

Monday 5th September

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

Welcome back – it was so lovely to see all our happy and smart children return today. Thank you for ensuring your children were in on time – what a great start. It was also great to talk to so many familiar and new faces at drop off this morning.

We are aware that for some parents our request for children to return to being in full school uniform every day, and bring in their PE kit on PE days, has caused some concerns. As always, we are grateful to those parents that took the time to give us their views. We are always keen to listen and this letter is to reassure you that we have heard you and are responding accordingly. As you probably know, the pupils designed the uniform many years ago and we continue to be very proud of how smart they all look.

The rationale for having PE kits worn into school started during Covid and continued as we entered the summer term of intensely hot weather. I think we all agree that Sports Day was a triumph, but had to be managed carefully to keep parents and children safe as the temperatures soared. The reason for reverting to children wearing full uniform every day and changing for PE was based on several factors. Firstly, we are entering the winter months and the PE uniform is not as warm as a full school uniform. Secondly, we noticed that towards the end of the year the strict PE uniform was not consistently being worn by all; in some year groups this affected behaviour and attitudes to learning with some children regarding the day as a Mufti Day. Our motto's Manners Matters and Aiming for Excellence continue to be central to our ethos.

We have, however, listened to your thoughts about this change. In total, 7% of the school community contacted us directly and of that 7%, 90% put forward a calm and reflective rationale as to why they preferred the children to come into school in their PE uniform on PE days. The reception team are human and have been upset by the tone used by a very small minority of parents. As we always advocate, working together in partnership helps resolve issues and move things forward in a positive manner.

Going forward, we are giving the choice to you, the parents. On the days that the children are doing PE, you can either send them in full school uniform with their kit in a bag, or you can send them in their school PE uniform. Please remember, children **must** wear the school PE top and plain navy-blue shorts (and a dark blue or grey tracksuit in the colder months). If a child turns up in a football strip (or other deviations) you will be contacted and asked to bring the correct PE kit into school.

On another note, can we please remind you that for health and safety reasons, the Governors have held strong on our **no earring and jewellery** policy. We have noticed a few children with earrings today, please

ensure these are removed for tomorrow. Children will not be allowed to do PE if they are wearing jewellery. If your child has had their ears pierced over the summer, we will allow a 6-week period for you to send the child in with plasters/tape over their ears (we will not be providing this, so please send child in with spares). By half term, ALL earrings must be removed before they come to school each morning.

We appreciate that the cost of living for all of us has become a challenge and we do realise that school uniform (especially as your children are constantly growing) is yet another cost. We have listened and made some small changes that will hopefully help address some of the cost of living concerns raised. The school uniform policy can be found on the website <https://www.castlehillprimary.net/parents/uniform-personal-belongings>.

If you are still struggling please contact the school office as we have access, via Fundraising Friends, to a lot of good quality, low cost second-hand uniform.

Hopefully we have now addressed all concerns whilst reassuring all parents that our traditional values have not been compromised. These values are the reason more than 150 families applied for 60 places. As always, we continue to work in partnership and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr John DF Martin and the Castle Hill Team