

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
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*A Church of England School
providing a Values Based Education*

21st October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Half-term is approaching and we have had a great start to the school year with lots of amazing work, some return to normality and some thoughtful, caring and lovely acts of kindness. Our vision to 'live life in all its fullness' and our three key focuses have driven our work so far this term. We are all striving to *live our values, be the best we can be ... and all working together in community*. Year 5 have settled in well, Year 6 have made an impressive start to their SATs year, Year 7 have suddenly 'grown up' as they enter KS3 (they had an amazing day on Monday at Mountfitchet Castle and were a credit to the school) and Year 8 are responding well to their new leadership roles. As you will be aware, we have had several challenges with Covid-19 and we thank you all for your flexibility and support. Thankfully, cases have started to decline and half-term will provide a natural 'circuit-breaker'.

As things settle down, we thought it worth a reminder of some of our general expectations – especially about uniform and some basic school expectations as well as how we can work together as a community to ensure the best outcomes in terms of behaviour and standards for all.

Uniform: In order to represent our whole community appropriately - it is important that our students wear our uniform with pride and look well presented at all times – Please see the attached link to the [school's uniform policy](#).

We are now in the Autumn term, as such, polo shirts are not acceptable school uniform. Students are expected to wear a white shirt, that is tucked into their trousers or skirt, with their school tie at all times. On PE days, students must continue to comply with the school's PE uniform. This includes plain black jogging bottoms, shorts or sports leggings, and/or a black base layer (if desired). Polo shirts, mid layers and rugby shirts with the school logo are available to order through the school website. Hoodies are not acceptable and should not be worn into school.

Shoes and Socks: Both socks and shoes need to be plain black with a smart appearance suitable for office wear. Converse, Nike Air Force Ones and other similar footwear labelled as 'shoes' are not acceptable. Sometimes, shops label up shoes as school shoes ... this does not mean they are necessarily suitable.



Socks should ideally be plain black and no socks should have a sports logo on them.



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Miss A Stewart
Assistant Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo: Mrs J Davies – Senior Leader: Mr James Ulph

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Jewellery: The only jewellery that is permitted in school is: one pair of studs worn in the lower ear lobe only, a wristwatch and one small ring - no other jewellery or piercings are acceptable.

Make Up: Students are not permitted to wear any make up in school; this includes nail varnish. Where students are seen to be wearing makeup, they will be asked to remove it and the school office will have nail varnish remover to facilitate this.

Snacks, Chewing Gum and Sweets: Please ensure that snacks are as healthy as possible. Chewing Gum is not permitted in school. Any student caught chewing gum in school will have an automatic sanction and the associated consequence. There is also an increasing number of students bringing and eating sweets in school both during break, but also in between lessons and whilst lining up for class. Students are not permitted to eat sweets between lessons or on their way to lessons.

Mobile Phones: SMART mobile phones are not allowed in school – please see the school’s [mobile phone policy](#). Any SMART phones that are found in school, will be confiscated and will only be returned to the student’s parent or carer. We recognise that for safety reasons parents may wish to have a method to be able to contact their children on the way home from school, therefore we do permit students - with permission - to have a non-smart phone that they keep switched off in their bag during the day and then turn on once they’ve left the school site.

Equipment: Throughout the pandemic, we have been very supportive of students who do not have basic equipment and we will continue to support those students who cannot afford basic stationery. However, we do expect all students to have the following equipment: a blue or black handwriting pen, a red pen, a green pen, a pencil, a whiteboard pen, a mini-whiteboard, a ruler, and an eraser. At the start of the year we provided all students with a whiteboard and whiteboard pen to use, when required, in lessons. We asked that where the whiteboard pen runs out that families are responsible for replacing it.

Parental Contact: This is a reminder that your first point of contact in respect of your child should be their form tutor, who will involve other members of staff where necessary and escalate any issues to their Head of Year or where necessary a member of the school’s Senior Leadership Team.

