

November 2022

Dear Families,

Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Issues

I am writing to you to share information regarding behaviour issues in the local area. I have liaised with Mr Walklate, Headteacher at Erasmus Darwin Academy and Staffordshire Police and we feel a collective message to our families about our contextual behavioural issues at present is required. Before I proceed with further information, this letter is not intended to question how you parent your child. The letter is intended to offer help, guidance and support to ensure that the school environment remains calm and orderly and that the children in the community are kept safe.

You may be aware of a very serious incident that occurred on Monday evening (31st October) at Burntwood Leisure Centre where large groups of teenagers gathered and behaved in a way that was simply unacceptable. Both schools are in the process of liaising with the police to investigate who was present so that this can be followed up accordingly with students and families. Unfortunately, a very small minority of students feel it is appropriate to bring 'street' behaviour and mentality into school. This type of behaviour will not be tolerated at Chase Terrace Academy. We take a thorough approach to analysing behaviour data in school and I am very proud that most of our students have an excellent behaviour record. However, there are a small minority of students who are demonstrating behaviour that is unacceptable and this needs to rapidly change. Myself and Mr Cain (Deputy Headteacher) have already been meeting with families to discuss their child's behaviour and we will continue this in the coming weeks.

When I reference 'street' behaviour I am referring to the following and I encourage families to discuss this with their children and actively check to see if any of these traits are currently evident in your child's behaviour:

- The wearing of balaclavas. Children in the local community have increasingly been seen wearing balaclavas on the streets at night. Wearing a balaclava is associated with either hiding your face because you don't want to be identified or because you are trying to intimidate another person. Please check if your child possesses a balaclava and check they are not in possession of one when they go out into the community.
- Vaping. We have written home about vaping previously and informed families about what steps to take to check your child is not in possession of an illegal vape. This continues to be prevalent within the community. Please check your child is not in possession of a vape.
- Carrying weapons or imitation weapons. Staffordshire Police have reported that an increase number of children in the local area have been caught carrying weapons. Should any student bring a weapon into school this will result in a permanent exclusion, in line with our behaviour policy.

- Gathering in large groups and demonstrating anti-social behaviour. This involves using foul and abusive language between themselves and also to members of the public. We work incredibly hard at CTA to ensure that our students treat each other and the staff with genuine mutual respect. On a daily basis I can proudly say that the relationships between students is very positive and I want this to continue when students are in the community.
- Attending and filming organised fights. At CTA fights are incredibly rare. So when I hear that our students are attending, glamorising and filming (and then sharing) arranged fights I find this deeply concerning.

As parents, the advice and guidance we give is that you check the following:

- Where your child is at night, who they are with and what they are doing.
- If they are going to the Leisure Centre, please be aware that we have been informed the surrounding areas have been used for storing, hiding and supplying drugs.
- If your child is in possession of an illegal vape, weapon or any form of clothing that could be seen as intimidating. When conducting searches at school, we have found that students are very creative with their hiding places.
- If you use a tracking device on a mobile phone do not always believe your child is where the device states. Children will leave their phone in a friend's house and go out into the community.
- If your child is out in the community, ring them frequently.
- Check your child's phone frequently, particularly check their social media platforms and their messages. We are becoming increasingly aware that students are arranging things via social media.

We are here to educate children and we believe that whilst your child's behaviour is your responsibility outside of school hours, we will support and issue sanctions should any child be considered to be bringing the Academy into disrepute. In order to educate children on these points the following takes place at CTA:

- We have weekly pastoral briefings which tutors will share with students. These outline the behaviours we expect and how we want the students to behave and interact.
- Assemblies always have key messages on behaviour and attitude.
- We are liaising with Staffordshire Police and other crime prevention agencies to keep up to date with current issues outside of school such as organised crime where vulnerable children can be targeted.
- The agencies mentioned above work closely with CTA and provide training and support to our staff so they best support your child should this be required.
- We are investigating the possibility of having a knife arch brought into school to educate students on the dangers of knife crime.

Changes to the CTA Behaviour for Learning Policy

At the end of last Academic year, the Department for Education released a number of updated documents regarding behaviour in schools. As a result, over the last half term we have updated our policies to reflect these changes. These changes were communicated to you in the summer term and at the start of the autumn term. As a reminder, a removal from lesson results in a 60 minute detention.

To reiterate again, this letter is not a criticism or judgement of how you parent your child. I see it as my responsibility to keep you informed of what we are dealing with in school and what our contextual problems are. We are stronger if we work together and ultimately, your child's education and safety is paramount to us all. I meet regularly with my Senior Team to evaluate the information we gather on behaviour, and I have shared these findings with all staff and students last week.

Our aim, as a school, is for every child that walks through the gates of CTA to be educated to the best of our ability, to keep them safe, to get them to understand genuine mutual respect and to ensure they are ready for their next steps. Thank you for your support and understanding in this very important matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N. Mason', with a decorative flourish at the end.

Ms N Mason
Headteacher