

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following the launch of our Virtual Parents Evening last week there has been a tremendously positive response. As a reminder, you can access all of our information at:

<http://www.oldburywells.com/virtual-open-evening>

and make further contact with the school should you wish to arrange a tour or ask any questions.

Following our launch a number of questions have been asked which we felt would be useful to communicate to all parents. We will be updating a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section on the school site which will provide further useful information but, in the meantime please see below some of the questions asked with our response:

***Can I book a visit and have a tour? I have been to Oldbury Wells before but would like to visit again!***

**Yes you can!** We have added tours to meet the high demand and to ensure that the school is available to all parents and families if required. Tours can be booked through the school website; although should you require any alternative arrangements please do not hesitate to contact the school and ask to speak with Mrs Dwane who will make any necessary arrangements.

***We know how important Homework is for our child, how do I get to know what Homework my child will have and how they are getting on in lessons?***

We have formal Parents Evenings which take place across the year and you also receive written reports and regular feedback on the levels your child is working at, alongside their attitude to learning in lessons. We also have an online system called 'Satchel One'. This shows you what homework your child has been given, if the homework has been submitted or not, and you can also see any comments staff have made to give praise or when there may be a concern. As parents you have direct access to this so you can see what is happening on a daily basis.

***In my child's primary school pupils are encouraged to behave, supported and rewarded and there are also clear sanctions and punishments. Can you tell me what is your general approach?***

Our approach in our secondary school is similar. We use a toolbox of strategies to support all children which leads to excellent engagement from all students. There are two sides to our highly effective systems: High Challenge and High Support.

- **CHALLENGE:** We challenge pupils to behave well at all times and we make sure this happens; we constantly educate our students on what our expectations are and ensure they respond to this; we also have clear sanctions for any poor behaviour.
- **SUPPORT:** We actively teach pupils the behaviours we expect, and we support them to get it right. We reward good behaviour and good work which creates a positive ethos leading to outstanding outcomes.

We recognise that there is a need for both Challenge and Support. Our approach is recognised by OFSTED as having the most positive impact on student outcomes and wellbeing, our successful track record is proof that this is the case.

We know that schools which use simplistic, harsh, punishments as their main way to manage behaviour fail children in the long run. Such discipline systems can lead to an unhappy school ethos and resentment amongst teenagers. It is for this reason that many schools are moving away from this over-reliance on pure 'discipline' and towards more effective and balanced approaches.

***Not enough challenge?*** We also know that some schools are not proactive enough and are accepting of low standards in learning or in behaviour, which in turn leads to less successful outcomes.

At Oldbury Wells School, we know that different things work with different children and so we use FOUR main techniques:

1. An inspiring positive and engaging education.
2. Promotion of a positive ethos and climate for learning with frequent encouraging and use rewards.
3. High pastoral support, including teaching pupils how to behave and manage effectively in school.
4. Clear consequences/ sanctions for poor behaviour.

### ***What are your consequences and punishments then?***

Almost all of our children behave well and need only an occasional reminder about behaviour, because they want to do well and be a positive member of our school. However, we are strict on behaviour and use clear and firm punishments when we need to.

- We start each day right: We meet pupils at the gate/ on the bus park and set the tone for the day. High standards of behaviour start here.
- High standards: We have a very clear set of rules. We make sure every child understands the rules, what the rules are for, and what will happen if they break them.
- Safe supervision: We plan so that supervision around school is high. Our pupils are very safe in school because there is a planned staff presence around school.
- Remove problems: We remove a child from class straight away using our walkie-talkie system called 'Walkabout'. Senior staff are on call so if a pupil is misbehaving, they are removed from class and dealt with. This means the class can keep learning.
- Strong sanctions: We have a robust system of punishments that we use, including removal from class; detention; isolation; fixed term exclusion and permanent exclusion. At Oldbury Wells we do use permanent exclusion as the ultimate sanction where this is necessary.
- Make sure parents know: We also make sure that parents have immediate contact if there has been a concern with their child, recognising the importance of a positive relationship between school and home.

### ***What about rewards and encouragement?***

We know that all of our feeder primary schools have great ways to encourage good behaviour; we have that in our secondary too. This means we have a happy and positive school where pupils learn well and behave well. This in turn makes our pupils very successful in their learning, securing great academic outcomes and success within their own personal development.

- Our parents can use the SatchelOne app to see when their child has been awarded an achievement point or a commendation.
- We keep track of achievement points and give out frequent rewards when they reach particular points levels.
- We have all sorts of rewards for our pupils, ranging from early lunch passes to school trips.
- We have awards ceremonies every year for a range of achievements and best effort.
- Our school council is actively involved in planning how rewards in school work best - for all students in school.

### ***How does an inspiring education and excellent teaching lead to good behaviour?***

- Because our teaching is such high-quality, poor behaviour is rare during lessons.
- When pupils are challenged by their work and are engaged they don't become distracted. Schools find that it is often bored pupils, or where work is not suitable for pupils, that leads to bad behaviour. Our detailed planning and high quality curriculum ensures this is not the case.
- Our robust curriculum, alongside our positive ethos, results in students being independent and able to make good decisions, they understand how their action can impact on others and take responsibility to make good decisions.
- Research shows that effective behaviour management and effective education go together, our school's success rates, exam results and support for students to progress to the next steps in education are proof that this is the case.

### ***How do you support pupils and also how do you teach them to behave?***

- We have extensive systems to further support some pupils, such as school counselling and mentoring.
- We invest in a team of pastoral support workers who are available to support and/or manage behaviour, depending on the individual.
- We have staff trained to teach children techniques such as anger management and coping with stress.
- We teach all pupils about their responsibilities to others in our school.
- We work with a range of external providers who bring additional support into school where needed.

***I want my child to get a really good education. How successful are your students compared to other schools?***

Our school is very successful, and our students get excellent results compared to other schools.

- Our year 11 pupils have consistently outperformed all other local schools in examinations.
- We are the only local school with positive GCSE scores every year since new GCSEs started (four years in a row!)
- We have the highest expectations of pupils. We also support every child to do their best, especially if they don't find study easy or have any type of learning need.
- We make sure our education is inspiring and we offer a superb range of courses.
- All of our students get excellent results, from the very brightest to those who need further support.
- Our brightest pupils aspire to the world's best universities. Three of our pupils went to Oxford and Cambridge this year, with many others each year successful in their journey to top universities.
- We are the only school with a Sixth Form in our area, this gives our teachers an edge in terms of A level specialist knowledge.

***I have heard that there is a national shortage of teachers? Do you have many supply teachers? How do you make sure that your teachers are good?***

Yes, there is a shortage of teachers nationally. Thankfully at Oldbury Wells, we have no teacher vacancies at all and have every post filled by an excellent specialist trained teacher. There are several reasons for this:

- Staff turnover is low at Oldbury Wells as teachers want to stay at our happy and successful school.
- We do have high expectations for our staff and they work very, very hard to educate our pupils superbly. We also make sure that they have good training and support.
- As a school with a sixth form we attract some of the very best teachers. A teacher who understands their subject and teaches it right up to A level is a truly inspiring teacher in main school too.
- Our exam results demonstrate the expertise of our teaching team who provide the very best education.
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***I would like to have the opportunity for a more detailed discussion with a member of the school team.***

You are able to request a call back using the contacts section on the school website, although please feel free to simply call the school if you require any further information.

We hope that you have found the above details useful; as our tours and contact with parents continue we will provide further updates via the school website. We are aware that under current COVID restrictions it is important that you get feedback on any areas of interest for you personally.