

SUNNYDOWN SCHOOL

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Headteacher Mr Paul Jensen B.Ed Grad Dip (SEBD) NPQH



Friday 27th January 2023

Dear all who are associated with Sunnydown,

I had the privilege of spending some time with KS4 Life Skills students this morning. We ventured to East Side Cafe for a hot drink and a snack. I have set the boys a challenge of establishing their own in-school business which would generate funds to allow them to visit cafes more often. There are so many possibilities that I am looking forward to being invited to future events.

Trial change to lunch times

I am constantly looking at ways to improve all aspects of Sunnydown. Some recent and ongoing observations include, but are not limited to:

- Students are often finishing their lunch well before the allocated 30 minutes is complete, meaning that we have the entire school on the playground towards the end of each sitting.
- These short windows of time are when we observe a spike in negative interactions between students.
- Taxi departure is often impacted by vehicles on the school road which is shared with two other schools.

To try to alleviate some of these observations, I am proposing some very slight changes to our school day, with NO change to the start and finish time. It is important to also note that no learning time is being lost - students will get full access to the timetable that they currently do.

The proposed changes to times are shared in the tables below. In summary, I am exploring the impact of reducing lunch by five (5) minutes per sitting.

This would serve to reduce opportunities for negative interactions between students at the end of each lunch cycle and allow a clear window to escort students to their taxi, with the intention of getting them away with more efficiency than we currently do.

I have mentioned this in whole school assemblies this week, and met with the Student Council on Tuesday.

I intend on running a trial to explore the impact of these small changes on the following dates:

Monday 30th January to Friday 3rd February
Monday 27th February to Friday 3rd March

I will then collate feedback from students, staff and families and share this at FGB on Thursday 9th March. The changes are attached with specific areas highlighted in orange. Thank you for your support in advance.

Something to think about

A statement to ponder - the majority of a child's waking time is not spent in school. Assuming that a child sleeps for 8 hours a day on average, approximately 15% of a child's waking time until they are 18 years old is spent at school. This means that 85% of their waking time is spent at home, with friends, online using social media, playing sports or any combination of other activities. This 85% of time has a massive influence on a child's development, for better and for worse. Food for thought.

Strike Action - Wednesday 1st February, 2023

Strikes by their very nature are disruptive. Some staff at Sunnydown are being impacted through strike action in the school where their child attends. Finalising plans is a complex task when not having access to necessary information. Senior leaders are meeting on the afternoon of Monday 30th January to finalise our arrangements.

As of this afternoon, I can be no more specific than **proposing** that it is most likely that we will be open to all KS4 students. Some KS4 students will be participating in a football tournament, others may have access to regular lessons, while others will have some supervised study time.

In KS3, it is **most likely** that we will be open to Year 7 and Year 8.

The only decision that I can confirm is that we will be closed to Year 9 on Wednesday 1st February. We will inform taxi companies of this today, but please do communicate directly with your driver as well.

Swearing and other inappropriate language

I understand only too well that swearing is a means of communicating. However, the use of bad language at school, directed at peers and adults who work hard to support all young people, is never appropriate.

Should your son use bad language, he will be challenged and you will be informed. Educating a child is not the sole responsibility of a family nor that of a school. Working in close partnership has the greatest possible impact.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Schools have a responsibility to keep all students safe from harm, and one area in particular that is of paramount importance is harmful sexual behaviour. I have written on this before, with excerpts from previous newsletters attached today. I have presented to whole school assemblies many times on the topic and will continue to do so. Staff are trained annually and encouraged regularly to adopt a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment.

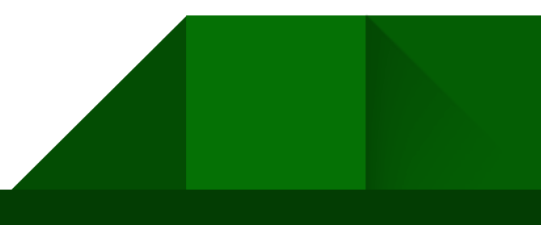
Below is a quote taken from our Child Protection Policy, page 27.

We believe that all children have a right to attend our setting and learn in a safe environment.

Children should be free from harm by adults and other children in Sunnydown School.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing other children and their peers and this will be dealt with under our Child Protection Policy and in line with KCSiE (2022).

We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable.



We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- **Making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. We believe that failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.**
- **Recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.**
- **Challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. As we believe that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.**

Further, below is a quote taken from our Child Protection Policy, page 42 to 43.

Sexual Violence

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE- Settings should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone’s bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault).

