

1st June 2009

Headteacher's Newsletter to Parents: 'Making Pupil Behaviour Outstanding'

Dear Parents,

Over the last year, with staff, students and parents support, Cranford has made great strides on the journey to 'excellence in all areas'. There is, of course, lots still to be done but we are cheered by the fact that the last two visits to Cranford by Ofsted have resulted in judgments of 'Outstanding'.

At this time our hopes and wishes of success are with the 600+ Cranford students taking GCSE, AS and A2 examination in June 2009 and the 210 Year 9 students that have recently taken their Year 9 SATs examinations but we are also looking longer term to ensure that all our students are preparing well for future success.

Our aspirational school motto is '**Excellence in ALL areas**' and to achieve this, we particularly need to focus our attention on improving those areas of the school which only achieved 'Good' grades in the last whole school inspection by Ofsted in March 2008.

Nationally, one of the areas that parents want to see improve most in schools has been identified as 'behaviour' and for September 2009 Ofsted will be issuing more detailed and tough criteria to help schools meet the wishes of parents in this field.

At Cranford, we believe that outstanding behaviour (including exemplary attitudes to school and to learning) will help young people to be more successful academically and that poor behaviour or attitudes by students or their parents run counter to that.

Consequently, we must not tolerate poorer behaviour by any student as it puts their future academic success at risk and sometimes harms others as well.

As school staff and as parents, we can show that we truly care by addressing the matter early whilst the intervention can guide our students along the correct path at school and in life.

We know that the vast majority of our staff, students and parents will be supportive of a drive to improve behaviour further.

Next time Ofsted visits; we would all like to achieve an 'Outstanding' grade for this important fundamental of school life.

In June 2009, therefore, we are beginning a new drive to travel the short distance from 'good' behaviour to 'outstanding' behaviour at Cranford Community College.

Where are we starting from?

Ofsted (March 2008) judged behaviour as 'Good'. This means that there are no aspects which were found to be less than satisfactory and most were already found to be good or outstanding.

That's not a bad starting point and even more pleasing is the fact that we believe that behaviour is already better now than it was a year ago.

Behaviour is a complex area though and includes aspects such as attendance and punctuality for example.

In particular, our Ofsted inspection report made the following written comments about behaviour at Cranford Community College, these give a real 'flavour' of the range of what we mean when we talk about '*behaviour*' in schools:

"Students behave well and come to school regularly although attendance in the sixth form is not as good"

"Students take responsibilities seriously and provide exemplary service to others"

"Cranford's way incorporating 'the right to be safe, the right to be respected, and the right to learn'."

"Students make valuable contributions to the running of the school and the local community, including peer mentoring, fund raising and supporting in local primary schools"

"Students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties make especially fast progress towards their personal and academic targets. Students' progress accelerates as they move through the school because of the good teaching and the strong focus on improving literacy"

"Attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships between the students and adults are excellent in this harmonious community. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Students enjoy their education and attend very well in the main school"

"The school council is effective in promoting students' rights and responsibilities. Students were involved in selecting and monitoring the quality of the catering contract and fund-raised for charities such as a 'water-aid' project in Africa. Learners are well prepared for economic success because of their academic standards and exciting work-experience placements both in the local community and overseas. They regularly inspire and organise events, prepare and present assemblies to younger students and make presentations to the governing body. Roles such as sports leaders and tutors in primary schools enable students to become independent, self-motivated and confident young people"

"The school has extremely robust arrangements for safeguarding students." "One parent wrote, 'I know my children are safe'."

"A scheme of rewards that recognises students' efforts and contributions to school life is motivational and very popular"

Where do we want to be?

At Cranford, we have made a commitment to be 'Outstanding'. For *behaviour*, we want this to be measured against Ofsted's new and tougher criteria. We want to achieve this top grade in the shortest possible time and in *much less* than one year.

We want to start now, in June 2009, even though we don't know the exact detail of Ofsted's new criteria; we feel that we know what needs to improve already and do not see the benefit of waiting until September 2009.

How are we going to get there?

The focus of this letter is, therefore, how we can further improve behaviour within school and beyond. Excellent behaviour and attendance are proven to underpin high levels of achievement among pupils and we want our pupils to achieve the very best.

The areas of behaviour in which the school is already achieving 'Outstanding' behaviour grades are, for example, the ways in which we encourage positive behaviour; such as rewards, assessment, praise, encouragement, relationships with adults, involving students in the running of the school, active citizenship, community cohesion and harmony, giving students opportunities and genuine responsibility, etc.

The areas in which we can improve most relate to a better consistency of approach when dealing with unacceptable behaviour, mainly low level disruption such as politeness, but also punctuality and attendance. There is some excellent practice already, for example uniform and confiscation but consistency needs to be improved elsewhere.

We are beginning a new strategy focussed on improving behaviour and it will grow and develop over the coming months, partly informed by Ofsted's new guidance and criteria. In the interim, we are making tightening up on low level misbehaviour and introducing a new whole school detention system.

One of the main areas in which potential inconsistency or unfairness can creep into the system is by inconsistent use of 'warnings'. Parents will know that some staff will give no warning, others might give one warning, others may give multiple warnings and sometimes this can depend on the quality of the relationship or the mood of the child or adult. This doesn't make for a fair or consistent approach.

