

Headteacher's Letter, July 2015

21st July 2015

Dear Parent

This letter has been posted home to all parents of the coming Year 7 to Year 11 to ensure you are fully informed of important information. I take this opportunity to welcome on board parents with pupils joining us for the first time and look forward to working in partnership with all parents in the next school year.

The following are also enclosed for your information:

- Key Dates For Parents 2015 – 2016
- School Uniform 2015-16
- HCC advice leaflet on Penalty Notices to address poor attendance and punctuality

We approach the end of another very busy and successful year. As a school we continue to challenge ourselves in our drive to keep moving the school forward and in our 'pursuit of personal excellence'. This last half term of the year has seen much going on at school as always, including another successful Activities Week.

Our latest newsletter is about to be published and I do encourage you to have a look at this to read more about the wonderful range of learning experiences, activities and opportunities our pupils have been involved in. This can be viewed or downloaded from our website on www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk. Paper copies are also always available from Reception and Pupil Services in school. My thanks, as always, to all the staff because without their commitment, support and hard work many of these learning experiences would not be possible. It is hard to measure the full impact of these and how much our pupils benefit from their involvement.

Communication with parents

Our partnership with you remains very important to us to ensure your child is making progress. Below are three ways you can access further information or keep in regular contact with us:

- many of our parents are now directly receiving more key information by signing up to our email database rather than relying on their children to bring all letters home. This will also ensure you receive my half-termly letters and the termly newsletter notification by email next year. To do this you need to go to www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk, click onto 'Our School' and then 'Parent Contacts', complete the required fields and press 'make request'. An acknowledgment will then appear on the screen. I know that not all parents have access to a computer and some prefer a paper copy so we will continue to provide these as well
- the SIMS Learning Gateway provides a logon to access information on your child's progress. To request an account please email SLG@testvalley.hants.sch.uk stating your child's name and tutor group. There is also a link to SLG on the homepage of our website.
- parents can also logon to Moodle (via the school website) to view the home learning tasks set. There is also a link on Moodle to request a logon.

Credit and debit card facility for parents

We offer this facility to parents making payments to school. There will be a charge of 1.5% on all transactions as this is the cost levied by the company providing the service and the school does not benefit from this in any way. Payment by cheques or cash continues to be available as an alternative.

Staff changes

We shall be saying goodbye at the end of this academic year to some staff:

- Ms Bushell (English teacher/Literacy Co-ordinator)
- Mrs Hallwood (Learning Support Assistant)
- Mr Lucas (Learning Support Assistant/Technician)
- Mr Muendo (Mathematics teacher)
- Mr White (Cover Supervisor)

We thank all of the above staff for the contribution they have made to Test Valley School and wish them well for the future. We congratulate those moving to promoted posts and hope their time here has prepared them well for the next step in their careers. We thank Mrs Crossland who is stepping down as a Year Co-ordinator after 20 years but are delighted she will continue to teach Science next year. We also thank Miss Veale (PE teacher covering Mrs Vaughan's maternity leave) and send our best wishes to Mrs Luckham who will be starting her maternity leave in September. Finally, we were pleased to welcome back Mrs Vaughan and Mr Dyke this week.

I look forward to introducing you in September to all our new staff. We are fully staffed for all teaching posts for September but we do have three support staff vacancies currently advertised on our website.

Attendance

I would like to thank parents for your support to ensure pupils' high attendance at school. We continue to monitor attendance closely and are keen to offer support if your child's absence is causing concern. There is no doubt that pupils need to have good attendance if they are to be successful at school and it is clearly linked with effective learning and progress. Equally, pupils with poor attendance tend to fall behind with their work and can struggle to catch up.

Pupils should therefore be in school unless they are too ill to attend, are on a pre-agreed leave of absence or in rare cases where family circumstances are such that they cannot attend for a short time, for example, in the case of family bereavement.

There are significant changes coming in from September as a result of the revised Hampshire Code of Conduct with regard to school attendance. This was outlined in a letter sent home to all parents in March. In summary, due to changes in the school attendance law, schools will be required to work with Hampshire County Council to take legal action if a pupil's lateness or absence is considered unauthorised. Our discretion to authorise any leave of absences in exceptional circumstances are considerably limited. I enclose a leaflet produced by Hampshire County Council for your information.

