Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support this term; it was lovely to see so many of you at our Meet the Tutors evening. We know that our partnership with you as parents and carers is absolutely key to the success of our students so do please make sure you contact your child’s Form Tutor or Head of Year to let us know about your child’s success stories and any concerns you may have.

Our build project is finally underway and it is incredibly exciting to know that in a year’s time, our students will benefit from such improved facilities. In the meantime, as ever we are working extremely hard to make sure each and every student is working well in lessons and enjoying the full range of opportunities available in our extra-curricular offer.

As the dark nights close in and we approach Half Term, it is an important time to focus on the safety of our students and I am attaching some important information jointly issued by local schools and our colleagues in West Midlands police. You may have noticed that this year, we have increased staff presence at the start and end of the school day to ensure students arrive and leave school in a calm and respectful manner. I also need to ask for the help of every single parent and carer to manage road safety with the changes to our parking and drop-off arrangements. Road accidents are the stuff of parent/carer nightmares and I am now discovering the same is true for Headteachers! So, I am appealing to all of you who bring your children to school by car to consider how you can be part of the safe travel arrangements for every single student when you do a morning drop off or an after-school collect.

Parking and School Drop-Off
With the exciting start to the school build project, travel routes in and out of the building for pedestrians and cars are now much more limited and I thank all of those parents and carers who are using alternative transport arrangements and drop-off points. Unfortunately, I am seeing an increased risk of road traffic accidents as a result of the changes to parking arrangements and I am therefore asking parents and carers to consider how you can help us make sure that every single student is safe on their way into school. The biggest risks and dangers we need you to avoid are the following:

i) Stopping to drop off on the Bristol Road X – this is extremely dangerous as well as illegal. Stopping on the main road creates a health and safety risk for all other road users and must be avoided.

ii) Using Belton Grove / School East Building staff car park for drop off X – this is fast becoming a very dangerous hotspot and should be avoided at all cost. Cars turning into Belton Grove are sometimes causing a backlog on the Bristol Road, with subsequent risk to road traffic and pedestrians. Cars turning into the school car park are causing a significant risk to student pedestrians. A barrier is due to be erected during half term to enhance security in this part of the site.

What are the safe alternatives:

i) The safest alternative for all students is to use public transport or walk to school whenever possible.

ii) If you are dropping your child to school, in order to support the safety of our school community please use either Morrison’s Car Park, McDonalds Car Park or one of the alternative side roads indicated on the map below. Please avoid Belton Grove at all cost.
Criminal Exploitation
One of the two letters attached is providing information about the approach being taken locally to the increasing problem of County Lines: you may have read in the news that young people are increasingly at risk of being targeted and exploited to carry drugs for criminal gangs operating across county boundaries. Like our neighbouring schools, the fact that we are located on the border between Birmingham and Worcestershire means there is an increased risk of students from our school being targeted.

As a school community, we also remain vigilant about the risks and dangers to young people of being targeted by individuals selling drugs. We are working closely with our partner schools and the police to gather information that will help us identify individuals at risk so we can ensure support is in place and can also engage police support to tackle criminals who may be exploiting young people. We also continue to educate our students about the risks of drug and alcohol use so that our young people are well equipped to stay safe in the face of the pressures they may face.

If you have any concerns at all, please do contact the school or report your concerns via our Sharp System, which can be accessed via the school website. While we take a very strong line in school to keep our community protected from harm, we also want to make sure that every single young person feels safe enough to ask for help if they need it.

Anti-social Behaviour
The second letter written to you in partnership with West Midlands Police is a timely reminder about avoiding anti-social behaviour keeping safe as the darker nights close in. With Halloween and Bonfire Night approaching, we want to reinforce messages to our young people about not only staying safe themselves but making sure that they do not cause upset or harm to others through anti-social behaviour. I am always delighted to receive so much positive feedback about the contribution many of our students make in our local community. Unfortunately, I also receive a number of complaints about the behaviour of students on the way to and from school. Students remain accountable for poor behaviour while travelling to and from school and will be sanctioned under the school's Behaviour for Learning policy if involved in antisocial incidents so do please remind and encourage them to be the very best possible ambassadors for our community when out and about.
Annual Data Check

It is extremely important that we always hold up to date information for all our students to ensure that we can contact parents and carers in a timely way should we need to discuss anything with you. We are also required under data protection legislation to regularly check that the data we hold is correct. We are therefore launching our data collection check this week. If you have subscribed to our SIMS parent app/service, you are now able to update your information electronically and will receive a notification that your update has been processed. This is by far the quickest and easiest way to confirm your data. Where our records indicate that your family has not yet activated the SIMS parent app/service we will send a paper copy home via students this week. It is important that we receive a prompt response from all families to either method of data check.

To encourage a prompt response to the data collection exercise we will reward the first form group to return 100% of their data check submissions/forms with a reward breakfast after half term.

As part of our data checking exercise we are also updating our parental consent records in line with data protection legislation for the sharing of pupil data, photographs and videos. The full policies are available on our website for further reading if you are unsure of your rights related to this.