As the starting point, we have identified the 6 most frequent categories of low level misbehaviour and are targeting these through a new detention system which we believe will be fairer. These are:

1. Arriving late (to lessons or late to school)
2. Disrupting a lesson or learning activity
3. Impolite, rude, offensive or challenging behaviour
4. Having incorrect uniform (Note: detention will be in addition to confiscation)
5. Unacceptable, uncivilised or anti-social behaviour in and around the school site
6. Failure to meet deadlines (e.g. coursework, homework, etc)

As all 6 of the categories relate to basic expectations of positive behaviour, there will be **no warnings in the new system**.

Pupils and parents are being reminded of these expectations now as we introduce the new behaviour system and this is the only *warning* that will be given. New students and parents will be introduced to the expectations as part of the induction arrangements.

Our behaviour philosophy will continue to promote the three rights & responsibilities of our community:

The right to learn
The right to be respected
The right to be safe

Phase 1: A new, better and fairer 'Whole School Detention System'

In order to reinforce the school's expectations and to eliminate low level disruption and anti-social behaviour, students that **choose** not to comply with the behaviour expectations will be sanctioned in a more systematic and robust way.

A new 'whole school' detention system will be launched from Monday the **15th June 2009** and will apply to all students in the school including the 6th form.

The aims of the new system are:

- a) To instantly eliminate a culture of 'warnings' and create a fairer and more consistent response to unacceptable behaviour. To raise expectations and standards of positive behaviour to enhance learning, respect and safety.
- b) To eliminate low level disruption and anti-social behaviour in and around school in a consistent, swift, fair and systematic way that ensures all poor behaviour has a guaranteed consequence and non-compliance with sanctions is dealt with swiftly, robustly and unwaveringly.

The new Whole School Detention (WSD) system will be explained fully to students during assemblies in the week beginning the 8th June 2009.

Students will also complete an activity in class to ensure they fully understand the new system. This communication with the students will also serve as their warning and there will be no further warnings.

Staff (teaching and non-teaching) will be instructed that a Whole School Detention **MUST** be set for the following:

- Arriving late (to lessons or late to school)
- Disrupting a lesson or learning activity
- Impolite, rude, offensive or challenging behaviour
- Having incorrect uniform (Note: detention will be in addition to confiscation)
- Unacceptable, uncivilised or anti-social behaviour in and around the school site
- Failure to meet deadlines (e.g. coursework, homework, etc)

A whole school detention (WSD) will be set in the following way:

- a) A member of staff will complete a detention slip and give the top copy to the student to take home, making clear what the detention is for. The slip will serve as the notification to parents. It is the student's responsibility to show the slip and inform a parent or carer that they have a detention the next day.
- b) The detention will be completed the following day. If the pupil is absent from school on the day of the detention, the detention will automatically be served on the first day of their return to school. No further notice will be given to parents and parents should expect their child to finish school at 4.30 p.m.
- c) All detentions will be for 60 minutes and will run from 3.30pm – 4.30pm
- d) A senior member of staff will follow up any failure to attend and set an additional WSD, and take steps to ensure the student does not miss these 2 detentions.
- e) Some behaviour may warrant a higher level sanction and parents will be informed if this is the case. More serious behaviour will not be dealt with by the whole school detention system and more severe sanctions will be applied.
- f) If a student is late for detention, this will be treated as defiance. They will sit the remainder of the original detention and will be set a further detention for the following day.
- g) Students that do not behave appropriately during the detention will complete the detention and be set a further detention.
- h) Failure to attend the first and follow up WSD will result in a more weighty sanction and enforcement by senior staff to ensure the detention is completed.

What has been the experience in other schools?

The experience from other schools that have successfully introduced a similar system is that initially there may be large numbers of students in the whole school detention and so we are prepared for this initial bulge.

As time goes on, the vast majority of inherently well behaved students modify their behaviour and they stop acquiring detentions. The consistent approach and guaranteed sanction gives students a good reason not to copy the poorer behaviour of a few. The general reduction in low level misbehaviour benefits everyone.

This remaining pattern of detentions helps to identify the smaller number of genuinely defiant students who may require additional action to improve their behaviour and life chances.

Working in partnership (parents, pupil, school and other key partners) is crucial to helping students to learn effectively. Parents have an important role to play and can support your child/children and the school by talking through the issues in this letter with your child/children.

The main responsibility to comply with the school rules, of course, remains with each student but we can help them to acknowledge their responsibility for their own excellent behaviour.

Similarly, the main responsibility to enforce the rules and to reward or sanction rests with the staff at the school acting in *loco parentis* but we welcome the role of parents in supporting the school in its efforts to do the very best for your child/children and for all the students at Cranford Community College.

I hope this letter will help parents to understand the school's revised approach to behaviour and will support us in pushing the grade from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' in this area. We will keep you informed of the next steps in the strategy as we progress.

We welcome your positive comments, complaints & feedback at all times.

All well mannered comments are appreciated and can be made via the school website www.cranford.hounslow.sch.uk by right-clicking on the text on the front page which states: 'Please send us your comments and suggestions about Cranford Community College'.

Anonymous or impolite comments are not normally considered but all other comments, complaints and suggestions are taken seriously, considered professionally and carefully.

Thank you again for your continued and powerful support of our journey to excellence.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Prunty
Headteacher