

4<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Dear Parents,

The worst snow for eighteen years and unfortunately school closure. My apologies go to you, but to keep our sites open during such conditions provides unacceptable health and safety risks to all members of our school family. I hope you understand.

As always, the start of the new term has been fast and furious and it is hard to believe that we are already into the fifth week. For those pupils and students approaching vital examinations in the summer, much is being done to encourage them, monitor their progress, offer them additional learning opportunities and generally nurture them through tough and demanding times. Interviews for places in our Sixth Form are ongoing and we are experiencing record numbers of applications. If your son/daughter is still thinking about applying to stay on with us, as I feel they should, then they must make an application very quickly. The success of post 16 education at our school is encouraging a great many applications from students across the city.

Our astro turf pitch has been out of action recently as it has undergone a major refurbishment. I am very pleased to say that its condition, following the work, is as good as new! This is an excellent facility, one of the best in the Midlands and we are very proud of it. I do hope you will encourage your son/daughter to join one of the many sporting activities taking place day after day to provide for a healthy lifestyle and give opportunities to participate in competitive sport.

We are pleased to announce that following a rigorous assessment, we have been awarded the Basic Skills Secondary Quality Mark for the third time. This shows continuing developments and improvements in our provision and practice in basic skills, with strong evidence of their impact on pupil achievement and attainment.

We continue to strive to improve the health of all of our children and my usual plea is being made. Although we have seen a decrease in the number of pupils going to the junk food outlets at lunchtime, pupils, particularly the boys, are still eating fast food every day. If this is combined with two/three cans of fizzy drink then we all know the results - poor concentration, poor

behaviour, poor learning and consequently underachievement. I cannot emphasise enough the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. Some of our pupils are eating their way towards ill health and huge underachievement. Whilst we continue to improve learning, standards and attainment, we continue to be frustrated by bad diets and poor levels of fitness. Please help by insisting on:

- a healthy lunch, preferably in school
- few, if any fizzy drinks
- less bags of crisps
- more fruit and vegetables
- some regular daily exercise

Such changes to eating habits and daily life will make a huge difference. Also a reminder that crisps, fizzy drinks, sweets and lollipops are banned in our school. Thank you

For the past four terms, we have been investigating and consulting on changes to the structure of our school day. All members of our school community have been consulted; staff, pupils and students, governors and parents. We hoped to build into our week opportunities for ongoing professional development for my colleagues and less travelling between the two school sites. Unfortunately, the model we selected after consultation, cannot be timetabled. Consequently, our school day will remain unchanged in September 2009. My thanks go to all parents who sent in their views and comments. They were greatly appreciated.

Charity fund raising events are on-going and we will shortly be having two theme days to raise monies for our school in Pakistan. Parents will shortly be receiving a brochure all about our school in Barakot. As you know, we are committed to providing money towards the running costs of the school and so such fund raising events will be very important for its future. I was very proud of our pupils recently for their determination to raise monies for Children in Need who are supporting the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Several groups of pupils and students engaged in a variety of activities to raise money, all of which were organised and led by themselves. Excellent!

Some dates for your diary:

- School will finish for half term at lunchtime on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February to allow my colleagues to engage in a two hour professional development programme on speaking and listening skills.
- School re-opens after half term on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February is a full staff training day.
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February, Y10/Y11 subject evening.
- Performances of our pantomime Cinderella - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February.

I hope that you will soon be receiving our first copy of a pupil led school magazine, full of interesting articles and school news which will provide you with even more information about life at Small Heath School. Don't forget to visit our website [www.smallheathschool.org.uk](http://www.smallheathschool.org.uk) for all our news and information.

Finally, I hope that parents who keep us updated with their mobile phone numbers are enjoying the benefit of our text messaging service. Would you also please ensure that school is notified of any changes to contact details we hold on file for your son/daughter as soon as possible, preferably with an updated mobile telephone number to enable us to contact parents in an emergency. Thank you

With my very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

P. Slough  
Headteacher