

Dear Parents/carers

As we move towards the end of January (where did that month go!) I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a belated Happy New Year. I am delighted to be writing to you as the new Headteacher of Chase Terrace Technology College, a school I have been a part of for over 12 years as deputy head and which I consider to be a wonderful place to work.

I have genuinely enjoyed everyday spent in the company of a truly exceptional teaching and support staff and engaging and inspirational students. My appointment as Headteacher results from the school's transfer to academy status under the government's programme of academisation. The academy to which we belong bears the name of one such inspirational student - Stephen Sutton, who, on a daily basis continues to influence the lives of all of us who work at or attend CTTC. Stephen's mantra - "Live, Love, Laugh, Learn" formed the backbone of my first week of assemblies at which I wished the students a Happy New Year. I am determined that every day at Chase Terrace will be filled with smiles, happy voices and respectful behaviour which makes the learning process so much easier and each day better. I truly believe that this makes a real difference - particularly in our modern world where some would say we spend more time looking at computer screens rather than each other. Following this brief mention in assembly I am now met in corridors and in classrooms with ringing "hello"s and "how are you?"s from the students which indicates to me that they are feeling good about their school. Staff are also 'meeting and greeting' students at the classroom door and welcoming them into the room too.

The staff at CTTC are my greatest resource and I am fortunate to be work with a dedicated team of outstanding professionals who are always prepared to go the extra mile for students, particularly when this is matched by the students individual endeavor and determination to do well - something that I would ask all parents to help to instill in their children.

I have made my expectations of students very clear in the first few weeks of term - our 'respect for all' agenda combined with Stephen's mantra covers everything! Students have been reminded that they should be polite and respectful at all times that they should aspire to be successful and avoid situations which end in sanctions as this leads to a less positive atmosphere in school. Every action that is taken and decision that is made has an outcome and I ultimately want to encourage our students to make the right choices all of the time - this in its self is education for life and therefore the job of a school. I want students to delight in and celebrate success and the school to talk about rewards rather than sanctions.

I am tremendously proud to be Headteacher at CTTC and look forward to meeting you all in this capacity in the coming months. I thank you in advance for your support particularly with the simple things such as uniform and completion of homework and assure you of my determination to do the best for your child's future.

Tim Chamberlin
(Headteacher)

Internet safety and social media

As a school we have been spending a lot of time talking to students about internet safety - their digital footprint and online presence. In a rapidly changing digital world it is increasingly difficult for parents/carers to effectively monitor internet and app usage by their children. Regular updates from the governments Department for Education and our local police remind us daily of the dangers faced by young people from inappropriate use of digital media. Can I please ask parents/carers not to neglect this area of family life and regularly ask to see your child's phone, tablet and PC - checking the history of sites visited and even the validity of apps being used. Two apps that parents/carers might find particularly useful are 'Netaware' released by O2 and NSPCC and 'ZipIt'. 'Netaware' tells parents about every app that their child might be using on their phone or tablet, rating the safety of the app so that parents can make an informed decision on whether the app is suitable to be used by their child. 'ZipIt' provides good advice to students on how to remain safe on the internet or through social media sites. I was shocked to hear that many apps these days are disguised to look innocent because of the app's logo but are actually quite sinister in what they can do. We will be writing to parents/carers shortly to invite you to an internet safety briefing given by the police which many of you may be keen to come to.

Bikes and Scooters

I am very keen to encourage students to walk or cycle to school. Students know that, for safety reasons they are not allowed to ride their bikes or scooters on the school site but must walk them to the storage area. Can I please ask parents/carers to ensure that bikes and scooters are securely locked to the storage racks. Regrettably we have had a couple of instances recently when bikes have been targeted by thieves - we have CCTV cameras trained on the storage area but strong locks would provide a greater and more immediate deterrent.

Uniform

Thank you to parents/carers for your continued support of our uniform policy. The school uniform was originally decided upon several years ago by staff and governors at CTTC in consultation with our Parents' Forum group. I am currently in the process of reviewing this policy as I believe a number of elements of the policy are outdated. I will inform parents/carers once this job is complete and post the updated policy on our school website. In the meantime can I please ask parents to fully support and enforce our uniform code which has been designed to be comfortable and affordable. Please never buy items of uniform without referring to the uniform policy or be persuaded by your child that an item is part of our uniform when it isn't. I am particularly keen to preserve a positive atmosphere around the school and disagreements about uniform create tension where it doesn't need to exist.

Student safety

Our work with our local Police Officers, PCSOs and community teams is a very important part of ensuring the safety of the young people who come to CTTC. These teams are keen for me to stress the need for parents/carers to ensure that they know where their children are at all times and who they are with. I have been made aware of a number of recent situations in the Burntwood area that give me cause for concern. As part of our care in the community responsibility Staffordshire County Council have asked that all school children over the age of 11 should see a film called 'Kayeighs Story' which highlights the risks faced by young people in today's society. I will send further details to parents/carers about this in the next few days.

Use of mobile phones in school

CTTC permits the carrying of mobile phones in school as they provide a sensible level of safety while on the way to or from school. Their usage in school is, however, restricted. Students should not be making phone calls during the school day. If an emergency arises it is essential that students let a member of staff know of the problem to allow us to deal with the situation quickly and appropriately rather than contact home - ringing home delays staff being notified and often leads to confusion or mis-information being shared which deflects staff from dealing with the real situation. Can I also respectfully ask parents not to make calls to their children during the school day but again contact the child's Year Office and allow us to pass urgent messages on for you at the next convenient opportunity. Our students know that they cannot take pictures or make videos or recordings of other students or staff whilst in school - this is actually illegal. Phones should always be set to 'silent' whilst in school and kept securely out of sight in bags along with headphones. Phones should not be used in classrooms without the explicit permission of the class teacher. Use of social media of any form during the school day is actively discouraged.

Hand held devices- iPads, tablets, surfaces...

CTTC is keen to encourage students to use tablets as part of their modern learning toolkit - along with traditional pencil cases containing all the necessary daily stationary equipment. We have made significant investments in our WiFi network to ensure that all students can access online learning resources when it's appropriate to do so. We are no longer continuing to offer our Learn Anywhere Purchase Scheme as the management of insurance claims in particular has become very protracted and time consuming. I am very pleased to be able to confirm that we can now add Android based devices to our WiFi system which opens up very cost effective options to parents/carers with prices as low as £89.00 in many shops for well spec'd android tablets. Usage of these devices, as with mobile phones, is at the discretion of the classroom teacher but good examples of usage include photographing the white board so that a copy of class notes is taken, researching projects and creating mind maps or revision cards. When linked to our WiFi, access to websites is limited by our school systems, as it is on our networked computers. If students want to sign their devices up to our WiFi they can do this by speaking to our ICT technicians at lunchtime.

School Closures

Should it be necessary to close the school due to severe weather conditions I will inform parents of this decision via the school Twitter account @ChaseTerraceTC. This can also be viewed on the front page of the school website (currently indicated by a large blue arrow).