As a school we pride ourselves on the positive and professional working relationship that we have with our whole school community and in particular our parents. We recognise that this has been difficult to cultivate and maintain over the course of the last 18 months with us having limited opportunities during the pandemic to meet parents and carers in person as frequently as we would like and as part of the “norm”. In particular we recognise that for our KS2 parents you will not have had an opportunity to meet your child’s teachers and visit Holywell as part of normal school life and as such the school may well remain somewhat of unknown quantity.

We like to hear about what is going well! As a school, we also take instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and we do not tolerate any circumstances that may make students, staff members and other members of the school community feel threatened or uncomfortable. Our staff are very diligent at responding to queries and issues and, within the constraints of teaching commitments and other responsibilities, we aim to investigate those queries and issues as quickly as possible. Queries and issues which are brought to our attention out of normal school hours will be dealt with at the earliest opportunity within normal working hours.

Please do contact us about any concerns – even if they seem small or if they seem awful. When we look into issues raised, we try to establish what had happened and this usually involves looking at the situation from a range of perspectives. We aim to be peaceful problem-solvers and we aim to take a restorative approach to any situation. Please also do bear in mind that your child will have their own unique perspective on an incident or situation and it is often useful for us to explore what happened before, during and after an incident. We try to be fair to all involved in an incident and there are occasions when an imperfect resolution is required. We hope that parents will be supportive of our investigations and trust us deal with any situation fairly. To ensure a good working relationship between parents and staff, we have put together a document with a specifically designed set of expectations and commitments regarding behaviour and conduct which we hope you will support us with when dealing with raising concerns and interacting with staff – [Expectations and commitments regarding parental behaviour and conduct](#).

Incidents outside school: Where there are incidents and/or issues outside of school, it is useful for us to be aware of these just in case things 'spill over' into school life. We have had some instances of unkindness over social media and/or via games platforms – these need to be dealt with outside of school and any serious issue re: social media needs to be reported to the police via 101. We recommend the 'Stop – Block – Tell' approach to any online issue:

STOP! Don't do anything immediately. End the conversation. Come offline. Take 5! to calm down.

Block! Block the person being unkind or limit all communications to those on your buddy list.

and Tell! Tell a trusted adult, you don't have to face this alone.

Please ensure that students are accessing age-appropriate apps and monitor their online presence carefully. For further tips and information, please see the online guides for parents on our school website: <https://holywellschool.co.uk/online-guides-parents/>.

Stress: Dealing with stress and anxiety: When things have been tough in school, we have referred back to the work we did with Liz Fordham in the Summer Term on managing stress and anxiety. Liz often uses the analogy of being in a snow-globe to help us think about what it is like being stressed and anxious: the snow is swirling ... and we can't get out ... we just have to wait for the snow to settle, before being able to deal with things calmly. When we are calm, we can follow these three simple steps:




1. Talk to someone who can advocate for you (for students, this would be a trusted adult)
2. Take control in a positive way
3. Have fun!

We find a way

We find a way
Like water Through spaces
Between gaps Over blocks
We find a way

We find a way
Together like water We power through
We flow between We move over
We find a way

We find a way
Like water Through hope
With faith We are filled with the spirit
And we find a way



We find a way
To live life in all its fullness
Living our values
Being the best we can be
In community
Like holy water
We find a way

Holywell School
A Church of England School providing a values-based education
Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care

This is exactly the same for adults as it is for our students. Being a parent/carer can be a stressful experience and for some of you, this will be the first time you have had to deal with a whole range of emotions and feelings. Middle School is also very different to Lower School and students do need to be more independent and responsible ... that takes time! A key thing is never to do anything when angry or stressed. Take a moment, let the 'snow' settle and then take a measured, calm approach.

At the start of the year, our reflection was 'We find a way' and, whatever storm or stress arises, we will find a way forward in community together. As always, your support is greatly appreciated. Have a wonderful half-term and we look forward to an exciting second half of term where our value of 'Courage' will support us all through the month of November.

Best wishes

Mike Simpson
Headteacher