



The Kidsgrove Secondary School
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Kidsgrove
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4 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you are aware there was a hoax incident at the school yesterday which resulted in our lockdown procedure being implemented. Firstly I must commend our pupils and staff for responding to the situation in a calm, sensible manner, which I would expect. Our pupils were an absolute credit to yourselves and the school.

I understand that when pupils text home, despite being asked not to, it can be an extremely anxious time for parents. As a parent myself, I understand this completely. I also recognise that young people will still be tempted and also use phones when asked not to, particularly in stressful situations. However, I will be talking to them over the next few days about ensuring that instructions in emergency situations are given for a reason and so should be adhered to. I hope you will support me in this by having conversations with your child and reinforcing the importance of the matter.

The phone call that we received stated that a man wearing black joggers and a hoodie was going to a high school in the area and that he had a knife. The emergency services were called immediately. As it was lunchtime, our pupils were in one of 5 areas, so a sweep of the building was carried out. Pupils obeyed instructions and swiftly went to the Gym. This procedure took between 5 and 7 minutes, which I think is remarkable, considering it was during the school lunch break. This is a measure of how well behaved and absolutely compliant and respectful to staff instructions our pupils are.

I am aware that some parents were not able to contact the school and I completely understand this frustration too. However, I have a duty of care to pupils and staff in our school; therefore, in a lockdown situation parents should not expect a response to phone calls as all staff would be assembled in the designated area with the pupils. All staff were supervising pupils, other than the support staff that were ensuring that the site was safe and secure. In a situation like we had yesterday, dynamic risk assessments are being taken on the spot and my priority is to ensure childrens' safety.

As already mentioned, I am extremely proud of our pupils and as parents I wanted you to be able to share the praise with your children too. This pride is also extended to the way staff responded. All staff were calm and it is quite humbling to see the dedication of the staff that work in this school.

This letter should reassure you that we do have very tight processes in place, however, a debrief will take place with our senior team and support staff concerned. This will ensure that we learn from the situation and that procedures are tightened further as a result.

At no point in my reflections do I think I could have informed parents any quicker than we did initially that all pupils were safe. The delay in the services attending the school site did not help the situation; however, I could only report to parents a second time when it was confirmed by the Police that there was no intruder on site.

If you have any further questions I would be more than happy to talk to you and urge you to please contact the school office as a first point of call to express any concerns you may have.

Thank you all for your co-operation and continued support to the school.

Yours faithfully



Mrs K Mitchell
Head of School