



# Penistone Grammar School

## Never Stop Flying

**Principal: Mr P Crook (B.Ed Hons)**  
Huddersfield Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 7BX  
www.penistone-gs.uk  
enquiries@penistone-gs.uk  
01226 762114  
@PGSALC



Achieving Excellence through a Values Driven Education

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Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by thanking the 377 parents who have already taken the time to fill in our Parent Survey for 2018. We began asking parents for their views formally in 2012, and each year the results have proved pivotal in shaping our school improvement priorities. There have been tangible changes within school that are directly attributable to the information you have shared with us. This includes anti-bullying initiatives, changes to Parents' Evenings, refinement of the VDE system and a significant investment in mental health initiatives. This year's results are particularly important to me as they will reflect mine and the new leadership team's first year leading the school. As a result, I am particularly keen to understand the things you think we are doing well, and where, in your opinion, we need to focus in terms of further improvement. The highest number of responses we have had to our survey was in 2016 when 475 parents completed this; it would be fantastic if we could exceed this number this year ... we are nearly there!

You can access the survey via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PS-2018>. On average it takes 10 minutes to complete and the deadline for responses is 21 December 2018. On 28 February 2019 at 19:00 I will be hosting a meeting to which all parents are invited. At the meeting I will present the results of the survey and most importantly, outline how the information collected will influence our School Improvement Plan. You can register to attend via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PS-2018>.

Given that we are currently faced with such dark, cold mornings, the glorious summer we experienced this year seems such a long time ago. But on Wednesday 5 December we were able to re-live this for a short time when we welcomed back our Year 11 Class of 2018. We were thrilled to see so many of our students return to us with parents and carers to celebrate their fantastic GCSE results, and to allow us to mark this formally through the presentation of official examination certificates. As part of the evening we awarded two special awards; the 2018 Joe Dale Memorial Cup which went to Monique Van Veen, and the David Brown Trophy for Academic Achievement, which was presented to Jamie Butler. For those students who have moved on to different institutions post-16, it was great to hear how well they are doing, and for those who have stayed with us, the evening was a lovely opportunity to reminisce over previous years.

On Wednesday 19 December we are looking forward to welcoming back our Year 13 Class of 2018 when we will be taking time to celebrate their record-breaking results which, according to ALPS, placed our sixth form provision in the top 1% of A Level providers nationally this year. To this end ALPS have asked permission to feature Penistone Grammar School Post-16 Centre as a case study school of best practice; an incredible honour and a real testament to the success of students and staff.



Aim High



Be Determined



Be Brave



Be Supportive



Be Proud

I would like to thank parents and carers for their continued commitment to supporting our 'Values Driven' expectations, particularly in relation to uniform. Overall, uniform is far better than we have ever seen, the only area where we have noticed an emerging issue is in relation to the length of skirts. In September we slightly relaxed our rules in relation to skirt length, specifying that, rather than skirts needing to be "knee length", they should be "... of a reasonable length, and preserve the dignity of the wearer at all times" (Student Planner 2018: Page 18). Upon speaking to students there appeared to be some ambiguity about what this meant, so in assemblies last week we provided students with our definition. We advised that "reasonable length and preserving the dignity of the wearer at all times" means that the skirt should be within 5cm/2inch (approximately) of the top of the knee and of a material and shape that does not ride up or become shorter when walking.

We have asked any student who needs to address the length of their skirt to do so by the time we return to school on 7 January 2019. To support with this, we now have skirts available to buy from our school shop. Skirts are available in three lengths; 18", 20" and 22" and are available in sizes 6 to 20. Skirts are unbranded (ie they do not have our logo embroidered on them) and cost £11.00 each. We hold a sample sizing set in school; delivery to school is usually within one week of ordering.

As you know, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students is something I hold close to my heart and I am now delighted to share with you that we have chosen to work towards being accredited with the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for the 'Mental Health in Schools' award. Carnegie School of Education, based at Leeds Beckett University, and Minds Ahead CIC have developed the School Mental Health Award to give schools a framework for whole school mental health development. By embracing the ideals of the award, we are demonstrating our deep commitment to working towards excellent practice as we place the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff at the core of all we do so that all members of our school community can thrive.

I look forward to sharing how we, as a community, are further developing our practices in relation to mental health and wellbeing over the coming months. In the interim, further information about the award can be found on the Leeds Beckett University website: <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.ac.uk/schoolmh>.

In terms of supporting our students beyond their learning, we are excited to confirm that we have become official supporters of Barnsley Youth Choir and are hosting one of the new children's choirs, Barnsley Children's Choir West, every Wednesday evening. As a result, we were invited along to BYC's Christmas concert at Emmanuelle Church on Friday. We were absolutely blown away by the evening. We had the best time watching, not only our students, but children from across the Borough performing, and felt an overwhelming sense of pride for what those young people are able to achieve. We are in awe of what the leaders and volunteers of Barnsley Youth Choir are doing for our young people and cannot thank them enough for the opportunities they are providing. We will continue to do all we can to support them and to ensure that as many children as possible can have the opportunity to be involved in this heart-warming and life-affirming venture.

As we approach the end-of-term holiday, the next two weeks are jam-packed with lots of events which I have detailed below for you:

Thursday 13 December	<b>Year 11 Parents' and Students' Evening</b> [16:00 to 19:00] Please make appointments via our online booking system.
Monday 17 December	<b>Christmas Carol Service</b> [19:00 to 20:00 at Penistone Parish Church] A warm invitation is extended to everyone.
Wednesday 19 December	<b>Christmas Dinner for Students and Staff</b> Served in the main dining room: £2.20 for Christmas dinner, desert and a drink.
	<b>Post-16 Class of 2018 Celebration Afternoon</b> [15:30 to 17:30 in the Post-16 Centre] Celebrating the achievements of the Y13 Class of 2018.
	<b>Christmas Showcase</b> [19:00 to 21:00 in the Amphitheatre] Tickets are available to purchase from the Performing Arts Dept.



Thursday 20 December	<b>Community Christmas Lunch</b> [13:00 to 14:30] Held in partnership with Penistone AgeUK.
Friday 21 December	<b>Rewards Day</b> Non-uniform day for all students, students are asked to wear something Christmassy!
	<b>End of Term Holidays Begin</b> Students break up for Christmas at the usual time of 14:50.
Monday 7 January	<b>All Students Return to School</b>

As we break for Christmas we say goodbye to Miss O'Brien, Teacher of English, as her temporary contract comes to an end. We wish her well in her future endeavors and thank her for her commitment in the short time she has been with us.

Finally, I would once again like to take an opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of your children, and of our school. I wish you all a happy, peaceful and safe holiday and we shall all look forward to welcoming our students back to school, rested and ready for the Spring term, at 8:20am on Monday 7 January 2019.

Yours sincerely



Paul Crook  
**Principal**

