



Eckington School

Chorus Education Trust

27th October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your families are well as we approach the end of a very busy and enjoyable half-term. Eckington School reopens again on Monday 6th November 2023.

Since September, there have been many whole school changes designed to improve the quality of education at Eckington School. These changes have included:

- Launching The “Eckington Way” & implementing a new “Ready to Learn” classroom behaviour system
- Introducing an out of lesson Commendation and Correction System
- Launching a “Star of the Lesson” rewards system
- Introducing a “Big Question” starter in lessons to improve student engagement and create links to prior learning (sequencing and interleaving pedagogy)

I am pleased to inform you that these changes have already had an impact. Two external reviews (one from Chorus Academy Trust and one from the Department for Education’s Behaviour Hubs Programme) have stated that the school climate and student behaviour has noticeably improved.

Behaviour Hubs Update

On 25 October 2023 Eckington School welcomed two external inspectors into the school as part of the Department for Education Behaviour Hubs program. During their visit, they observed the new behaviour policy in action and spoke to students and staff to collect their viewpoints. I am pleased to inform you that the student and staff voice was overwhelmingly positive. During their visit, students stated that, ***‘Since September, behaviour has improved, the school is safer, and we are learning more in lessons’ (Year 10 student panel – DfE Behaviour Hubs 2023)***

Further school improvement work is planned throughout the academic year to ensure The Eckington Way is embedded, and standards of behaviour continue to improve, allowing students to make better levels of academic progress in a calm and supporting school climate.

Improving Communication with Parents

New Website Update

Over the next half-term, I am hoping to launch a **Parents’ Hub** on the school’s website that should help parents and carers navigate to frequently visited areas of our new website within 3 clicks. Parents and carers will be informed when this goes live.

Term 1 Parents’ Forum

The first Parents’ Forum will be held on Tuesday 5th December from 5pm to 6pm. I will be attending this with Mr. Power (Deputy Headteacher). During the forum, Mr. Power will conduct a ten-minute presentation on the school’s new behaviour policy and the plans linked to our new anti-bullying campaign. If you would like to book a seat, please email my PA, Mrs. Middleton on DMiddleton@chorustrust.org. Please also send any questions or agenda items to Mrs. Middleton by Thursday 30th November 2023.

Outstanding Achievement for All

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New Reporting and Communication System Starting in January 2024

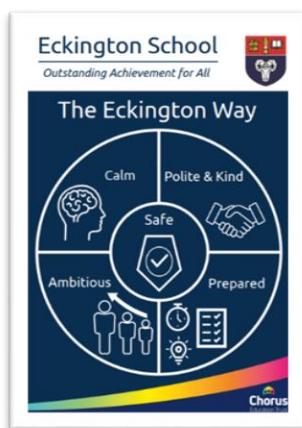
The school will be introducing a new operating system in January 2024 called Arbor. This will be replacing our current system called SIMS. It is hoped that this new system will improve communications between school and parents for academic reporting, attendance and positive and negative behaviours. More details will follow in due course, including how to download the parent app.

Additional INSET Day on Monday 8th January 2024

Due to the amount of school improvements taking place, there will be an additional INSET day on Monday 8th January 2024 that has recently been approved by the Trustees of Chorus Academy Trust. The remaining INSET days for the 2023/24 academic year are:

- 27 November 2023
- 8 January 2024 – additional INSET day
- 22 July 2024
- 23 July 2024

The Eckington Way: New Focus for Half-Term 2



Since September 2023, the school has focused on three of the five Eckington Way core values (A **safe** school, a **calm** school, and a **polite and kind** school). From November, alongside the first 3 Eckington Way core values, we will be focusing on being **prepared**. We will therefore be focusing on:

Attendance and punctuality – arriving to school and lessons on time. Students will be issued with consequences if they are late to school or lessons.

Having the correct equipment – all necessary learning materials, including PE kit and a bag large enough to carry all pieces of equipment.

Wearing the correct uniform to school. From November 6th, students wearing incorrect uniform will be issued with a double correction in their planner by their form tutor during morning registration.

Please could all parents support the school by ensuring that their child/ren have the necessary equipment and are wearing the correct school uniform. Our uniform expectations can be found on the school website by following this hyperlink here: [Eckington School - Uniform \(chorustrust.org\)](http://www.eckington.chorustrust.org)

Mobile Phone Reminder

Mobile phones should be turned off and placed in student bags at all times. If seen, mobile phones will be confiscated until 3pm (the same day). For safeguarding reasons, we have deliberately decided not to ban them from school premises (to ensure students have them on their way to and from school, should parents require it). However, the school accepts no liability if these devices are damaged or lost.

Eckington Enrichment Booklet

At Eckington School we understand the value of extracurricular opportunities. Mr Shore (Assistant Headteacher) has created an Eckington Enrichment booklet which has been added to our website, this is available to view via this link: www.eckington.chorustrust.org/extracurricular Throughout the year, Mr Shore will update this booklet as new clubs or opportunities arise.

School Closure at 13:20 for Flooding on Friday 20th October 2023

Thank you for your support on Friday 20th October 2023. Within 1 hour of deciding to close the school early, the school ensured all students had the opportunity to eat a hot meal (normally served at 1320). We also made the decision to ensure parents gave their permission for their child to go home (to ensure all of our 1260 students could get home safely in the extreme weather conditions). I would also like to thank Eckington's staff who helped support this extraordinary situation, including the staff who remained in school until all students could get home safely.

Extreme Weather Procedure

During extreme weather, particularly when heavy snow is forecasted, the school will consult BBC weather, our bus companies, and the school's site manager before making decisions to remain open or close. At the heart of every decision will be student and staff safety.

In common with many other large secondary schools, our staff are drawn from a large area. Therefore, a key factor in any decision about opening in extreme conditions will be whether we can guarantee sufficient staffing to supervise all students safely.

With winter approaching, if a decision is made to either delay opening or close the school completely, parents will be notified via the following:

- School website
- School's Facebook and Instagram
- School communication to parents (email or text)

I would like to thank parents and carers for their ongoing support. I wish you and your family a pleasant and safe half-term holiday.

Yours faithfully,



Richard M Cronin
Headteacher