 7 induction events. We are once more oversubscribed in Year 7 with 300 new pupils on roll and they have settled really well in to what they call "big school"! It is indeed a big school and we have 170 staff now not including the staff from GFM who coordinate our lunches, repairs and the site in general. As you know we are also co-located with Redwood who are extending their building meaning there are over 2000 people on this site everyday. This is *exciting* but does mean health and safety around the car park and buses are a daily watchdog for us. We thank parents and carers for continuing to support us by driving slowly and carefully, and dropping students off outside the school gates at the start and end of the day and thereby enabling us to keep students safe.

Following on from this please do note that the areas around the school are very busy traffic-wise particularly on inclement weather days. Punctuality is hugely important and we do expect all students to be in the building ready for the bell at 8.25am. The doors are open from 8.00am. Morning registration is just 5 minutes for messages and equipment/support checks so that students are organised for the day but without wasting valuable teaching time. Please support your child by ensuring they arrive before 8.25am and that they attend regularly. We expect a minimum of 96% attendance for a pupil to be successful in their studies. At 95% attendance your child will have missed half a day every week which is 28 school days and 140 lessons if that continues for all 5 years. At 90% your child is classed as a Persistent Absentee and will be referred to the Education Welfare service. Attendance is one of the real keys to success (please see our website for more details). We have great students and staff at Oulder Hill but if pupils miss the lessons they cannot expect to be successful in their exams!

Speaking of exams I am delighted to inform you that we have again had some very pleasing results this summer. A journalist from the Manchester Evening News came to our results morning and stayed for the full 2½ hours of Year 11 and decided to stay for the Year 10 results as he was enjoying the amazing atmosphere and vibes so much at seeing so many young people do so well! It was indeed a real pleasure to be there that day and many congratulations go to those students, staff who taught them and of course to the parents/carers who supported them and worked closely with us to enable them to succeed. There were a lot of happy tears that day not least of which came from the students who between them achieved nearly 500 A/A* grades (or what are now grades 7-9 in reformed English and Maths). In traditional numbers we have achieved 70% C and above (new grade 4+) in English and 68% in Maths. For those students who were with us from at least Year 9 it rises to 74% and 71% respectively. Notable subjects performing really well are Art at 85% A*-C, Business Studies 83%, Child Development 80%, Dance 80%, Drama 88%, Geography 81%, German 90%, Italian 98%, Further Maths 97% and Music 97%. In addition 72% of our students leave us with C+ in Double Science and in I.C.T all 173 students passed with over 64% achieving a distinction (A/A*). This year a number of other subjects move on to grades 9-1 and we wish our students and staff all the best for the new year grappling with those new more challenging courses and extra exam papers to come in 2018!

Perhaps more importantly in terms of our performance last year are the results of our stakeholder surveys. I am delighted to report back to you that in the summer reports survey we had some very positive results and feedback from parents/carers. Firstly, 94% of you said the school deals effectively with bullying and 98% of you said that your child felt safe at school. 93% graded behaviour as good. These are outstanding figures but the school will not be satisfied till it is 100% and will continue to work on our values of Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe this coming year with some improvements to the system and the role of the form tutor. (Please see attached flyer on Tootoot for how students can report bullying to us.) 95% of you graded teaching as good and leadership too. Again these are very high compared to other schools but still room for improvement this year. Overall, 96% of you would recommend us to another parent which is the highest it has been and is reflected in our increased intake numbers again. I too am very pleased with the school's progress but not yet satisfied that we have fully "developed potential and achieved excellence" for every one of our students and will continue to drive improvements this coming year to meet the needs of every child (see School Improvement Plan 2017-18 attached). In addition, the surveys included a number of suggestions around what information you would like to receive and we will again be taking your requests on board this year. Mrs Sanderson will lead on your ideas for reports and progress. If you have anything else do please share it with us through the normal channels or join our Parent Forum (the first meeting is **Thursday 12th October at 6.00pm**) and have your say in our policies and processes. For more information please contact Gill Corlett on 01706 758533 or by email gill.corlett@oulderhill-school.com.

As many of you will already know, we have our Year 6 Open Evening on **Thursday 21st September between 6.00-8.30pm**. This key evening in the year is an opportunity for our staff and students to showcase the amazing things that happen in our school every day. The school will close at 2pm that day to allow staff and the students helping on the evening to prepare. Please note the afternoon bus service will not be in operation due to the early finish so please ensure your child has a safe alternative to get home. If you have any concerns and need your child to stay in school until 3pm, please contact the relevant Year Manager.

Oulder Hill have been using PMX (Parentmail2) for many years, this is the school's communication and online payments system. During the next few days all Year 7 parents/carers will receive a registration e-mail from PMX, if you encounter any problems when registering please do not hesitate to contact the school's finance team on 01706 758537 or 01706 758538.