School Uniform

As you are aware we moved to a standard skirt and trousers style for girls and boys from September 2013. A full list of our uniform, including the revised requirements, are attached again to this letter and are available on our school website at www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk. If you type 'school uniform' into the main search bar on our home page you will find details and you can download our uniform guide.

School uniform is important as pupils who are smartly presented will not only represent themselves and the school positively but also set the right tone for high quality learning. We have always endeavoured to make our uniform simple and practical. The changes provide absolute clarity and ensure no confusion regarding what styles of skirts and trousers can be worn.

We thank you for your ongoing your support in maintaining a high standard of uniform. We will, as always, be checking pupils are in the correct uniform at the start of the Autumn Term.

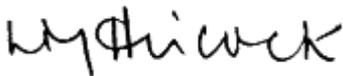
Year 11 GCSE results

We look forward to welcoming our Year 11 pupils back to school on Thursday August 20th from 10am to receive their examination results. Year 10 can collect any GCSE results they are expecting between 11am and 12pm. It should be noted that no exam results will be given over the telephone or via email. Uncollected Year 10 results will be issued at the start of the Autumn term. (please see our GCSE Results notice on our website for further information).

Final Remarks

Finally, I would like to thank parents for your continued support over the course of this year. I wish you all a safe and happy holiday and look forward to welcoming pupils back in September: **Wednesday September 2nd at 8.50am for our new Year 7 pupils and Thursday September 3rd at 8.50am for all other pupils.**

Yours sincerely



L Hiscock (Miss)
Headteacher

Attachments:

Key Dates for Parents 2015-16, School Uniform 2015-16, HCC Penalty Notices leaflet



Key Dates for Parents 2015-16

Autumn Term 2015

Tuesday 1 September 2015	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Wednesday 2 September 2015	Autumn Term commences for Year 7 only
Thursday 3 September 2015	Autumn Term commences for Years 8-11
Thursday 17 September 2015	Year 7 Parents' Information Evening 6.00-8.00pm
Monday 21 September 2015	Open Evening 6-8pm
Thursday 24 September 2015	Open Morning 9.15-10.30am
Friday 25 September 2015	Open Morning 9.15-10.30am
Friday 2 October 2015	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Tuesday 6 October 2015	Year 11 Parents' Information Evening: 6.00-8:00pm
Thursday 15 October 2015	Year 10 Parents' Information Evening: Introduction to KS4 6.00-8.00pm
Monday 19 October 2015	Year 7 Tutors Evening Main Hall 4.30-6.30pm
Friday 23 October 2015	School closes to pupils for half-term
Monday 2 November 2015	School re-opens to pupils
Monday 9 November 2015	Year 11 Practice Examinations commence
Thursday 19 November 2015	Year 11 Practice Examinations end
Friday 20 November 2015	Whole School PSHE Day
Thursday 26 November 2015	GCSE 2015 Presentation Evening Year 8 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 27 November 2015	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Monday 30 November 2015	Year 8 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Friday 11 December 2015	Year 11 Pupil Monitoring Data and Reports published to parents
Thursday 17 December 2015	Years 7, 9 and 10 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Friday 18 December 2015	End of Autumn Term

Spring Term 2016

Monday 4 January 2016	Spring Term commences for pupils
Monday 11 January 2016	Year 11 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Monday 25 January 2016	Year 10 Parents Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Monday 8 February 2016	Year 7 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Thursday 11 February 2016	Year 10 GCSE Science – Parents Workshop 6.00-8.00pm
Friday 12 February 2016	Whole School PSHE Day School closes to pupils for half-term
Monday 22 February 2016	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Tuesday 23 February 2016	School re-opens to pupils Year 11 Second Practice Examinations (Core) commence
Thursday 25 February 2016	Year 9 Examinations commence
Monday 29 February 2016	Year 9 Parents' Information Evening - Pathways Main Hall 6.30-8.00pm Year 11 Second Practice Examinations (Core) end
Tuesday 8 March 2016	Year 9 Examinations end
Monday 14 March 2016	Year 9 Option Review Week
Friday 18 March 2016	Year 9 Pupil Monitoring data and Reports published to parents Year 11 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents
Monday 21 March 2016	Year 9 Parents' Evening Main Hall 4.30-7.30pm
Thursday 24 March 2016	Years 7 & 8 Pupil Monitoring Data published to parents Year 10 Pupil Monitoring Data and Reports published to parents Year 9 Pathways Form deadline End of Spring Term



