

14th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

As we embark on what we hope will be the return of something close to a normal academic year and look back upon what have been the two hardest years that teachers and students the world over have had to face, we wanted to write to you to tell you about some important changes that have been made to the school behaviour system and the way in which we will be managing the students' behaviour moving forward.

Now more than ever as a society we are aware of the impact that mental and emotional health has on wellbeing, particularly in young people. Without doubt the pandemic and two periods of lockdown has had a significant impact upon a great number of people including our students.

For some time at the Academy we have been looking for a different approach to manage the behaviour of our students. Children are expected to deal with a multitude of factors in their everyday lives and this often has a significant bearing over their behaviour and ability to regulate their own emotions.

As we are part of the Wensum Trust, we have been in the fortunate position of receiving a variety of high quality training and lectures from experts in their fields on issues such as; child trauma, emotion regulation and restorative practice and our own professional reading in this area has allowed us to develop a far greater understanding of our learners and their emotional needs and responses.

At the end of the last academic year we were lucky enough to have a two day visit from Dr Sarah Modi, who is an educational psychologist who works for Emotion Coaching UK. Sarah had led some training for the staff previously but was keen to come and see how the school was deploying the training into the behaviour system and in helping the students become sufficient in managing and regulating their own emotions and behaviour. The visit was invaluable and gave us some real clarity about the journey that we are on and how far we have already come in transitioning away from our old traditional approaches to behaviour, to something that is going to be far more beneficial for the students in the long term.

With this in mind we have made the following changes for this academic year. Our Reflection Room is no longer referred to as space for correcting poor behaviour. Instead, the school community will view this space as an emotional hospital. It is a place where students can go when they have become emotionally dysregulated or need support, this can be either teacher or self-referred. The pastoral team will then use their training and the equipment at their disposal to help children to regulate

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their emotions before returning to lessons. Any children who need additional support or intervention will still receive this from our pastoral team within our Engage setting but this will not be necessary in all cases.

Following significant behaviour events students will be invited to attend restorative meetings with staff and mediators. During restorative meetings, incidents can be discussed and all viewpoints considered before targets are agreed and a line drawn under events. Our aim is that every lesson is a fresh start for all children with everyone clear about the expectations and positive relationships are continually promoted.

The last part of an incident resolution for this year will be a reparation between the student and the teacher or the school community. Following the restorative meeting, the student will be invited to select a gesture from our 'Give Back Menu'. This is a menu of gestures of varying levels which require the student to invest some time into repairing the relationship between themselves and the teacher or contribute to the school community in some way. From the vast majority of information that was gathered last academic year, the biggest issues causing flash points within the classrooms stemmed from relationship breakdown between staff and students and we feel that this investment between both parties will go a long way to improving that scenario and minimising these issues.

As an extension of this we have made the decision that this year there will no longer be any detentions set at the school. All of the research in the area suggests that behaviour related sanctions such as detentions have little or no impact, with students struggling to make the links between their behaviour and the sanction that they complete days or weeks later. Instead in order to see meaningful changes in behaviour, having purposeful, structured conversations with the students enables them to understand what the issues were and then learn from them in order that the same behaviour is not repeated.

I'd like to draw your attention to a video that I have made for Emotion Coaching UK which highlights the behaviour journey that Acle Academy has been on. This video is the rationale behind all of the changes that we have made and the vision that we have for behaviour moving forward.

<https://youtu.be/zYtg6VQXnUs>

We hope that you share our views on this move towards a more humanist approach in relation to behaviour and we look forward to your continued support throughout this academic year so that we are able to help every child realise their full potential.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards



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