



## ALSOP HIGH SCHOOL

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we have come to the mid-point of this half term, I wanted to take the opportunity to share with you some of my reflections from the past four weeks, alongside some key reminders on our standards and expectations to support you and your child in contributing to a positive culture within our school.

I referenced in my letter in July the school improvement journey we are on and how we are shifting our culture in school. I also mentioned that everyone, regardless of starting point or challenge in life, has the ability to contribute positively and be the best version of themselves by working hard, being kind and fulfilling their potential by always looking to push their personal best; true high-performance learning.

My personal commitment to our school improvement journey remains clear; if it wouldn't be good enough for my own two children at home, then it isn't good enough for our children here in our school. Where matters in our school have not met this expectation, swift action has been taken to address this and I will continue to drive this personal commitment and lead our school with passion, integrity and a relentless ambition on providing the best possible school experience for every child.

For us to uphold this ambition, it is critical that we continue to work together positively and I would like to recognise and thank the overwhelming majority of you for your support in ensuring that your child has started the new academic year positively and **Ready to Learn**. School, Parents/Carers and Students working together towards a common goal; **Achieving Excellence Together!**

A small number of parents and students, however, are not currently supporting our positive drive to improve our culture. Although only a small minority, it is a negative minority who take up a huge amount of time and energy with little back in return, so it is critical that I highlight again the specific points I made in July regarding our parental responsibilities:

- Ensuring our children attend school on-time every day is our parental responsibility.
- Ensuring our children are wearing the correct uniform every day is our parental responsibility.
- Ensuring our children take responsibility for their actions and supporting school with consequences / sanctions when they make wrong choices is our parental responsibility.
- Engaging positively and respectfully with our child's school and staff is our parental responsibility.

Please do not confuse this message as a lack of support or empathy, as I understand that our young people will make mistakes and that this is part of growing up and learning. We will, of course, continue to support every student to remove any barriers to learning, to meet our expectations and to demonstrate our Learning Habits independently.

Let it be clear for everyone, however. Those students and / or parents who are not working with us or who continue to cause issues / negatively impact on others will be tackled. I never celebrate punishments such as suspensions or Permanent Exclusions, but I want to assure you that where students have crossed our 'Red Line', swift action has been taken and, disappointingly, but in the best interests of the wider school community, I have levied a handful of Permanent Exclusions as a result within these first few weeks.

Some parents may not appreciate this direct tone. However, I am confident that the positive majority who are working with us, and equally as frustrated with the negative minority, will appreciate that I'm highlighting that although we will continue to shine a bright light of positivity on those students who are contributing positively and upholding our Learning Habits, we will tackle those who are negatively impacting on the experience of the majority.

### **A reminder of our Learning Habits:**

I urge you to discuss the key points below related to our Learning Habits with your child, especially if we have already shared concerns with you over the course of the past four weeks, as we will continue to have a positive and relentless focus on each area so we can maximise learning, reduce negativity and improve our culture.

<b>Learning Habit</b>	<b>How to contribute to a positive culture</b>
<b>A</b> ttitude to learning is positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uphold our school rules on <b>mobile devices – these should not be seen/heard during the school day</b>. If seen/heard they will be confiscated and returned to students at the end of the day.</li><li>• Always try your best, stay on task and contribute positively to lessons.</li><li>• Always look to learn and improve, pushing your personal best every day.</li></ul>
<b>L</b> isten and act on instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond positively to instructions from <b>ALL</b> staff; <b>first time and every time</b>.</li><li>• Do not answer back, ignore or challenge instructions from members of staff.</li></ul>
<b>S</b> mart uniform and correct equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Always wear the full correct uniform and with a sense of pride; <b>look smart &amp; work smart</b>.</li><li>• No blue shirts – our uniform is a white shirt and is to be worn with our school jumper and blazer.</li><li>• Appropriate footwear, <b>not sports / leisure trainers</b>, as detailed in our <b>Uniform Expectations</b> on our website and previously shared with parents / carers.</li><li>• No caps or hats to be worn at any time and <b>all outerwear removed before</b> entering lessons.</li></ul>
<b>O</b> n time; punctuality and deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All students should attend school <b>EVERY DAY</b> and aim for 100% attendance.</li><li>• All students should be on site and at <b>Morning Line Up by the 8:25am bell</b> – no exceptions.</li><li>• Move quickly to <b>every lesson on the bell without delay</b>; be on-time and Ready to Learn.</li></ul>
<b>P</b> olite and respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate polite &amp; respectful behaviour to other students and staff</li><li>• <b>Be proud of and look after our school</b> – put litter in the bin and look after <b>YOUR</b> learning environment.</li><li>• Respect everyone’s right to learn; do not disrupt the learning of others.</li></ul>

### **Further clarity on mobile phones / electronic devices:**

As I stated in my last letter, as a parent I fully understand that you may want your child to have a mobile phone so you can make sure that they’re safe on the way to and from school. I made clear, however, the distraction they can cause in school and the potential for misuse with social media and links to any concerns or issues outside of school.

There is plenty of research linked to the benefits of restricting mobile phone usage in school, including improved academic outcomes and improved mental health, with a recent report from UNESCO, the UN's education, science and culture agency stating, “*Mobile devices can cause distraction, risk pupil privacy and lead to cyber-bullying.*” The Education Secretary is also due to announce this week further clarity for schools on restricting mobile phone usage.

Our school rule has always been clear on mobile phones and linked devices such as Air Pods: **they should not be seen or heard during the school day unless under the direct instruction from a member of staff**. We will continue to uphold this and I appreciate your support in discussing this with your child and helping us to minimise disruptions to learning. Any failure to co-operate will be deemed as defiance and escalated accordingly.

As always, I trust I can count on your full parental support in supporting our school improvement journey and positive focus on shifting our culture. To those parents, however, who will not support us with this positive drive to support our culture, I urge you to consider if Alsop is the right school for you and your child, and I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss your next steps.

I look forward to celebrating our students’ successes and positive contributions further with you over the coming weeks, especially the announcement of our Student Leadership Team, our Inter-House Champions from the events this first half term and positive news stories across our curriculum areas. In the meantime, if you have any concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact us as we are here to support you and your child; **Achieving Excellence Together**.

Yours faithfully,



Paul Masher  
Headteacher