



Bramcote College

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

14th February 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's hard to believe that we find ourselves at the midway point of the school year already; 3 half terms have now passed and there are still 3 to come. Looking back to September I feel we have achieved a great deal, with Year 7s settling in and Years 10 and 12 getting started on their new GCSE, A Level and BTEC courses. Students have enjoyed trips to places as diverse as CERN in Switzerland, Portugal and a range of universities, exhibitions and sporting events. We are looking forward to our upcoming production of *Oliver* (25th – 28th March), as well as working hard to prepare our Year 11, 13 (and some Year 10 and 12) students for their summer exams. A school year is always a busy year, and at this mid-point it is good chance to take stock of what has been achieved and what has yet to be done.

Exams

The summer exams are starting to come into focus for Years 11 and 13 especially but also for Years 10 and 12; I have every confidence that the Exams Team and Student Support and pastoral team are not only working hard to make the exams run as smoothly as possible but also to support your child through this potentially stressful process. The first GCSE exam is on May 8th, with the last on June 18th and the emergency 'Contingency' day on June 25th (please don't take any Year 11s or 13s on holiday before this date). Individual timetables should be coming out at the end of February and will be re-issued closer to the exams. We are planning a range of workshops around how to revise, managing stress and tackling exam questions for students throughout March and April. In addition to this, I would like to invite parents and carers of Years 10 to 13 to our 'Exam Success' evening on Thursday 13th March (6-7:30pm); it is a drop in session which gives you a chance to gather information and advice on all aspects of exams, revision, stress management and more specific suggestions around supporting children with special educational needs or anxiety through the process. More details will come out shortly after the end of half term.

Uniform

I feel I must raise the perennial issue of uniform; while the vast majority of our students wear their uniform correctly, there remains a handful of students who bend the rules to breaking point. Some of our most frequent issues are round students not wearing the blazer that parents / carers have purchased; they are often squashed into school bags and replaced by a jumper over their school shirt or a coat. We have been conscious of having as few branded items of school uniform as possible, with only the blazer, tie and PE t-shirt being compulsory branded items. I would like to reiterate that jumpers are not a replacement for blazers, and neither are coats; a jumper can be worn under a blazer and a coat can be worn over a blazer but not instead of.

We are also noticing more impractically short skirts, which often mean that students are walking around constantly adjusting their skirts or holding them down. It may be the case that a skirt that was long enough in September may not be long enough 6 months later due to teenage growth spurts and a replacement is now needed. We have a lot of clean and, in most cases, new, items of school uniform which we will lend to students if they come into school and their uniform doesn't meet our school expectations; uniform will be a particular focus in the first few weeks back after the half term break.

In preparation for the second half of the school year, I wanted to raise a few key issues which have been coming into sharper focus in recent months, not just at Bramcote College but also in the national media.

Mobile Phones

As the debate about the impact of mobile phones and social media on students' mental health continues in the press, our own experience shows that they disrupt learning environments and create challenges as we work to safeguard students on school grounds. Research also suggests that mobile phones are impacting young people's mental wellbeing by never being able to 'switch off' and the stresses of situations being taken out of context and escalating at a worrying rate. The expectation is very clear; phones should not be seen or heard on the school site.

In response, we feel we must increase the sanction for students when we see or hear their phone on school grounds:

- **First time** – 20-minute correction
- **Second time** – Correction until 4:00 PM
- **Third time** – Correction until 4:00 PM, and a parent will be required to collect the phone

While we appreciate the need for many students to have mobile phones for traveling to and from school, we continue to see students abusing this privilege by using their phones on school grounds. Before entering the school grounds, students should turn off their phones and place them in their bags.

We will be reviewing these sanctions in the summer and if necessary, we may make further increases to the sanctions to ensure the school remains phone free and lessons remain undisturbed.

As parents / carers, you can support us by ensuring that students only bring their phones if you believe they require them for traveling to and from school. I would also ask you to use school Reception or Student Support to contact your child and avoid contacting them via their mobiles during the school day when they are in lessons.

Home-School understanding

Unfortunately, as this year has progressed, staff at the school have noted an increase in overly challenging or inappropriate communication with a small but growing number of parents / carers. While I do appreciate that emotions are understandably involved when we are discussing your children with you, I feel that the time has come to clarify what should be expected around home-school communications. I believe it is important for you, as parents / carers, to know what you can expect from the staff at Bramcote College regarding communications, and it is also important to set out what we are able to accept as a school, should communications become more intense.

Please find attached the Home School Agreement, which outlines this; I would appreciate it if you could read it and click the link to acknowledge that you have done so.

Successful students thrive on positive relationships between school and home, so I am always grateful for the support we receive from parents / carers, and I am keen to continue to build links between us in support of your children. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about our next Parents' Forum, which is online on Thursday 6th March between 6:00pm and 7:00pm focusing on the RSE curriculum and any questions raised in advance on other topics. To register your interest and request a meeting invite, please complete the below link

[Parent Forum Request Form](#)

As we approach the end of February and then March, I am looking forward to sunnier and hopefully warmer weather and all the good things that spring and summer will bring.

Please feel free to get in touch should you wish to discuss any of the points I have raised.

Warm regards,

Heidi Gale

Headteacher