



21 January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a great start to this term and have been particularly pleased to see improvements in attendance, especially in Years 7 and 11. Your continued support to make sure your child is in school every day is something we rely on – please do get in touch if you have any concerns regarding your child’s attendance so we can support you with any individual challenges.

As ever, our website, Facebook page and Twitter feed are full of great news stories – do take time to have a look and catch up with the tremendous range of activities going on here at Colmers. Highlights include a local Robotics competition, information on careers advice and our star appearance in the National Arts Award video - special congratulations go to Todd Green, Daisy Drennan and Miss Flynn for their film debuts which can be found at <https://youtu.be/uoqDUXgCUjQ>.

I have a number of important updates for you below. I also attach a letter from our police colleagues who are alerting parents and carers to the risks of criminal exploitation of young people in relation to drugs and county lines.

Key updates:

- Road Safety
- Curriculum consultation
- Year 11 Pre-Public Exams 2
- Year 8 Options process
- Winter Season reports
- Police update letter

Road Safety

We were really concerned this week when one of our students was involved in a road traffic accident. Fortunately, he is recovering well and I was particularly impressed by the assistance two of our students gave him at the time of the accident. I have reminded all students of the need to remain alert and vigilant when crossing the road, to always use pedestrian crossings and especially to avoid wearing headphones so that they can hear as well as see traffic. I would be grateful if you could reinforce these messages at home.

Curriculum Consultation Wednesday January 23rd , 11 a.m. or 5.30 p.m.

I will be meeting with parents during two slots on Wednesday 23rd, at 11 a.m. and 5.30pm, to discuss ideas for our curriculum next year. Please contact school reception on 0121 453 1778 or email enquiries@colmers.school if you would like to join either of the sessions. Last week I had the first of two meetings with students who have volunteered to be part of this consultation and, as ever, it was great to hear their ideas.



Year 11 Pre-Public Examinations 2

As the GCSE exam period draws ever closer, Year 11 are now in the thick of preparation and will sit their next set of practice examinations in the week commencing March 4th. Large numbers of our students are now benefitting from on-line learning, using GCSEPod, Mathswatch and Tassomai in particular to help them with revision. We are also ramping up our Period 6 revision sessions. Although we have some target lists of students based on current forecast grades, every student is welcome to attend additional sessions in any of the subjects offered.

Year 8 Options Process

Later this term, we launch the process for Year 8 students to consider the options they would like to study for GCSE. Please remember to keep February 28th free for our special curriculum options evening.

Winter Season Assessments and Reports

This week is our main Winter Season assessment week and staff will be completing the next round of progress reports for your child. These will be available through our SIMSApp from the week commencing February 11th. If you have not downloaded the App yet and need some help to get it onto your phone, do contact school reception for advice. You will now receive notifications of any ABC Recognition your child receives each day, as well as being able to check on attendance and find out about any detentions issued.

As ever, if you have any concerns about your child do please contact me and I will make sure the best person to respond gets back to you as soon as possible.

Best wishes,

Emma Leaman
Headteacher



Dear Parents/Carers,

'COUNTY LINES' EXPLOITATION

It is likely you have heard the term 'County Lines' used in the news recently. This is a growing form of criminal activity that exists nationally, regionally across the West Midlands and here in Birmingham. County Lines is a term used to describe how gangs and organised criminal networks export illegal drugs into other (mainly rural) areas by exploiting children and vulnerable adults, often without them realising it. Gang members may use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to do this. We are clear that this is child exploitation.

WARNING SIGNS

We want to support parents and carers to keep children safe; listed below are some warning signs of 'County Lines' exploitation for you to look out for. Often, these are behavioural changes such as:

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places

Birmingham schools are working together with West Midlands Police and partners, including The Children's Society, to prevent and spot signs of exploitation at the earliest opportunity. We're keen that parents are also aware of 'County Lines', know where to ask for more support if they are worried and know that you will be listened to and supported.

If you have any concerns about your child, speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences. You may wish to contact a member of the Pastoral Team at school if you feel you need support or believe your child is at risk. We can talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

If you or your child are aware that other young people in school or the community are at risk of 'County Lines' or any criminal exploitation, you should contact the police directly via 101. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org. If a crime is taking place or a life is in danger, call 999 immediately.

There are some links overleaf that you may find useful for more information.



<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines> (on The Children's Society's website there are also guides for parents available in 14 different languages).

<https://www.fearless.org/professionals/resources/gangs>

<https://www.youandco.org.uk/crime-info/violent-crime-facts/gangs-and-street-violence>

<https://www.spurgeons.org/>

Yours faithfully

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