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of the setting.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- *Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.*
- *Sexual “jokes” or taunting.*
- *Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes. Settings should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim.*
- *Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.*
- *Upskirting (this is a criminal offence), and*
- *Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.*

It is important that settings consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Paul Jensen



Friends of Sunnydown

Our next Friends of Sunnydown meeting will be held on **Tuesday 31st January at 7:30pm** at Sunnydown School. Everyone is welcome to attend! If you haven't attended a meeting previously, it's a great way to find out what Friends of Sunnydown do to fundraise for the boys. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome, so pop along!

Attendance

Congratulations to 7C for achieving 100% attendance for the week ending 20th January 2023.

<u>Thought for the Week</u> (W/C: 23 rd January)	<u>Thought for the Week</u> (W/C: 30 th January)
Why is it important to remember the effects of the Holocaust?	What is a negative influence? How can you avoid them?

Song of the Week

Song of the week was nominated by Miss Wood: OneRepublic, I lived (2014). 'I like this song because it makes you think about all the things you can achieve in your life and how you make a mark on this world.'

<u>Mathematician of the Week</u> The recipient of Mathematician of the Week, awarded by Mr Zadok for progress in progress made in percentages is James Dean (10M) The recipient of Mathematician of the Week, awarded by Mrs Cybuch is Harry Franklin (8N)	<u>Scientist of the Week</u> The recipient of Scientist of the Week, awarded by Mr Cybuch for cooperation & engagement is James Hall (9D) The recipient of Scientist of the Week, awarded by Ms Hristova for motivation & effort is Ollie McEvaddy (10C)	<u>Artist of the Week</u> The recipient of Artist of the Week, awarded by Mrs Ogle for resilience, effort & concentration in art this week is Kieran Kirk (10M)	<u>Musician of the Week</u> The recipient of Musician of the Week, awarded by Mrs Cybuch is George Whatling (10M)	<u>Chef of the Week</u> The recipients of Chef of the Week, awarded by Mrs Hull for being focussed & working independently in his lesson Logan East (9D)
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Friday Curriculum - 3rd February 2023

A timetable of events will follow next week.

House Points	
Oscar Stewart	650 House Points
Reece Wood	650 House Points
Jamie Rogers	600 House Points
Varen Estwick	550 House Points
Reece Williams	550 House Points
Taylor Conway	500 House Points
James Hall	500 House Points
Leo Sumsion	300 House Points



Join us for National Apprenticeship Week at our Insight Event at our offices in Crawley, to learn about Apprenticeships and Skills for Life!

You can learn about Thales and our different business areas, what our apprenticeship programmes can offer you and meet some of our current apprentices and their managers.

You can also talk to our Early Careers Team about CV writing, how to make a good application and skills for assessment centres. Don't forget to bring a copy of your CV!

We will also have two of our training providers here, East Surrey College and Corndel, to answer any questions you may have.

Drop in anytime between 5.30 and 7.30 pm on Monday 6 February 2023.

We look forward to welcoming school pupils Year 9 to 13, teachers, parents/carers and anyone that is interested in our apprenticeship programme. No restriction on age!

For further information and to register for tickets, please go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-apprenticeship-week-insight-event-thales-crawley-tickets-514847090507>

Please note that photo ID is required to gain entry.

Trial changes to daily lunch times - Weekly Overview

Monday:

Event	Current timings	Proposed trial timings
Students and taxis can arrive	09:00-09:30	No change
Registration	09:30-10:00	No change
School meeting	10.00-10.15	No change
Lesson 1	10:15-10:45	No change
Break	10.45-11:00	No change
Lesson 1 Continued	11:00-11.30	No change
Lesson 2	11:30-12:30	No change
Lunch (first half) KS3 - Eating KS4 - Playing	12:30-13:00	12.30 - 12.55
Lunch (second half) KS3 - Playing KS4 Eating	13.00 - 13.30	12.55 - 13.20
Lesson 3	13:30-14:30	13.20 - 14.20
Lesson 4	14:30-15:30	14.20 - 15.20
Taxi	15.30 - 15.40	15.20 - 15.30 (As advertised on the website)

Tuesday – Thursday:

Event	Current timings	Proposed trial timings
Students and taxis can arrive	08:30-09:00	No change
Registration	09:00-09:15	No change
Lesson 1	09:15-10:15	No change
Lesson 2	10:15-10:45	No change
Break	10.45-11:00	No change
Lesson 2 Continued	11:00-11.30	No change
Lesson 3	11:30-12:30	No change
Lunch (first half) KS3 - Eating KS4 - Playing	12:30-13:00	12.30 - 12.55 (5 minutes less lunch time)
Lunch (second half) KS3 - Playing KS4 Eating	13.00 - 13.30	12.55 - 13.20 (5 minutes less lunch time)
Lesson 4	13:30-14:30	13.20 - 14.20 Change to start and finish time. Same length of lesson.
Lesson 5	14:30-15:30	14.20 - 15.20 Change to start and finish time. Same length of lesson.
Taxi	15.30 - 15.40	15.20 - 15.30 (As advertised on the website)

