



April 4th 2019

Dear Families

This letter will reach you as we near the end of another full spring term. Our position as the leaders of the national Debate Mate Urban League, the Spring Concert last week and the impressive work of our Sports Leaders with primary schools; are just a handful of the highlights from this term.

As always, we are mindful of the safety of our students both inside and outside school and the shared responsibility that we have for this with families.

Thankfully, both the mornings and evenings are now lighter. This makes travel to and from school safer for our students. Please continue to explain to your child the importance of travelling with a friend. This is safer than walking alone. We are increasingly aware of the importance of families knowing exactly where their child is at the end of the school day. Please ensure that your child goes straight home after leaving the school site. This includes not remaining for long periods around the bus stops in Forest Hill town centre.

Our pastoral curriculum continues to educate students about 'How to Keep Safe'. This includes exploring the responsible use of social media. *Please do ensure that you are aware of your child's activity on social media.* Whilst it can be a force for good, social media is also a hidden world in which young people can be vulnerable and can put themselves at risk. 'Keeping Safe' workshops for families and students in the summer term will include the use of social media.

We continue to have the highest expectations of the students who attend Sydenham School. This includes being respectful, kind, thoughtful and self-regulating to all members of the school community. Students should let their tutor or a trusted adult in the school know if they have concerns. *We are a telling school.* Students should confide in an adult if they are worried about anything that may cause an issue within the school community. This is the responsibility of every member of the Sydenham School community, without exception.

Our School Police Liaison Officer, PC April Ryan, continues to do an excellent job within the school community. This includes running sessions in Personal Social Education (PSE) lessons. PC Ryan offers a visible presence in the local area along the main route that students take home at the end of school. We are asking for her presence after school for more days each week. Thank you for the support of parents who have also lobbied for this on our behalf.

Senior staff continue to be present in the community after school to help keep our students safe. This includes walking into Forest Hill and to Kirkdale. We have spoken to the Local Authority about increasing the support from Community Support Officers. They have communicated to us that due to limited resources they are unlikely to be able to provide anything additional at this stage. Please do contact your Local Councillor if you would like to raise this with them.

To improve community safety, we are working with colleagues in Lewisham to reinstate the 'Safe Haven' scheme. This involves identified shops and public buildings within the vicinity of the school where students can go and seek help should they feel themselves to be at risk in any way. If you know of any businesses willing to participate in the Safe Haven Scheme, please do contact us.



If your child uses the footbridge between Forest Hill and Sydenham stations, you may be aware of its poor condition. On his recent visit to Sydenham School, Mayor Damian Egan confirmed his commitment to the replacement of the bridge. In the meantime, the Council have promised that the lighting and security cameras on the bridge will be improved.

Finally, please do stay in regular contact with the school and do let us know of anything that may be of help in any way related to your child's well-being. We have been grateful for the offers of support from our families who want to share their networks and expertise in the area of 'contextual safeguarding'.

Please do contact Mrs Quartey, Assistant Headteacher and our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), if there is anything you feel you can contribute. We value our work in partnership with you.

We very much hope that you have a lovely and restful Easter holiday. I am sure you will share my appreciation for the staff who are coming in during their break to run revision sessions for Year 11 and 13 students. We have over sixty separate sessions on a packed timetable for the week beginning the 8th of April.

School begins again on Tuesday the 23rd of April and we look forward to greeting students at the school gates by 8.40am ready to start another new term.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Lowe