Summer Term 2016

Monday 11 April 2016	Summer Term commences for pupils
Thursday 14 April 2016	Year 8 Parents' Information Evening 6.00-8.00pm
Monday 2 May 2016	School closed Bank Holiday
Friday 6 May 2016	StockFest 8
Monday 16 May 2016	GCSE Examinations commence Year 8 Examinations commence
Friday 27 May 2016	Year 8 Examinations end School closes to pupils for half-term
Monday 6 June 2016	School re-opens to pupils Year 7 Examinations commence
Monday 13 June 2016	Year 10 Examinations commence
Friday 17 June 2016	Year 7 Examinations end
Wednesday 22 June 2016	Year 10 Examinations end
Friday 24 June 2016	Year 8 Pupil Monitoring Data and Reports published to parents
Monday 27 June 2016	New Intake Parents' Evening
Tuesday 28 June	New Year 7 Induction Day
Wednesday 29 June 2016	GCSE Examinations end
Thursday 30 June 2016	Year 9 Pupil Monitoring data published to parents
Friday 1 July 2016	STAFF INSET: School closed to pupils
Monday 4 July 2016	Activities Week commences
Tuesday 12 July 2016	KS3 Sports Day
Thursday 14 July 2016	Year 7 Pupil Monitoring data and Reports published to parents
Friday 15 July 2016	Years 10 Pupil Monitoring data published to parents
Tuesday 19 July 2016	Year 10 Sports Day
Wednesday 20 July 2016	Celebration Assemblies End of Summer Term



Uniform Policy and Guide

The school uniform policy sets out to encourage a sense of identification with and belonging to the school. We ask for the co-operation of parents to ensure that pupils are suitably dressed and thus represent the school and themselves appropriately. The uniform guidance is clear and the uniform itself is intended to be both practical and smart. The basic school colour is bottle green and bottle green school sweatshirts will be worn in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 move into grey as senior pupils. Please note that some items of school uniform are only available from certain stockists: Skoolkit www.skoolkit.co.uk, Marks and Spencer www.marksandspencer.com.

Please put your child's name on all uniform and kit.

Girls — Test Valley School Uniform 2015-16

Required items	Available from	Unacceptable items/notes
Bottle green polo shirt with school logo — Years 7-9 Grey polo shirt with school logo — Years 10-11	Skoolkit	
Plain black tailored trousers	Skoolkit recommended as supplier of this item. Code GPR (from £17.99) Alternative shop version of trouser style available: M&S — 2 pack Girl's Crease Resistant Bootleg Trousers with Stormwear Code T761281 (£16.00-£22.00)	No other trousers or styles are permitted
Bottle green V-neck sweatshirt with school logo — Years 7-9 Grey V-neck sweatshirt with school logo — Years 10-11	Skoolkit	No other cardigans, pullovers, sweatshirts (hooded or otherwise) or tracksuit top should be worn or brought into school
Plain black drop waist knife pleat skirt	Skoolkit recommended as supplier of this item. Code SSK303 (from £15.99) Alternative shop version of skirt style available:- M&S — 2 pack permanent pleat skirts Code T760174 (£14.00-£20.00)	No other styles are permitted. The skirt length should be no more than 6cm from the top of the knee.
Plain black low heeled sensible shoes (that can be polished)		No trainers, boots, backless/stiletto shoes, plimsolls, sandals, canvas shoes or shoes that have any other colours, branding or marking on
Winter — black/flesh coloured tights, knee length black socks Summer — white/black ankle socks		No other colours or patterned socks are permitted
Coat (optional) — plain only		No marking or branding. Hoodies, denim or leather jackets are not permitted.



Boys — Test Valley School Uniform 2015-16

Required items	Available from	Unacceptable items/notes
Bottle green polo shirt with school logo — Years 7-9 Grey polo shirt with school logo — Years 10-11	Skoolkit	
Plain black tailored trousers (straight leg) If a belt is needed, it must be plain black and discreet	Skoolkit recommended as supplier of this item. Code ST1 (from £14.99) Trousers from other stockists similar to Skoolkit code ST1 style are acceptable.	No jean style material, no tight/slim fitting trousers. Trousers must be worn so undergarments are <i>not</i> showing.
Bottle green V-neck sweatshirt with school logo — Years 7-9 Grey V-neck sweatshirt with school logo — Years 10-11	Skoolkit	No other cardigans, pullovers, sweatshirts (hooded or otherwise) or tracksuit top should be worn or brought into school
Plain black shoes (that can be polished)		No trainers, boots, canvas shoes or shoes that have any other colours, branding or marking on
Grey or black socks		No other colours or patterned socks are permitted
Coat (optional) — plain only		No marking or branding. Hoodies, denim or leather jackets are not permitted.

