



Winterton Community Academy

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Headteacher – Mr K Rowlands

Ref: KR/ AW/ det

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Dear parents / carers,

Further to our recent communication where we advised that our behaviour policy was being amended to restore after-school detentions, I would like to thank the overwhelming majority of you for your support in helping us to maintain and uphold high standards and expectations.

Almost 90% of our students have never received a detention and it is a credit to them for the manner in which they conduct themselves in and around school. That said, since we implemented those changes last week, we have seen a positive shift in general behaviour and attitudes around school.

I am conscious that a small number of parents have contested the use of detentions as a sanction and as a result, have advised their child not to attend.

This is regrettable, particularly given that as a result, their child will be subject to further consequences in line with our behaviour management policy. The purpose of detentions is largely to set the boundaries for children in terms of expected conduct, attitudes and behaviours. It is always hoped that detentions will serve as a deterrent and that our pupils will manage themselves appropriately in school and therefore, never receive a detention.

I have included the following extracts from the Department for Education document, Behaviour in Schools which was published in February of this year.

Detentions

A detention is a commonly used sanction, often used as a deterrent to future misbehaviour. It is typically a short period where the pupil is required to remain under supervision of school staff when their peers have been allowed to go home or to break.

When used, it should be done so consistently and fairly by staff. This process should be well known to all pupils and staff.

What the law allows

Teachers have authority to issue detention to pupils, including same-day detentions.

A school's behaviour policy should make clear that detention (including detention outside of school hours) can be used as a possible sanction.

A detention outside normal school hours will be lawful if it meets the following conditions:

- the conditions outlined in 'Matters schools should consider when imposing detentions';
- the pupil is under 18 (unless the detention is during lunch break);
- the headteacher has communicated to pupils and parents that detentions outside school sessions may be used; and
- the detention is held at any of the following times:
 - a) any school day where the pupil does not have permission to be absent;
 - b) weekends during term - except a weekend during, preceding or following the half term break; or
 - c) non-teaching days – usually referred to as 'training days', 'INSET days' or 'non-contact days', except if it falls on a public holiday, on a day which precedes the first day of term, during the half-term break, or after the last school day of the term.²⁵

The headteacher can decide which members of staff can issue detentions. For example, a headteacher could limit the power to heads of year or heads of department only, or they could decide that all members of staff, including support staff, can impose

detentions. This should be laid out clearly in the behaviour policy and communicated clearly to all pupils, parents, and staff.

Matters schools should consider when imposing detentions

Parental consent is not required for detentions that satisfy the conditions mentioned in 'What the law allows'.

With lunchtime detentions, staff should allow reasonable time for the pupil to eat, drink and use the toilet.

School staff should not issue a detention where there is any reasonable concern that doing so would compromise a pupil's safety. When ensuring that a detention outside school hours is reasonable, staff issuing the detention should consider the following points:

- whether the detention is likely to put the pupil at increased risk;
- whether the pupil has known caring responsibilities;
- whether the detention timing conflicts with a medical appointment;
- whether parents ought to be informed of the detention. In many cases it will be necessary to do so, but this will depend on the circumstances. For instance, notice may not be necessary for a short after-school detention where the pupil can get home safely; and
- whether suitable travel arrangements can reasonably be made by the parent for the pupil. It does not matter if making these arrangements is inconvenient for the parent.

You can see from this guidance that detentions are a recommended and lawful element of a school behaviour system and as such, we will continue to enforce them and uphold those standards to ensure that our school environment is a positive one.

Notably, there is no increased risk caused as a result of leaving the school premises at 4:30pm instead of 3:30pm and equally, it is clearly highlighted within the document that suitable travel arrangements are the responsibility of the parent or carer.

Whilst we will always try and work with parents and carers to support you under exceptional circumstances it is important that we consistently uphold our policy.

Please be aware that the consequence for refusing to attend a detention, is then a suspension and should a student accumulate repeat suspensions, then there is a real possibility that they will be subject to a managed move to another school or alternative provision.

I know that the vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of our policy and I politely ask that those who do not currently support this, reconsider their position as we do not want your child to miss any element of their education as a result.

Thank you for your understanding,

Yours sincerely,



Mr Rowlands