



Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year! It has been a challenging first week back with a change in MIS and snow, but our young people and staff have been brilliant. They have shown flexibility and resilience, kindness and have put learning first.



## Snow

Thank you for your support this week. I want to reassure parents that we do our utmost to make sensible decisions to ensure that everyone is safe during cold weather. Where possible we communicate out in advance with likely actions and then decide early each school day. To make the decision I travel early to work, look at my own driving conditions and communicate with staff who live the furthest away in each direction. I look at the school site with our Site Manager and the conditions locally. The option that meets the needs of school and the community is often to delay the start of the day. On Thursday, when the team arrived in school at 6am to make the decision the roads were clear, it wasn't snowing and there was no forecast for snow. A sudden tip of snow (mostly over Wigan) just before 8am was unhelpful! The reality is that when you make that decision to open, close or delay, whatever you do there will be a body of parents that take to social media to tell you that your decision making is madness. Yesterday I was reassured by the number of young people who commented as they left site on remarks made by a small minority of parents on our school Facebook page. Our learners said they were unkind and unhelpful. I am pleased that our work on kindness and acceptable use of social media is having an impact!



## Arbor

Please bear with us. Changing an MIS is a huge undertaking for a school. Our previous contract with SIMS (and Synergy) expires this term and some last-minute changes to renewing that contract meant that a change was unavoidable. Many schools, like us, have had to switch unexpectedly, with limited chance to plan for this. Arbor does lots of brilliant things that will make school life easier, the parent app is user-friendly and I am confident that we will be better for the move in time. But it is new for us all. Unlike Synergy, it is not an easy tool for communication. We are looking at how we will proceed with that and ask for your patience whilst we navigate the change.

## Uniform

We have relaxed uniform standards this week to keep our learners safe and warm. This was the sensible thing to do. I cannot fully explain why, but when we relax uniform (or have a non-uniform day) there are increased behaviour logs, more litter on the school site and poorer communication between some learners and our staff. The overwhelming majority of learners wear our uniform with pride, and we are grateful for parental support on this. On Monday we will return to full school uniform. Our full guidance on uniform can be found on the school website [here](#).





Key points to note regarding uniform are:

- every learner must wear school shoes and not black trainers. If the footwear is made by a sports brand, it will be deemed to be a trainer.
- one ear piercing in each ear is permitted. No other jewellery is allowed (except a wristwatch).
- skirts should sit just above the knee.
- hoodies must not be brought to school and will be confiscated at the gate.



I have recently been concerned by the length of some school skirts. I know that several parents have passed comment also. Short skirts are not appropriate for a working environment. In response to this our policy now states that where school skirts are repeatedly worn incorrectly, the school can and will direct young people to wear trousers for school.



Learners can expect to have prohibited items confiscated and to receive a sanction when uniform is repeatedly worn below expectations. We want to be fair to everyone. I would ask for your support in ensuring high standards of dress for school, with a particular focus on skirt length, school shoes and unnecessary jewellery.



### Knowledge Organisers

I am thrilled with the work done to improve our curriculum at Key Stage 3 over the last twelve months. Our spring term Knowledge Organisers have now been shared with learners – I would love for parents to have a look too. These booklets are great for supporting parents in testing for end of unit assessments. Full details of our curriculum can be found on the website [here](#).



Wishing you a warmer weekend.

With thanks for your continued support.



Yours sincerely,

Mr. N S Coe  
Headteacher