Finally, may I wish you, your child(ren) and your family all the best for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

John Watson
Headteacher

School Improvement Plan 2017-18

Key Area 1 – Effective Leadership of Curriculum, Learning and Assessment

(see Key Performance Indicators Tracker for Impact and Evidence)

- 1. Ensure effective leadership of the Curriculum, Learning and Assessment.*
- 2. The curriculum content and structure in all years effectively challenge students so that learning is personalised for all pupils.*
- 3. Students ReAct to all Assessment, Marking and Feedback (AMF) so that they understand what they are trying to achieve and how they can make this happen.*
- 4. Teachers plan for progress by timely review, analysis and response to data so that all groups, inc. boys, PP, SEND, High starters make rapid and sustained progress.*

Key Area 2 – Effective Leadership of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

(see Key Performance Indicators Tracker for Impact and Evidence)

- 1. Ensure effective leadership of personal development, behaviour and welfare.*
- 2. Growth Mindset is embedded in school culture so that students have high aspirations and do their best always, everywhere.*
- 3. Leadership of student wellbeing is outstanding so that all students (including key groups) are responsible, respectful and safe.*
- 4. Staff plan to meet the needs and aspirations of all students (including key groups) by timely review, analysis and response to ALL data.*



ALWAYS

TALK TO SOMEONE WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

Remember you can use tootoot in confidence whenever you or any of your friends have a worry, or you just want to talk to someone.

www.tootoot.co.uk



Available on the
App Store

You said, we did.....

You said...	We did...
Some of you are feeling unclear as to the Exceptional, Good, Some and below progress descriptors	With this response we are sending out the descriptors and their meaning. We also hold drop in sessions after reports are given out. Please feel free to attend those in order to enable us to answer any more questions you may have.
You would benefit from more frequent reminders for events such as parents evenings and Review Days	We will send out reminders 1 week before each of these events via parent mail. You can also follow us on twitter and check the website for important dates and information.
Sometimes teachers are not available at parents evenings and it is difficult to get follow up information after the event	We have put together a revised Parents Evening protocol system which has been distributed to staff. This document covers all aspects of running a Parents Evening, including detailing who is responsible for ensuring there is a robust system for following up with Parents who have been unable to see their child's teacher. However, if you have any comments or you require any further information following a Parents Evening, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Year Manager and Learning & Progress Director who will be able to ensure you are provided with the information you require.
You would benefit from more detailed communications about examination periods in order for you to ensure your child is preparing well at home for these	We try to ensure that we let parents know about upcoming examinations through our website, twitter and, in some cases, letters home. Of course, we always let the students know well in advance. However, we are always looking at ways of improving our communication and would be grateful for any further suggestions. It would also be helpful if every parent ensured that they were signed up to Oulder Hill's parent mail.
Some of you are frustrated by the parents evening appointment system and those appointments not running to time	As with the organisation of any such evening, improvements can always be made and based on your feedback we have again looked to make improvements for the forthcoming academic year. Getting a perfect system for Parents Evening appointments is incredibly difficult as we always try to ensure Parents of our Students have the opportunity to speak to as many Teachers as possible on the night. In turn we have to balance that against the other commitments and expectations we put on our Staff so simply adding extra evenings is not something we can do. That said, we will issue a reminder to our team about the need to run timely parent meetings and avoid unnecessary delay to our Parents and Carers on these evenings. We are also looking into the possibility of an online booking system which may further improve what we do.
You would like to sign feedback sheets in books to prove they are read	We agree with this and welcome any parental involvements and comments that help us to work together to improve your child's progress. We are now working to improve the sheets to include parental signatures.
You would like separate communications with exam results on them for all year groups	We understand this and we are looking into options for including results for end of year exams into the reports that are sent home.

<p>You feel the reports themselves seem impersonal</p>	<p>The reports are purely based on progress. However, we are adding a tutor comment once per year to the report. We place a great emphasis on the review days, in order for tutors to be able to talk face to face with you about your child's progress. We also want parents evening to be the opportunity for you to gain information about how your child can improve in individual subjects.</p>
<p>You feel unable to help your child at home sometimes</p>	<p>We understand that helping children at home can sometimes be difficult. The starting point is to familiarise yourself with the curriculum that they are studying. Full details of each subject curriculum can be found on our website: http://www.oulderhill-school.com/curriculum/ There is also a link to our VLE on the website where you can access the schemes of work that your child will be following. Checking students' homework planners is also a way of ensuring that you know what your child is doing. There are a range of websites that will give you valuable information about how to help your child at home and our staff are available to answer any subject specific questions that you have. Should you wish to contact a member of staff, please make an appointment at reception or telephone the school.</p>
<p>Some concerns were raised around the number of changes in teaching staff for particular classes</p>	<p>We try to ensure that children have consistency when it comes to their subject teachers. On occasions, some children will experience more than one teacher during a year for perfectly understandable reasons such as when sets change after an assessment. However, there are also times when staff are absent and we have to use supply teachers. We do try to minimise this and we also use our own Cover Supervisors who are well known to the children to supervise lessons when staff are absent.</p>
<p>The assessment pro formas are useful but can sometimes be inconsistent between subjects</p>	<p>As it is a new system, some inconsistencies will inevitably arise. We are working hard to ensure that those are ironed out this year and that children receive quality feedback in all subject areas.</p>