

1 December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds our families well. This half term continues to see our students bring real purpose and positivity into the school. Classrooms are calm and focused, and the commitment to learning - from our Year 7s through to Year 11 - is clear. Thank you for the support you give at home and for ensuring your child attends school every day; together it's important we keep the emphasis on every student accessing all of their learning, every lesson.

### **Students in learning (toilet use in lessons) – Parent/Carer Information**

In my last letter I shared with parents and carers that we were reviewing our student toilet access policy to ensure that learning is protected, students' needs are met, and staff are supported in applying a consistent approach.

We are not banning toilet access in lessons. Our focus is on maximising learning time and keeping lessons calm and purposeful. Over recent assemblies and mentor time, we have discussed with students how to make good choices so they can access all of their learning, every lesson.

- Medical toilet passes remain in place and are exempt from general expectations
- Genuine, urgent needs do occur. Staff will use professional judgement and allow a brief exit at an appropriate point in the lesson to support learning and wellbeing
- Students should plan to use toilets at brunch and lunch as their primary opportunity to avoid interrupting lesson time

Following last week's student feedback, we will move to single-sex toilets at brunch and lunch after the Christmas period, once the new reception area is completed. The new reception includes additional student toilets on the outside of the building for social times. Our anticipated start is January 2026, subject to completion. To ensure inclusivity, gender-neutral toilets in the A and B blocks will remain available during social times, so that transgender and non-binary students (and any student who prefers them) have facilities that align with their identity. This change is designed to help more students feel comfortable using toilets during social times, reducing movement during lessons and keeping the focus on learning.

While we recognise that some students will occasionally need to leave lessons, frequent lesson-time toilet visits reduce learning, increase anxiety when returning to class, and disrupt the flow of teaching. Our ethos is 'Caring about the choices that will shape your future.' Teachers know which parts of the lesson are vital and will decide the appropriate moment to support a student who needs to leave, protecting both learning and wellbeing.

To reinforce expectations, if a student leaves for the toilet during a lesson and then delays their return, this will be recorded as a Level 1 negative (other examples include chewing gum, lateness to lessons and mobile phone/electronic device use in school). Six Level 1 negatives within a week result in a one-hour SLT detention on Friday.

This week I will be speaking to students in assemblies to remind them of these expectations and the reasons behind them. We will also host a parent/carer drop-in in the library on Thursday 4 December, 6:00–7:00pm. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will be available to answer questions and hear your comments. Everyone is welcome!

Our aim is to create a fair and supportive approach that helps students succeed in their learning, feel safe, and have their wellbeing needs met. Thank you for your support in this area.

### **Year 11 mocks**

Good luck to Year 11 as mocks commence again at the end of this week. Please encourage your child to attend every exam on time, well prepared.

### **Parental communications in 2026**

In early 2026, we will be moving away from text messages as a regular messaging tool to parents/carers. School communication will be via the Arbor Parent App and email. Please ensure you are signed up to Arbor and contact school if your email address needs updating. I will share dates for this transition in the New Year.

### **Upcycle event — thank you**

A huge thank you to families who joined our first Upcycle Event on Thursday 27 November. All items - from baby and children's clothes to toys and books - were free to our community. We're grateful to everyone who donated and attended. We can't wait for the next one!

### **Stay Connected with Parkside**

To stay up to date with the latest news, highlights, and celebrations, follow us on social media; there's so much to celebrate at Parkside every day.

You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) by searching for Parkside Community School Chesterfield. It's a great way to stay informed and share in the successes of our students and staff.

### **Dates for diary**

- Y7 Parents' Evening – 1 December
- Choir singing at St Augustine's – 9 December
- Community Christmas Dinner - 19 December, 11.15am arrival
- Last day of term – 19 December – students dismissed at 12.30pm
- INSET day – 5 January 2026
- Students return to school – 6 January 2026

Thank you for your continued support in keeping the focus firmly on attendance to school and learning. By working together - students, families and staff - we'll ensure every student reaches their full potential through accessing all of their learning, every lesson. We look forward to the run up to Christmas and all the opportunities it brings. As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if there's anything we can help with.

Yours faithfully  
Mr Andy Kelly  
Headteacher