



Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope that you've all had a great summer holiday and that the first few days of school go well. The first week back after the summer holidays can sometimes be tricky, whether your child is just starting school or whether they are a returner! Getting back into a routine, remembering all of the things that need to be remembered and sometimes just getting out of the house on time when everything is conspiring to stop you – can all make this time of the year a bit fraught. I hope that the children continue to settle and that we have a great year with minimal disruption. The staff have been busy over the summer preparing for the start of term (we surprised a few pupils when we appeared in the Spar!) and they are all looking forward to teaching your children.

### **Cost of Living**

We are acutely aware that it is particularly tough at the moment for everyone due to the increase in the cost of living. This has and will continue to put a strain on family incomes for some time. Whilst we appreciate some families won't feel the strain as much as others, a good proportion of families will struggle. Alongside families, school has also been hit by increases across the board with no additional funding to fill the gap. Examples of this is the doubling of transportation costs for school trips and the tripling in cost of paper and exercise books. In the past, schools would have been able to absorb some of the costs or subsidise to some extent but we are unable to do that (we don't know for certain what our energy bill will be). The situation, for everyone, is really difficult and we want to make it as fair as possible. We're aware that children have missed out on a lot over the last few years but also aware that families and school can't financially support every additional opportunity.

We will be issuing a questionnaire soon asking for opinions on what actions we might take shortly.

Please contact us if you require advice or assistance.

### **Paperless Communications**

Before the cost of living crisis begun we had earmarked September 2022 to be a time to move the vast majority of communication to more sustainable electronic means – the increase in cost of paper has sped the process up slightly. From September 2022 all letters and communication will come via email or text. Please make sure that you update your contact details so you receive all communication. Thank you for your support in this matter.

### **Work over the summer**

For some of you that have been pupils in our school you would probably recognised the toilets in our KS2 building. We worked out that they haven't been altered in at least 30 years. Over the summer all of the toilets have been refurbished and look (and smell) great. We'll show pictures in our first newsletter next week. This is something that we have wanted to do for some time and something that will make a massive difference for pupils for many years to come.

We have also made some additional alterations to the KS2 entrance and added further fobbed security locks in the KS2 area of the school.

## **Attendance**

For those parents and carers with children in school last year you will be aware that I informed you that attendance will be monitored in a different way from September 2022. The Government have changed the process of managing low attendance and are insisting that Local Authorities issue fines for families taking children out of school. We are changing our processes within school and will be issuing those formally shortly. Whilst as a parent I understand the reasons for taking children out, as Headteacher I have to comply with Dudley LA. We are here to help families who are having difficulty getting children into school and encourage you to ask for help if you need it. Please understand that this is not Belle Vue being difficult, every school is having to change their position and the decision around not allowing holidays in term time and the issuing of fines was not our decision – the school does not receive the fine money. Please be aware, that if you take your child out of school for a prolonged period of time there is a very high chance that you will be fined.

I hope that this year is one where we can put COVID firmly behind us and get on with being a normal school. I will look forward to sharing with you more news and updates with you when I can. Myself, and other senior members of the team will be on hand in the mornings if you require any assistance, concern or just want a chat. Don't hesitate to come and find us. Please let us know if we can help.

Kind regards

Mr J Marshall

Headteacher