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 4th October 2018

Dear Parents

I am writing to you in response to the reported incident yesterday. As I have stated on many occasions before, the Governors and I take our responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. Yesterday’s incident reinforced how effective our present Safeguarding policies and routines are relating to keeping our Pupils and Staff safe. All staff acted professionally and followed procedures they have been trained to undertake in situations like this and the children acted calmly and all entered the building within two to three minutes.

Police have viewed the CCTV footage and agreed that the person was acting in an unusual way. They have commended the school on how they acted quickly, efficiently and how staff performed their designated roles. This ensured staff were able to inform the Police and the *Leeds Crisis Line* immediately which allowed other schools within the local community to access this information. We not only take the safety of our own pupils seriously but also that of the children attending local schools.

I am proud of how the staff at the school acted and I am in no doubt our present safeguarding measures are robust and effective. I recently stated in the school newsletter that school security is reviewed constantly by the Governors and I. The new security gate and CCTV equipment was the first stage of a process in enhancing the school’s perimeter security and this process is set to continue over a period of time, especially as funding is difficult to obtain and each application is a lengthy and not always successful process. Can I also point out that the process to install the security gate and obtain the funding has taken over two years. As recently as last week we were in discussion with Governors to look at ways to continue improving the site and ways of raising finance for this. We discussed using our devolved capital which amounts to only £6000. (This is money kept by the Diocese to continue the maintenance of school buildings). If we spend this amount in its entirety there will be no monies available to use for emergency situations such as boiler/roof/storm damage etc. It is important for parents to understand the school budget is tight, as is the case with all schools. It is always difficult for Governors and myself to stretch the budget to cover every need. Over the last few years schools have lost thousands of pounds from their funding. Basically I am trying to explain that the process for getting a perimeter fence will be a long one. We will apply as always for funding and look to other ways of obtaining financial help to enable us to go ahead with urgency. The irony is that the Governors and I were heavily criticised for installing the new security gate at the front of the school and were approached by parents in the playground demanding to know why we had ruined the look of a village school. I again stress incidents like this week reassure me the Governors and I made the right decision considering the number of emails, telephone calls and comments on social media insisting a perimeter fence must be installed immediately.

The Governors and I are happy to meet parents at 9.45am on Wednesday 10th October in the school hall to outline our future plans relating to school security but also it is an opportunity to answer the discussions held on social media by parents.

I would like to take this opportunity again to thank all staff at the school for doing their jobs and reminding everyone that their sole aim is to maintain the safety of our pupils. I would also like to thank the parents who took the time to email, telephone and call in to school to thank myself and the staff but also to clarify the correct details of what happened. However I do feel yet again the curse of the modern age, social media, can escalate parental concerns when untruths, rumours, hearsay and incorrect facts are uploaded to Facebook, WhatsApp etc. when parents do not wait for facts or information which has been clarified by the school or the police.

I would now like to take the opportunity to update you with the facts. Yes, the person was acting strangely outside school, the police agreed. The person was spotted by one of my members of staff in Guiseley today. They immediately phoned school as they knew a police officer was expected in school. The police were informed and the youth was apprehended and interviewed. The police were happy with the explanation given but advised this youth about his future conduct.

I am pleased with the outcome of this and I am pleased that the Governors and I can now concentrate on continuing with the process of finding ways to continue to improve the security and having perimeter fencing.

Again to re-iterate, myself and the staff came in to the profession to teach and help children. I am proud to say that all staff at Hawksworth care deeply about the pupils and feel disappointed that I and my staff continue to be criticised when I feel our actions were correct on the day, our approach to security and safeguarding is appropriate and this again was emphasised by the police praising our response.

Yours sincerely

Mr Norris