

**Headteacher: Mr Andy Kelly**

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4 December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to you after my first 4 weeks as Headteacher at Parkside Community School. It has been a fantastic experience and I have fully appreciated the warm welcome from staff, students, and parents/carers. I continue to be so impressed with your children and have thoroughly enjoyed observing them demonstrate focus and motivation in their lessons.

### **Monday 4 December: School closure and Year 7 Parents' Evening**

Thank you for your support of the incredibly difficult decision to shut the school this afternoon. The conditions across the site significantly worsened as the rain fell and this created large sections of ice that we were unable to eradicate. The decision to close was not taken lightly. The walkways around our site posed too much risk for students and staff; ultimately the decision had to be made to keep everyone safe. We will be open as normal tomorrow.

Unfortunately, this also meant that we had to cancel our Year 7 Parents' Evening. This will be rescheduled as soon as possible with information sent out to parents/carers in due course.

### **Parkside Praise Pass**

It is a passion of mine to develop a culture of celebration for our students. We are incredibly lucky to have so many students who 'get it right' every single day. Staff at Parkside have been working extremely hard to increase the number of positive phone calls to students who show great effort in their lessons.

In order to further capture the positive conduct that students demonstrate around our school we are trialing a Parkside Praise Pass for the last two weeks of this term. This physical card will be given to your child on Monday 11 December by their mentor. Within it there are 10 positive conduct boxes that staff can sign if they see good manners, politeness, helpful behaviour or anything else brilliant outside of lessons. The challenge for students is to see if anyone can fill these 10 boxes in the last 10 days of this half term. Completed positive conduct boxes will warrant a reward but the Praise Pass must be handed in to the student's mentor by Friday 22 December to qualify for this. Please do ask to see your child's Parkside Praise Pass so that you can see how many positive conduct points they get!

On the back of the Parkside Praise Pass there will be a section on toilet usage. Unfortunately, in my 4 weeks at Parkside I have witnessed far too much toilet use in lesson time by students. It is incredibly important that students are given access to toilets throughout the school day but we must limit this use in lesson time as it has a significant effect on your child's learning and future exam outcomes. From Monday 11 December students will be given 5 opportunities to access toilets throughout the school day – before mentor time starts, during brunch, during lunch, after school and once in lesson time. The latter is a change to the current ways of working and I ask parents/carers to support us with this. If a student wishes to use the toilet in lesson time, they will have to present their Parkside Praise Pass to their teacher. The teacher will sign the back of the card to show that they have used their one opportunity to access the toilet in lesson time that day. They will then not be allowed to leave a lesson to access the toilet for the rest of that day and will instead have to visit the toilet at their brunch, lunch or after school.

Of course, we do have a number of students with a toilet pass. For medical reasons these students will be exempt from the one a day lesson time toilet use and may access toilets whenever they feel the need.

I thank parents and carers for their support in this matter. Missing learning time seriously affects your child's education; we want them to be successful. I am more than happy to speak to any parents/carers that may have any queries regarding this. Please contact me at the school to arrange a call.

## **Parent/carer questionnaire**

Working in partnership with parents and carers is incredibly important to me. The link below takes you to a Parkside parent/carer questionnaire and I would love to hear from all of you. Your opinion really does matter so please take the time to complete this short questionnaire before the deadline of 6pm on Thursday 14 December. Please use the link below to access the questionnaire.

[Parkside Parent Questionnaire Dec 2023](https://bit.ly/4ag9ShA) ( <https://bit.ly/4ag9ShA> )

## **Attendance**

Your child's attendance is of paramount importance to us at Parkside Community School. If attendance is poor it results in the following:

- a student who has 90% attendance misses 28 school days across the year. This equates to missing 168 lessons which is a huge amount of learning lost
- 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all
- poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable

This year the school will be celebrating good student attendance in assemblies and mentor time. From January there will be prizes and rewards for those students who start 2024 with 100% attendance.

Please do speak to your child about the importance of attending school on time every day; thank you to all parents/carers for their support on this.

## Christmas market

A reminder that our Christmas market will be on Thursday 7 December from 5-7pm here at Parkside. We will have stalls from local makers, games run by our students, Christmas food, craft activities run by the DT department, musical performances and some carol singing for everyone to enjoy. Please come along to what will no doubt be a very special occasion.



### Dates for your diary:

Friday 22 December - Last day of term - Students will be dismissed at 12.45pm

Monday 8 January - INSET Day

Tuesday 9 January - All students return

Monday 15 January - Y11 Parents' Evening - Further details will be sent at a later date

Monday 12 February - Y10 Parents' Evening - Further details will be sent at a later date

Thank you for your support of myself and the staff at Parkside. Enabling your child to become the best version of themselves is what motivates us at this truly special school.

Yours faithfully

Mr Andy Kelly  
Headteacher