Friday

Event	Current timings	Proposed trial timings
Students and taxis can arrive	08:30-09:00	No change
Registration	09:00-09:15	No change
Lesson 1	09:15-10:15	No change
Lesson 2	10:15-10:45	No change
Break	10.45-11:00	No change
Lesson 2 Continued	11:00-11.30	No change
Lesson 3	11:30-12:30	No change
Lunch (first half) KS3 - Eating KS4 - Playing	12:30-13:00	12.30 - 12.55 (5 minutes less lunch time)
Lunch (second half) KS3 - Playing KS4 Eating	13.00 - 13.30	12.55 - 13.20 (5 minutes less lunch time)
Lesson 4 (PSHE)	13:30-14:30	13.20 - 14.20 Change to start and finish time. Same length of lesson.
Assembly	14:30-14:50	14.20 - 14.50 Change to start and finish time. Same length of lesson.
Taxi	14.50	14.50
End of School Day	15.00 (As advertised on the website)	15.00 (As advertised on the website)

Excerpts from previous newsletters

Friday 17th September 2021

Part of what makes us so special is the extensive support we provide to your sons to meet high expectations regarding behaviour, communication, completing tasks in lessons, handing in homework and the wearing of uniforms. On occasions your son may not meet these expectations. When this does happen, the situation is addressed responsibly, maturely and professionally so that the young men learn from the experience, can develop a sense of responsibility for their part in the situation and improve in the future. This process however can be a cycle and does take time. Thank you for working with the incredible staff team as we support your sons through their Sunnydown journey.

Friday 24th September 2021

When staff reported that some students appeared to be using colourful language more often, it was not followed by “What sanctions do we need to put in place?” but by “What is that young person actually trying to communicate?” and “What can we do to help him?” This compassionate, empathetic level of reflection abounds at Sunnydown.

Regarding bad language, as a whole school we will continue to have very high expectations regarding how young people speak with one another and to adults and we ask families to support us in this regard. When events do occur, they will be addressed by staff and records kept, so that the Pastoral Team can monitor and provide additional support where necessary.

Swearing is one sign that a student may be unsettled. Withdrawing from lessons is another. If a student has a valid emotional reason for not being able to be in a lesson, they can use the ReST strategy where they come out of the lesson for 5 minutes. Staff may ask students to take a ReST if they recognise behaviours that warrant it. In some cases, the Pastoral Team will support the young person to help them better understand their situation, their emotions and reasons for not being in a lesson. Where a valid reason cannot be established, it may be that a senior leader decides that the student will need to complete the work during lunch. We are after all a school and our core responsibility is to educate.

Throughout episodes of swearing or an inability to go to class as discussed above, and indeed in all situations, we expect young men to have and demonstrate respect for the adults working with them. During the staff meeting, it was acknowledged that our young men, all young people across the country actually, have had a very rough 18 months and we will continue to see behaviours that could be attributed to the impact of Covid.

For example, our current Year 8 students have not physically been at Sunnydown for a full year, they do not know all of the routines yet. In many circumstances, the new Year 7 students are at an advantage because they have arrived and school is pretty much back to normal. They know no different and are adapting well. Our current Year 9 students have had a very unsettled Year 7 and Year 8 because of Covid. However, with some intense support during the second half of summer, and with much of this continuing now, many staff were able to comment on their high levels of maturity and resilience in this group. This is a clear demonstration that when school, family and the young people themselves work closely together, great things can be achieved.

Please do understand our philosophy and our approach. We are a school and we are charged with providing an excellent education, and we do. When a young person is not in the right frame of mind to learn, support is offered. This can range from making sure a hungry child is fed, a thirsty child is given a drink, an emotional child is allowed to shed some tears, a child who has a wet uniform from the rain will be given a dry set of clothes. We will look after your son professionally and in a caring manner. This is all focused on supporting your sons to learn and in this endeavour, our efforts are being doubled and should be considered relentlessly positive.

Thank you to those families who understand our approach and support us in maintaining our standards and



expectations. Your sentiments when shared via email or phone call are always shared with my team as a reminder that their efforts do not go unrewarded.