Key points to note for parents and carers using the app:
- The data collection return can only be completed once and will freeze until it is processed by school.
- Data Collection via the app/website is only available to contacts that live at the same address as the child.
- The parent/carer completing the data check is requested to check the information for all contacts registered for your child.

We will also send further personalised letters this week to any families where we do not hold specific key information such as email address or mobile phone numbers to enable further uptake of our apps and services.

Next Half Term – Uniform & Jewellery

The building works will continue at pace next half term. We look forward to seeing students back with us on Monday November 4th at the usual start time. We will be continuing our focus on high standards across our school next half term, building on the excellent uniform that is currently in place.

Please can I remind parents and carers about the very strict school rules on jewellery. Half term may be a time that students are tempted to get piercings with your agreement. However the school rules have been made very clear to all of our students and the school only allows one small stud or sleeper in each ear, all other piercings will have to be removed under our uniform policy. We do not allow new piercings to be either covered nor do we allow acrylic/clear plastic jewellery to be used. Please therefore reinforce with your child that any piercings that are done during the holiday will have to be removed. This approach also applies to acrylic nails.

I wish you all a very enjoyable Half Term break. As ever, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns and I will endeavour to ensure that I get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Ms E Leaman
Headteacher
Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

‘COUNTY LINES’ EXPLOITATION
It is likely you have heard the term ‘County Lines’ used in the news recently. This is a growing form of criminal activity that exists nationally, regionally across the West Midlands and here in Birmingham. County Lines is a term used to describe how gangs and organised criminal networks export illegal drugs into other (mainly rural) areas by exploiting children and vulnerable adults, often without them realising it. Gang members may use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to do this. We are clear that this is child exploitation.

WARNING SIGNS
We want to support parents and carers to keep children safe; listed below are some warning signs of ‘County Lines’ exploitation for you to look out for. Often, these are behavioural changes such as:
- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn’t expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

Birmingham schools are working together with West Midlands Police and partners, including The Children’s Society, to prevent and spot signs of exploitation at the earliest opportunity. We’re keen that parents are also aware of ‘County Lines’, know where to ask for more support if they are worried and know that you will be listened to and supported.

If you have any concerns about your child, speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences. You may wish to contact a member of the Pastoral Team at school if you feel you need support or believe your child is at risk. We can talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

If you or your child are aware that other young people in school or the community are at risk of ‘County Lines’ or any criminal exploitation, you should contact the police directly via 101. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org. If a crime is taking place or a life is in danger, call 999 immediately.

There are some links below that you may find useful for more information.
https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines (on The Children's Society's website there are also guides for parents available in 14 different languages).
https://www.fearless.org/professionals/resources/gangs
https://www.spurgeons.org/

Yours sincerely

Emma Leaman

Head/Principal Name
Headteacher/Principal
School Name

Kenny Bell
Chief Superintendent - East NPU
West Midlands Police

John Denley
Chief Superintendent - West NPU
West Midlands Police
Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

HAPPY, SAFE HALLOWEEN/BONFIRE NIGHT – REMINDER FROM WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

With the darker nights fast approaching, it is important that students are reminded what we, as a school community, expect of them in terms of behaviour. Whilst we hope they will enjoy socialising with friends and family during the half-term break and the upcoming Halloween/Bonfire Night activities, we also want to ensure they feel confident to keep themselves safe and away from danger, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Parents/carers and students should already be aware that as part of our safeguarding arrangements, the school has a two-way information sharing agreement in place with West Midlands Police, and we are active members of the local Police & Schools Panel. This joint-approach helps us to intervene early to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour involving our students, and provide support and up-to-date safety messages.

In partnership with the police, we would like to remind our students about the following:-

- **Anti-social behaviour**: Halloween can be a scary time for people who don’t like surprises or callers at their door. Think about how your actions and behaviour affect others; elderly and vulnerable people may be frightened by ‘trick or treat’ so look out for signs in windows that people do not want callers at their door.
- **Personal Safety**:
  - Be aware of your surroundings, take care of friends and family members and keep valuables such as phones out of public view whenever possible.
  - Don’t drink alcohol, take illegal drugs or unknown substances; they can have a big impact on your health and safety, behaviour and your ability to do well at school and enjoy other interests and activities. They can also be addictive and have unpredictable side effects, including sudden death!
  - West Midlands Fire Service recommends that you go to an organised display; it’s the smart way to stay safe. You’ll see a lot more fireworks and it’s a lot cheaper. Information about firework safety is available at [www.saferfireworks.com](http://www.saferfireworks.com)
- **Weapons in public places**: carrying a knife will get you a criminal record which can have life-long effects on travel and job prospects. Those who carry knives are also much more likely to be injured by them.
- **Off-road bikes**: These can only be ridden on private land with the landowner’s permission. Don’t risk your life and future prospects by illegally riding these on the road.
- **Remember the company you keep**: if your friend breaks the law, you may also be held responsible for that crime – even if you weren’t the one directly responsible.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Leaman
Head/Principal Name
Headteacher/Principal

Kenny Bell
Chief Superintendent - East NPU
West Midlands Police

John Denley
Chief Superintendent - West NPU
West Midlands Police