



22 September 2023

Rachel Hutchinson
Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, I would like to thank you for attending our Principal Welcome Information events that we have hosted over the past couple of weeks. The support that we have received and continued feedback has been invaluable.

The Deputy CEO of WeST, Mr Nat Parnell, visited Ivybridge Community College this week and it gives me real pleasure to share some of his feedback below:

"It has been a pleasure to visit Ivybridge Community College twice since taking up post this term as Deputy CEO of WeST. I have observed a real sense of purpose about the College. Staff and students report that this term has begun with increased clarity about behavioural expectations and support for learning to take place. The effects of this, as I have seen, are calm and safe corridor transitions, purposeful lessons and a sense that the learning of young people is at the heart of the work of the College.

Staff have spoken to me about the effect on lessons of high expectations: more learning can take place and student understanding can be better checked and consolidated. Balancing the sense of focus with the personal development of the students is something leaders are taking seriously. We know a safe and calm learning environment and clear, consistent expectations and routines allows all students to flourish, with staff able to focus more forensically on their learning needs. It means the needs of the most vulnerable learners are served alongside those of the more confident and proficient. The students really appreciate this".

To ensure that we maintain the momentum described by Mr Parnell and to continue to build further on the immense efforts and hard work of our staff, students, parents and carers, I would like to take this opportunity to add additional clarity to certain areas of College life.

Use of toilets during lessons

Students at Ivybridge Community College are permitted to use the toilets during lesson time. To minimise disruption to learning and to maintain clear and calm corridors, we operate a lanyard system. Every staff member has one toilet pass lanyard that permits one student at a time, from each classroom, to access the toilets. This approach is already ensuring that students can use the toilets without having to negotiate crowds or wait in queues. Students will never be refused the use of the toilets during lesson but may need to show patience as they await their turn. Students with known additional needs, who require greater freedom to use the toilet have been issued with a personal toilet pass. If you feel that your child would benefit from such support, please contact your child's College Director. To ensure that this support intervention is distributed accurately and fairly, applications for toilet passes must be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional.

Communication through ClassCharts

ClassCharts is a digital platform recently adopted by the College and used by staff to take registers, create seating plans, input progress data and to log positive behaviour points and sanctions. We are aware that the communication of Reset and Reflection to parents and carers through this platform has not been clear enough. I can confirm that this issue has now been resolved and as such you will be provided with greater details of events to further inform your discussions at home.

Respect ■ Aspiration ■ Integrity ■ Compassion

General Communication

Effective communication between College and home is paramount. We will endeavour to reply to all questions, queries and concerns within 24 hours of receiving them. In cases where additional time is required to provide an effective and accurate response, we will aim to reply within 48 hours. In such cases, a notification of receipt of your communication will be given within 24 hours.

To further facilitate a timely response to questions and concerns that you may have, [click here](#) to be taken to our Communication Flowchart that will provide you with useful contacts for specific queries.

Information Sharing

We recognise that the information shared in some of our College documents is unclear and that the layout of the College website can make it challenging to navigate. We are currently streamlining the information shared on our website to increase its accessibility. Please rest assured that College documents are currently being refined and will be presented in a more systematic format for your ease of reference. When such documents are finalised, we will upload them to our website and inform you. We aim to have this completed by the end of next week.

Corridor Culture

The corridors at Ivybridge Community College are calm, safe and purposeful. Staff and students are sharing that lesson starts are prompt, previously congested junctions are flowing more freely and that behaviour in corridors is greatly improved. Our routines, regarding the use of toilets during lessons by students, teachers standing at their classroom doors at the start of lessons and the deployment of additional middle and senior leaders in corridors between lessons are starting to have a really positive impact.

Lateness to Lessons

Since adding 20% extra movement time between lessons and ensuring that notes are issued to students in cases where lateness is beyond their control, we are experiencing significant decreases in the application of sanctions for lateness to lesson. Last Thursday, all students received a presentation of the updates pertaining to lateness to lesson. As a result, students are moving with renewed purpose and increasingly taking responsibility for their uniform to ensure that they are not late due to corrections. In the now very rare cases where a student arrives late to lesson without a note and cites reasons for lateness that are deemed out of their control, a member of our On-Call Team will triage the situation to ensure that sanctions are applied accurately. We will ensure that students arriving late to lessons for reasons that are out their control remain in lessons.

Lateness to College

We are aware that the roads surrounding the College become increasingly congested when the weather is poor. Similar to that described above, we will endeavour not to sanction students who arrive on late College buses or when lifts to College are delayed because of poor weather, accidents on the road or roadworks. As these incidences often result in greater numbers of students arriving late, we ask them to go the Sport Hall in the morning so that they can be registered and set up for a successful day. In individual cases, we really appreciate it when parents and carers call our reception to let us know about unforeseen lateness and often it can alert us to local challenges that we may not be aware of. Every morning, we have a team of staff present at both main entrances welcoming students to College, checking uniform and responding to lateness effectively.

Jackets and Blazers

This week we have experienced repeated torrential downpours of rain. To ensure that students keep dry we urge them to bring a jacket or coat to school. We kindly request that, where possible, jackets and coats are plain in colour with a hood for bad weather. As previously shared, hooded tops are not allowed on the College site and are not permitted to be worn under blazers instead of coats or jackets. Students are expected to arrive to College in the morning and to lessons with their blazers on and to maintain the high standards of uniform achieved by them, we kindly ask that jackets and coats are worn over and not instead of

blazers. This will ensure that shirts, blouses and blazers remain dry and maximise students' comfort in and between lessons.

Disruption-Free Learning

Our classrooms are calm and focussed. Repeatedly, across all Year Groups, students are commenting about how much more work they are getting done and how much easier it is for them to contribute. Staff are sharing that they are covering the curriculum in greater depth and that they are seeing significant gains in student confidence since the start of the academic year.

SEND Students

Our SEND students, for whom environments that are free from disruption and distraction are even more critical to their success, are benefitting from the calm and focussed classroom environment. We recognise that the support of our SEND students sometimes requires adjustments to be made to our routines so that they too are given the greatest opportunity to succeed. Where appropriate, if a student with additional needs is sanctioned, our Inclusion Team will ensure that, prior to removal from class, their needs had been planned for in the delivery of lessons. This triage process will ensure that sanctions are delivered accurately and that time in lessons is prioritised.

I hope that this letter provides further clarity to the areas shared and supports your discussions at home with your children.

On behalf of all staff at the College, thank you for your continued support, enabling us to prioritise the quality of education for all children at Ivybridge Community College.

Yours faithfully
Rachel Hutchinson

Principal