

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

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Headteacher  
Mrs E Leigh-Bennett

## KINGSDOWN SCHOOL – FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent

With the new term almost upon us, and following last week's news coverage concerning the school, I thought it would be helpful to remind you of the highly effective range of robust Safeguarding policies and procedures we have in place here at Kingsdown.

The inaccuracy of recent media attention has been both disappointing and frustrating, not least because it was our input that specifically contributed to the arrest – a proactive and positive step that lies at the heart of the matter.

As you have heard me say many times, the security, safety, well-being and continued happiness of the children in our care is my number one priority.

Effective safeguarding is central to everything we do here, and I would like to remind you of our approach to it:

- We pride ourselves on the strong internal relationships we have here, and we know our students well.
- We track attendance exceptionally closely. Students are registered by 9am every day, and parents are contacted if there is an unexpected absence.
- The school site is exceptionally secure – measures include locking gates and CCTV.
- Our staff are trained to the highest possible standards. We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to oversee our policies and approach, and four deputies. All have 'Level3+' training, which means they can give expert advice and guidance, and can train others.
- We have painstakingly built a strong relationship of mutual trust with our students. They clearly feel confident there are adults in the school to whom they can turn if they need to talk or have specific concerns.
- We have extremely rapid action and response processes in place. These ensure information is collected and shared across the school and with other agencies, such as social services. From September students will be able to securely share any concerns through a specially designated online system, known as 'SHARPS'. Students will be shown this as part of their induction. This facility is also available for our parents via the website. Here concerns can be reported and done so anonymously.

[www.kingsdownschool.co.uk](http://www.kingsdownschool.co.uk)

**We champion each and every student**

- We ensure every student in every year group receives one hour of personal development every cycle. This curriculum covers important safeguarding topics including anti-bullying, sex education and drug awareness.
- Throughout the last year we have undergone safeguarding 'health checks' every term. These are detailed reviews, and in each case our processes were found to be strong and effective.

On this last point, I would like to share with you the comments of Bernice Weiss, Lead Safeguarding Adviser – Education at Swindon Borough Council, who praised our arrangements following her most recent audit, saying that “what we do here should be shared as a best practice example with all local schools”.

She wrote: “I consider the safeguarding at Kingsdown to be very secure, in policy, procedure and also staff awareness and responses. I have seen very positive, planned actions to ensure they are providing the highest levels of safeguarding.”

So, as you can see, we are doing everything we can to give our students the full benefits and protection of an appropriately secure learning environment, and I hope this letter reassures you about the safety of your children.

If you have any further questions or specific concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me through my PA, Mrs Carter, at [jcarter@kingsdownschool.co.uk](mailto:jcarter@kingsdownschool.co.uk)

We are now looking forward to welcoming your son or daughter to Kingsdown School. They will be returning at a momentous time when we have received and celebrated transformational examination results achieved by the cohort of 2019.

These show magnificent progress – students performed on average half a grade better than last year, across their best eight subjects. In addition, 17 different subjects all improved upon their scores from 2018.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Emma Leigh-Bennett  
Headteacher