

28 March 2025



RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

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Dear parent/carer

I would like to reiterate our expectations in school, and I am asking for your support to work with us, so that all students can meet them.

We have seen a significant increase, this term, in the frequency of students arguing with staff members and parents/carers questioning the decisions made by staff and the school.

I must take this opportunity to remind you that our behaviour policy and systems are designed to ensure that Ridgewood School is an environment where staff, students and visitors feel safe.

Our first school value is RESPECT. When we introduced this value, we demonstrated our respect for students by engaging them in decisions that affected them on a daily basis. As a result of this consultation, we decided to allow nail polish, one pair of earrings (studs only) and a grey v-necked jumper, as an additional/optional piece of school uniform. We also updated the zero-tolerance approach to non-compliance. i.e instead of an automatic C3 for not adhering to a school rule, we introduced the C4 for refusal. For example, if a student is not wearing their blazer, instead of an automatic C3, they are reminded of the school expectations and given a chance to make the right choice. If a student fails to do so they would receive a C4 for refusal. This subtle change to the policy was designed to help the students with our second value of RESPONSIBILITY.

Recently, I have delivered assemblies to students on these key school values. In these assemblies I have referred to the 'C4 refusing a reasonable instruction' sanction and reminded students that using unacceptable language when responding to a staff member, will result in a C4 being issued. If a student feels they should not have received a C4, they have the right to appeal the sanction. But arguing with a member of staff will automatically prevent them from an appeal.

As a school, we pride ourselves on preparing our students for the road ahead. This means that we want our students to leave us with excellent qualifications, but we also want them to be mature, respectful young people who contribute positively to society. Therefore, I urge you to support us in reinforcing such a key value as respect and, if your child argues with a member of staff, please support us with the resulting sanction.

Detention sanction - I ask that you support us with this and trust us that when a detention has been issued it is fair and proportionate. As mentioned above, there is an appeals process, but it must be the student who takes responsibility for this and submits the appeal. In future any appeal submitted by a parent/carer will not be responded to. Please also be mindful that it is the responsibility of parent/carer to make arrangements for their child to get home and it is not our responsibility to rearrange detentions around parent/carer availability.

We have also noticed an escalation in the number of concerns/complaints from parents/carers, with the two main reasons for these being:

- parent/carer is in disagreement with the school over a sanction.
- parent/carer does not agree with a subject group that their child has been placed in.

I have spoken to students in assemblies about our third value of RESILIENCE. One area in which students need to show more resilience is in relation to form groups, teaching groups and seating plans. I have explained to students that not liking a teacher or not liking who they are sat next to is not a valid reason to move groups. We use a wide range of factors when placing students including, but not limited to, ability, need and behaviour. Please trust us that such decisions are not taken lightly and the group your child is placed in is designed to best meet their needs.



'Prepare for the road ahead'

Respect

Responsibility

Resilience

As we approach the Easter holidays, please remember that false eyelashes and nails are not allowed in school and that piercings are limited to one pair of studs. Students will be required to remove these prior to coming back to school after Easter.

I hope that you all have a restful Easter and look forward to continuing our work with you next term.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Peirson', written in a cursive style.

A Peirson
Headteacher