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Michael McCulley
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Dear Houlton family

Positive Behaviours Policy: Use of After-School Detentions

As you will be aware from the presentation we delivered at the beginning of the school year and from our *Positive Behaviours Policy*, we use a graduated consequence system (alongside our rewards system) to support pupils with 'getting it right' in terms of our expectations of them each day both in terms of their conduct and their organisational skills/preparedness for learning.

As you may have come to realise whilst supporting your child with home-schooling during the pandemic, managing pupils' motivation, behaviour and organisation presents challenges, and this becomes even more challenging for us in school when managing classes of 30 young people. Our policies are in place to support staff with maintaining a happy, purposeful and engaging learning environment for all.

In common with most secondary schools both nationally and locally, part of our policy is the escalation to **after school detentions** where there are repeated instances of particular behaviours or where deadlines are repeatedly missed. This not only encourages good conduct and a happier school day-to-day, but also creates a positive learning environment for our pupils at Houlton.

Teachers have limited resources to support pupils with improving their conduct and/or organisation and detentions are an important part of delivering a clear message to them that any **inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated and will have consequences**, just as it would within wider society. During a detention pupils are expected to reflect on the choices they have made and have a restorative conversation with the staff member issuing the detention so that we can support our pupils in realigning poor behaviour choices.

You may not be aware, but **schools and academies have no legal obligation to inform parents/carers that their child is being detained** after school for a detention, **nor do they need the consent of a parent/carer to detain a pupil** for an after-school detention.

However, because we want to work with families and be as supportive as possible, we have protocols in place to support families with planning for detentions. Therefore, at Houlton:

- A child may be detained for up to **ten minutes** at the end of the school day without notice;
- For longer, **after school detentions**, we have chosen to notify you if your child has been entered for a detention by email and/or an alert through *EduLink* with **24 hours' notice**.

We understand that making alternative arrangements for pick-ups due to after-school detentions can sometimes be an inconvenience for families, but this will not be accepted as a reason to cancel a detention as they are an integral part of the behaviour management system; accordingly, we urge Parents/Carers to encourage their children to adhere to the high expectations of the school, so that ultimately they are not issued with a detention at all. Where they are, engaging in a restorative and proactive conversation with your child at home in terms of how they can avoid future detentions will support the school's own work with pupils.

Parents/Carers **are not able to refuse attendance at after school detentions**. In rare, exceptional circumstances (e.g. a medical appointment) we will consider deferring a pupil's detention to the next available after-school slot, but it will not be cancelled and deferrals will not be accepted routinely. On rare occasions where a deferral may be appropriate, please contact your child's **Pupil Experience Leader** at school.

Detentions – the law¹

What the law allows:

1. Teachers have a power to issue detention to pupils (aged under 18).
2. Schools must make clear to pupils and parents that they use detention (including detention outside of school hours) as a sanction.
3. The times outside normal school hours when detention can be given (the 'permitted day of detention') include:
 - a) any school day where the pupil does not have permission to be absent;
 - b) weekends - except the weekend preceding or following the half term break; and
 - c) non-teaching days – usually referred to as 'training days', 'INSET days' or 'non-contact days'.
4. Parents/Carers do not have the right to refuse after school detentions.

The Principal can decide which members of staff can put pupils in detention. For example, they can limit the power to heads of year or heads of department only or they can decide that all members of staff, including support staff, can impose detentions.

For further information on the government's guidance in relation to detentions and exclusions, please visit the link below:

[Legislation regarding School Discipline and Exclusions, including Detentions](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. A copy of this letter is available to download on the 'Letters' section of the school website.

Should you require any further information regarding the use of afterschool detentions at Houlton, please contact **Miss Buckenham, Vice Principal**, in the first instance.

Yours faithfully



Michael McCulley
Principal

¹ *Behaviour and Discipline in schools*, Department for Education, January 2016