15th March 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Following our Ofsted visit where we celebrated so much improvement, we would also like to share with you how we wish to further improve based on their observations.

We told Ofsted about the extraordinary challenges families in Bolton faced during the pandemic being under restrictions for longer than anywhere else in the country. We shared how one of the side effects of our lengthy local lockdowns is that some young people became more addicted to mobile technology and are less equipped to be able to reason through conflict. We shared that our pastoral team has had to expand to be able to deal with incidents that happen out of school online or between families, but then play out in school. We shared with the Ofsted team that we are completing a piece of work around building a stronger culture at St Joseph’s so that young people feel such a strong allegiance to our school family and such a strong sense of empathy for each other and the world around them that they show improved attitudes and behaviour to each other. To do this fully we need the support of staff, parent/carers and students.

Funding is a bigger challenge than ever but we have already make good headway in implementing the following:

* We have appointed a new student support team member (Miss Williamson) to work with those whose behaviour is compromising the experience of others.
* We have directed funds to making our site safer and increase supervision
* We have engaged a masculinity programme to help channel the energy of boys and will also be working with the Girls Aloud ‘Big Sister’ project again.
* We have stressed the dangers of drug use (particularly the use of vapes) and also spent time exploring appropriate online activity in tutor times and in our personal development curriculum.
* We have shared through form tutors the need to respect our environment and place litter responsibly in our recycling bins.
* We have had a drive to improve the consistency of basic standards – we have introduced a D4 detention for defiance, so that we can take a stand on those who compromise our ability to run the school safely.
* We have had a mission week encouraging our young people to be empathetic and also to look to the future and to be prepared for whatever career they choose when they take their place in the world.
* We invited the Mizens in to remind young people of the catastrophic pain that can be caused through a single act of violence as they shared the story of their son Jimmy.
* We have hired a former HMI inspector to listen to young people’s views on behaviour and attitudes and we have plans to re-develop our nurture provision for those who benefit from a safe base within school. We are looking to implement some more rewards suggested by our students to motivate young people to be the best they can be. We are also listening to young people to then design experiences that help create ‘family memory moments’ so that students, staff, governors, parents and carers are genuinely proud to be part of our school.

This means we will be calling meetings with parents and carers of young people who have compromised our behaviour standard. We know that it is tempting for parents and carers to deflect away from the child’s behaviour by pointing out others or trying to justify it but we hope that parents and carers will work with us so that children see a united front.

We encourage all parents and carers to check what their child writes on social media. If they are hesitant to show adults their phone, it could be that they are involved in something that will cause harm or pain meaning that we may have to intervene. We all need to be conscious that the more time a child spends on electronics, the more ‘mechanical’ their brain will become and the less they will be able to engage comfortably with others.

We also ask that every child wears our uniform correctly and comes to school well equipped. We will help any child who is struggling to afford items, but we do expect that they look after what they have been given.

Many thanks for all your support and cooperation over the years. The success of our school is very much down to a partnership between governors, staff, parents and carers and young people and I would like to thank you all for your contribution to all that we have achieved and all that we will achieve together. If you have any suggestions questions or concerns please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us in the usual way.

Kind Regards

Mr T McCabe