

17 October 2025



RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

Barnsley Road, Doncaster
DN5 7UB
01302 783939

Dear Parents/Carer,

As we approach the end of the first half term, I would like to share some updates with you.

New Build

We first received notification of the new build in December 2020, so to say this has been a long time in the planning is an understatement! However, the completion of the new building is only phase 1. Phase 2 - the refurbishment of the Post-16 roof, will begin immediately after half term. Phase 3 - demolition of the existing buildings and subsequent landscaping, will follow and end in August 2027. So, there is still a lot of disruption to come.

To enable the handover of the new building to run as smoothly as possible, school will close for October half term at 3.10pm on Thursday 23 October. School will open again to students on the morning of Wednesday 5 November.

Next week, students will receive assemblies where we will outline our expectations for the new building. One of the expectations will be the use of chewing gum in school. We have noticed an increase in students chewing gum around school. Chewing gum has always been a banned item from school, because of the damage it can do to floorings, furniture and clothing. Students who are caught using chewing gum will be given a C4, for refusal to follow a reasonable instruction. Please support us in this matter by ensuring that your child does not bring chewing gum to school.

Y12/13 GCSE English resit – Tuesday 4 November

Please note that there is a Y12/13 GCSE English resit exam on Tuesday 4 November. If your child is due to sit this exam, please ensure that they attend on this day. All students who this affects have been informed of the arrangements.

Parent Survey

Those of you who have attended open evenings over the past 5 years will have heard me speak about our aim for the students at Ridgewood School to be safe, happy and successful. Therefore, it is incredibly pleasing to be able to share some of the results from the parent survey that closed today. 90% of parents reported that their child felt safe at school, 85% reported that their child was happy and 93% reported that their child does well at this school. Although these are very high figures, please be assured that we will not rest until these results are 100%.

In our quest to achieve this and become a great school, we are pleased to share with you that we have achieved two prestigious awards for excellence in research engagement and professional learning for all staff. These are the Chartered College of Teaching Research Mark Plus and the Teacher Development Trust Gold Award. We hope that these two awards demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that your children have the best experience possible while at Ridgewood.

The main areas of the school that parents have concerns about, seem to be toilet facilities, queues for lunch and capacity on the school buses.



'Prepare for the road ahead'

Respect

Responsibility

Resilience

I hope that the increased number of toilets in the new building and the configuration of the new dining hall will address the first two issues. We will be monitoring the situation closely.

In terms of the school buses, we have done a lot of work over this half term to try to resolve the issues and been in constant communication with SYMCA and the bus companies. For example, members of the leadership team have ensured that all students have been able to access the bus at the end of the school day. On a Monday afternoon, when the capacity required is greatest, we have also had our minibus on stand-by, but not once have we required the use of it. We have also been monitoring capacity when the buses arrive at school in a morning. On every occasion that we have counted the students disembarking, there have been at least 30 spaces still available across the 5 services. This clearly demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity. On three mornings, we have also visited various bus stops in the surrounding villages to see firsthand what the issues are. We believe that a cause of the problem is that some parents are choosing to drop their child off at certain bus stops. The reasons for this are that it is more convenient for them or that their child wants to travel to school with friends. Unfortunately, SYMCA does not allocate spaces based on preference; they allocate based on location. Therefore, to alleviate this issue, I must insist that students catch the bus that is closest to their home.

Today, I have been at the bus stop outside the Shires Store in Sprotbrough. The first bus was only able to take a small number of students. The second bus arrived a few minutes later with space for 16 students. Nine students got on leaving 7 spaces but the rest of the students who were waiting refused to get on. They said they were waiting for their friends on the third bus. Luckily, on this occasion there were sufficient spaces on the third bus, but only just. Please discuss this with your child and ensure that they get on a bus when there are spaces available, rather than waiting for a later bus.

Student Email Access at Home

Over the summer, we carried out extensive updates to our IT systems in school. As part of this process, all students have been issued with new email addresses and login details. To strengthen the security and protection of student accounts, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) has now been enabled for any access to school emails from outside of school. The IT Team at the Trust have produced the attached 'How To Guide' to support you and your child with setting this up if required.

Non-uniform Day

We will be holding a non-uniform day on Thursday 23 October. Recently, Brandon Belshaw, a former Ridgewood student, suffered a life changing industrial accident. Therefore, we would like to donate all proceeds to support him with his recovery. We hope that you can give generously to such a worthy cause.

I want to thank you for your continued support and urge you to use the 'contact us' facility on our website if you want to provide us with any feedback or to raise any concerns.

Yours faithfully



A Peirson
Headteacher