

28<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear students

As you will be aware we have for many years now had a fire drill so that in the very unlikely event of a fire we can ensure that all of you can get to a place of safety whilst a fire is dealt with. We have several fire drills every year just to make sure everyone knows exactly what to do and what we need from you to keep you all safe.

The school recently received a letter from the Diocese who look after all of the Catholic schools in this area, asking us to update our procedures to include something called a “lock-down” procedure. This is one of several things that can help to keep us safe in a number of situations. These could include keeping you in classrooms to protect you from toxic fumes if there is a fire in the local area, or if there is a chemical spillage. We will all have seen the events in Manchester and London over recent weeks, and in any public place where many people are gathered it is important that procedures are in place to keep everyone safe in the highly unlikely event that something of this nature were to happen.

On Thursday this week we plan to try out a short procedure called ‘lock-down’ so that we have another way of keeping you safe in any circumstances.

For lock-down, an intermittent (on-off) alarm will sound for one minute. This is the signal for all of us to go into a lock-down position. In lock-down, where possible, teachers will lock the classroom door, pull the blinds shut, and turn the lights off, and students will take cover under desks. Senior members of staff will then come around the school, notifying each classroom that it is safe to come out of lock-down and the lesson will return to normal. When you are in lock-down, in the same way as we expect you to be silent for a fire drill, we expect you to stay silent under the desks and keep out of sight. This is so that staff can communicate with one another without any noise, and in the event of any threat on the school site, students and staff are safely hidden and cannot be heard in classrooms. If you are out of the classroom during a lock-down alarm make your way to the **nearest** classroom and teacher – do not return to your original room.

As this is the first time we have had such a procedure in the school, we expect there to be a few teething issues, however, as your Headteacher, I think it is far more important to have a procedure in place than not, so at least we all know what to do.

I have written to your parents in the newsletter this week, which is available on the website. If they have not had a chance to read it, please encourage them to do so.

Please do not be alarmed by this drill. We have had fire drills in our school ever since it opened 28 years ago, but have never had a fire to deal with. Statistically, there is a far smaller chance of ever having to go into lock-down than there is of having to deal with a fire. This is purely a precaution, but we think it is an important one.

Having spoken to lots of you about this, every one of you I have spoken to has said they would feel safer knowing that we have a drill in place to keep us safe.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Mr Gritton

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