Friday 1st October 2021

Staff attended whole school online Safeguarding training regarding Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment on Thursday afternoon. While we have always encouraged our boys to speak respectfully to and with one another and staff, the zero tolerance approach to behaviours associated with this area is now written into all Safeguarding policies in all schools since 1st September.

For clarity, name calling in any way associated to sex, sexuality, or making another person feel victimised or to feel vulnerable in any way, especially related to sex or sexuality, will not be tolerated. If your son makes an inappropriate comment in this regard, it will be classified and recorded as Sexual Harassment. Sanctions and education support will be considered in all cases. Further, families will be informed. Repeat offences will result in further targeted interventions and possible exclusion. Under no circumstances will 'banter' or 'it is boys being boys' be tolerated. Such behaviours are unacceptable and your support in understanding our position in this regard.

Friday 25th November 2022

Sometimes humans can be unkind to one another, even bully one another. At Sunnydown, this type of behaviour is unacceptable. Every day is anti-bullying day at Sunnydown.

During assembly this afternoon, you will have heard me speak about another type of inappropriate behaviour that has no place at Sunnydown nor anywhere. This is harmful sexual behaviour.

Any behaviour that is physical in the area covered by our underwear or swimwear (including bras for ladies) that is not wanted is inappropriate. Touching another person in these areas is considered harmful sexual behaviour and has no place in any school. It will be challenged and reported to families.

Any behaviour that is related to the areas covered by our underwear that is spoken about (or typed on social media and other devices) in a way that causes any offence to the person who sees or hears it, is considered harmful sexual behaviour. This has no place in any school. It will be challenged and reported to families.

I emailed all families this week to make them aware of our school policy regarding Harmful Sexual Behaviours, making it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to such behaviours, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys". We believe that failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises harmful sexual behaviours, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Victims of such behaviour will always be supported. Those children who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviours will also be supported to understand the inappropriateness of their actions, but in addition will have sanctions considered through our Behaviour Policy. This can include the involvement of police.

Please be safe, and behave safely; in a way that does not cause upset and distress to others, at all time

Friday 2nd December 2022



This week I remind our community that students are expected to speak politely.

We expect your son to speak politely to staff and peers at all times. It is crucial to acknowledge that the vast majority of young men who attend Sunnydown meet this expectation every day. For this, we are grateful and appreciative. We will endeavour to recognise and champion this more frequently.

However, the impolite communications that we do observe among a small but impactful percentage of students includes referring to staff by their first name, swearing directly at them, making comments about personal appearance and ignoring polite instructions and offers of support. On occasion students use adjectives to describe staff in a negative way like “idiot” or “you are stupid,” this is particularly evident when a student does not get his own way or does not like the subject or the work set. Sunnydown is a school first and foremost.

Most young men who attend Sunnydown demonstrate appropriate and polite communication at all times.

However, it is a fact that some of your sons swear and use vulgar language and the other impolite actions listed above. This negative behaviour has an impact on other students and has the potential to disrupt learning. Students do not learn to speak in this way from staff, and I am very confident that they are not taught to do so by parents. Where they learn this is complex, but likely a combination of from peers, older siblings, movies, social media and YouTube to suggest several avenues.

As we are a Special school for communication difficulties, we expect some exhibition of behaviour that is affronting. However, we will never condone it and will always expect a young person to reflect and learn. We will of course apply context to a situation and recognise the needs of each student.

How can you help the expectations of polite interactions to be demonstrated at Sunnydown even more often? In essence by understanding that no school holds all the answers and that working together increases the chances of meeting the expectations. All students have an EHCP at Sunnydown, and all of them identify CoIN as an area of need. Communication is a complex social interaction, one that even neurotypical humans get wrong on occasion.

To those families of children who fit into the group of polite young men which make up a majority of the school, please talk to your son and congratulate him. Please encourage him to speak to an adult at school when he observes impolite language and interactions. Please help him understand that other students have different needs and limitations, but that impolite interactions of others will be addressed.

To those families that we need to contact because of how your son has spoken, please understand that we are neither displacing responsibility nor blaming you when a member of staff calls you to share this information. While it may not be a welcome message, possibly embarrassing, we are simply relaying back to you, your son's exhibited behaviour. Your son is responsible for this behaviour and by working together, we can help your son understand this, and over time, manage it himself. In conversation with your son please remind him that he is not to address staff by their first name (with the exception of Gabe who works for Greenhouse). Further, discuss this with your son and remind him that he is responsible for his own behaviour and that no context condones inappropriate interaction with staff and peers.

From a school's perspective, we are committed to listening to students and their experiences. We will also address negative interactions and put in place sanctions where necessary. Importantly however, we will endeavour to support all students to understand their own needs and their responsibility to manage their own interactions, improving over time.

