

April 2019

Dear Parents/ Carers,

So much has happened since my last 'Headteacher's letter to parents' that it is quite difficult to know where to start and what to include in this update. I will include what I think are the main headlines but as always, please have a look at our website where you will find a lot more about what has been going on.

Reviewing the school menus

Firstly, I should say that Mr Khan and his team in the kitchens do a truly amazing job and I want to thank them publicly in this letter. As part of the constant drive to improve all aspects of school life at Eastbrook, we have just undergone a review of the food we provide for our students. In the primary school we recently implemented a much wider choice of main courses and 'healthier' options such as jacket potatoes, salad and fruit. The response from the students so far has been very positive.

In the secondary school I put a working party of students together to consult about what we provide for them. After a couple of meetings to discuss what they would like to see on the menu, we then held a tasting session where students could rank a range of new dishes that Mr Khan had prepared. The results of this process will be implemented after Easter. A big thank you to Ms Southan who has coordinated the consultation

Reviewing the School Day

Many students and Parents have spoken to me about some of the issues they saw in the structure of the school day. Mainly this was to do with lunchtime not being long enough to eat properly and relax before afternoon lessons began. Again, there has been a wide consultation with students and staff and one of the new features will be 10 minutes longer for lunch.

We are also now going to have a breakfast sitting between 8.00 and 8.30, so that students who don't get to eat before they leave for school can do so when they arrive but this is of course, optional. Prices will be advertised on the School Website

We have introduced a short form time at the start of the day. This is for a number of reasons, but the main ones are to ensure good punctuality to school and to give the tutors the chance to ensure that their students are equipped and ready for the day ahead. Similarly, we have put a 20-minute form time at the end of the day. This will be used for a range of activities around 'Personal Development' but will also give tutors the opportunity to review the day with their students and address any issues or concerns. A summary of the new day is in the table below; it will start after Easter and be under review during the summer term

8.00 - 8.30	Breakfast
8.40 - 8.50	Form
8.50 - 8.55	Movement Time
8.55 - 9.50	Period 1
9.50 - 9.55	Movement Time
9.55 - 10.50	Period 2
10.50 - 11.10	Break

11.15 – 12.10	Period 3
12.10 – 12.15	Movement Time
12.15 – 1.10	Period 4
1.10 – 1.45	Lunch
1.50 – 2.45	Period 5
2.45 – 2.50	Movement Time
2.50 – 3.10	Personal Development

The EBK 150

This brilliant rewards system was developed by the Staff Behaviour Working Group and the students themselves. Students are given a score for every lesson during the week – this adds up to a possible 150 points. Those who score the highest over a week, half term or term are rewarded with a range of prizes along with their parents being informed how well they are doing. The intention was to ensure that we recognise and celebrate the efforts of those students who are consistently well behaved and try as hard as they can in every lesson and it is working; more and more students are giving their very best in an effort to secure the highest points scores. Please note - if students are late or absent they score zero for that lesson, and as such it has already had a very positive impact on punctuality and attendance.

Amazing Students

I must mention one individual by name. Until recently we had no idea that Marigona Beluli (Y10) was so incredibly talented at Karate. She is quite a quiet student and not one to boast about her achievements, so it was only by accident that I found out. Since I became aware, I have been taking a keen interest in her progress and performances and I am delighted to inform our parents that she competed in the European championships recently and came home with two gold medals and one silver medal! Well done Marigona your school is proud of you!

Please also spare a thought for our Year 11 and 13 students who are working incredibly hard to prepare for their summer exams. The school is doing everything it possibly can to support them all, but ultimately it is down to each individual student to ensure they are as ready as they can be when the exams start. It is pretty tough and relentless at this stage, but I am sure that the hard work will seem worth it when they get their results. Similarly, our year 1 and 2 students are busily getting ready for their phonics and SATs tests later in the year. I am sure the whole school community wish them all well.

Debate Mate

Parents may be aware that the school has a strong history of debating. We believe this develops and encourages essential life skills and we see the benefits of it in the students who participate regularly. Over the last couple of months our debating teams have been competing in the Urban Debate League organised by Debate Mate. During the initial rounds they participated in inter-school debate rounds with other schools in the area and the results of each of these debate rounds are entered into a national league. The top performing schools go through to a grand final. **Our debate teams have done exceptionally well by finishing 5th in the league, 3rd in London and they are the top performing school in the borough. The teams will compete in the grand final in May.** Very well done to all involved

Student Recruitment

I am delighted to inform you that more Year 6 students and their parents have chosen to come to Eastbrook next year than at any time in recent years. Due to this scheduled expansion we are now looking to recruit teachers in a wide range of subjects. These are exciting times and I will keep parents informed as things progress.

Free School Meals

We recently uploaded some information onto our website about parents claiming **Free School Meals**. I urge all parents to have a look and see if it applies to them. Not only is this entitlement very helpful for the parents themselves, but it can also bring a lot of money into the school which would go towards the education of our students. It is what is known as a 'win win' situation so please have a look and get in touch if you have any queries.

Student Attendance

Although it is improving rapidly at Eastbrook , there are still too many students and parents who don't realise the impact of poor attendance. Research shows it is quite simple – virtually all students who attend 95% or better do very well in school, students between 95% and 90% are at significant risk of underachievement, and students below 90% are almost certain to do poorly. Please consider where your child is on this scale and ensure that they achieve 95% or better from now on.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to thank all parents for their continued support and wish everyone in our school community a peaceful and relaxing break.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Frith', written in a cursive style.

Mr Frith
Headteacher