All pupils 2015-16

Sports Kit — Required items	Available from
Navy school rugby shirt Navy short sleeved polo shirt with collar and school logo Navy blue shorts Navy blue football/hockey socks	Skoolkit
Also needed	
Shin pads Trainers, non-marking soles Football boots either moulded or with safety studs (not astro trainers) Gum shield One piece swimsuit (girls), swimming trunks or shorts (boys) Towel Headband for long fringes Hair ties for long hair	

A single earring in the lower lobe of each ear, i.e. a single pair of small studs or sleepers may be worn. **No other piercings are acceptable.** One neck chain with a religious symbol may be worn if out of sight (on receipt of a note from parents). Watches may be worn but parents are reminded that pupils must be responsible for their own property. Make up and fashion jewellery are not considered acceptable or appropriate for school. Pupils' hair colour and styles should not be extremes of fashion, i.e. if coloured it should be natural colour and uniform in nature — no extreme haircuts, tramlines or markings are allowed (if in doubt please consult the school before your child has a specific hair cut style). Protective clothing will be necessary in practical lessons.

Uniform & Kit Supplier Details

SKOOLKIT, 15 Church Street, Basingstoke, RG21 7QG	Tel 01256 817284 Fax 01256 812417 Online ordering: www.skoolkit.co.uk Email: basingstoke@skoolkit.co.uk
Marks & Spencer	www.marksandspencer.com

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements are included in the Penalty Notice. You must ensure that you include your Penalty Notice reference number on any payment method so the payment can be tracked. Failure to do so may result in the Penalty Notice being recorded as unpaid. Full payment is required within the 21 days or 28 days' timescales. Payment in part or by instalments is not possible. Late payments cannot be accepted and the Penalty Notice is recorded as unpaid.

What happens if I do not pay?

You will have up to 21 days at £60 or 28 days at £120 from the date of posting to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to do so, the local authority is required, by law, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of poor school attendance.

If convicted of this offence under the Education Act 1996 there are a number of possible sentences, including a fine of up to £1,000 (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1)) or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a period of up to three months' imprisonment (in the case of a prosecution under section 444(1A)).

Can I get help if my child is not attending school?

Yes. The school is available to provide advice and support and signpost you to other support agencies in the locality. You can also contact the local authority on:

Tel: 0300 555 1384 (Hantsdirect).

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Information on Penalty Notices for non-attendance at school

Education Act 1996, section 444A

Advice for parents and carers

Applied from September 2015



Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996

Section 444A of the Act gives powers to the local authority, and headteachers to issue Penalty Notices in circumstances where it is believed that a person has committed an offence under Section 444(1); that is, where a child fails to attend regularly at their registered school.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.

Who can be issued with a Penalty Notice?

Where absence warrants the issuing of a Penalty Notice, each individual parent/carer can be issued with one Penalty Notice for each of their children with unauthorised absence.

What if my child has further unauthorised absence from school?

If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

How is a Penalty Notice issued and how much is the fine?

Penalty Notices are either posted to your home or delivered to you by hand. Each Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of the date of posting and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days of the date of posting.

When are they issued?

As set down by the Department for Education, Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence. In Hampshire, Penalty Notices are issued when a pupil has had 10 or more half-day sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence, in any 10 school week period; or one or more unauthorised absences during a public exam,

assessment or test (where the dates have been published). *Unauthorised absence* is absence not approved by the school and will be coded on your child's attendance record as one of the following:

- O – unauthorised absence
- U – late after close of registration
- G – non-approved leave of absence (holiday).

Is a warning given?

For unauthorised leave of absence or during public exams, assessment and testing the school will provide warning of a Penalty Notice in its school policy, or through letters, newsletters, the school website, and the leave of absence request form. In such cases a Penalty Notice can be issued without further warning.

If your child has an ongoing pattern of unauthorised absence then you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This warning will advise you about the extent of your child's absence and warn you that if your child's attendance does not show a significant improvement and if this improvement is not maintained thereafter, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Further support, advice and guidance is available from:

The Department for Education

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
- www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview
- www.gov.uk

Hampshire County Council

- www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents.