

3rd May 2024

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to you today, not with the letter I had originally planned – which was to introduce myself at the end of week 3 and to give you an overview of how we will be moving Birley Academy forwards – but with an update on our actions and response to the incident on Wednesday morning.

Firstly, I would like to extend a massive thank you to all our pupils and staff for their exemplary behaviour and approach to what was an initially very worrying situation. The staff and pupils were calm, pupils felt reassured and supported, and staff followed the guidance and procedures we have in place quickly and effectively. I am incredibly proud to have had such a wonderful community response within our school.

I would also like to recognise the bravery of staff and visitors in the reception area, whose actions went above and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some clarity around the events on Wednesday morning. The young person who entered reception did so at the start of the school day, when the reception was open and available for visitors and parents. At no point did he breach the reception and waiting area. This is very important as I hope it reassures you that our school systems were appropriate and kept pupils safeguarded effectively.

The lockdown alarm was sounded quickly once the young person displayed aggressive behaviour and this triggered staff and pupils to follow the lockdown procedures in school. The police were also alerted through this alarm and attended the school within 10 minutes of the alert, which was phenomenal. As soon as was practicable, I ensured that communications were sent to parents and carers to inform of the situation.

Within school, following the incident we have reviewed and reflected where we could *even further* enhance the security of the reception area. The following steps have already been taken:

- The reception desk has had additional structural work so that this is now floor to ceiling
- The double doors through to the visitor seating area now has mag-lock entry
- The reception doors are now set to be ‘locked’ as standard, and can only be opened by reception staff
- Gate opening times will be shortened
- All pupils must enter via the student entrance (not reception)
- All entrance cameras will be checked and improved to ensure high quality visuals
- Regular lock down and fire drills scheduled (the initial drill for lockdown will be pre-warned to avoid any anxiety following this week’s events)

I do hope that this has reassured you that we take the safety and wellbeing of all our staff and pupils extremely seriously, and that you are confident that we will continue to do so.

I look forward to writing to you next week with how we are going to be driving forward the improvements in our school, and how you as our valued parents and carers will be able to support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Victoria Hall

