

Little Heaton CE Primary School

Boardman Lane, Rhodes, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4PU

Telephone No: 0161 672 0555

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Head Teacher: Miss J L Hulme
Deputy Head Teacher: Mrs C Crawford



Monday 1st July 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

I write to you with a heavy heart at the school grounds being targeted and misused once again this weekend. Our children, staff, Governors and families urgently need the support of the Rhodes community. On a regular basis our front building is targeted by youths climbing the fences, climbing onto the kitchen and caretaking buildings and attempting to gain entry into school. This is why we have CCTV all-around school and use shutters on our windows and doors. Until 2017 the school and grounds were targeted and vandalised on a nightly basis. An increased PCSO presence and the local community supporting the school by warning the trespassers when they saw them, reporting it to 101 and school helped to reduce the damage which unfortunately at the time was ongoing and costly for the school.

Sadly, in recent weeks, we have noticed a HUGE increase in the number of vandalism targets school is receiving, especially on our kick pitch, back playground and school fields. In recent weeks, staff, local residents and even our own pupils have been verbally abused if they attempt to encourage these 'young people' to 'move on'.

Over the weekend, school was targeted again at a cost which will now have to be taken from other priority areas to rectify.

Between 6pm Friday 28th June 2019 and Sunday June 30th 2019 approx. 10pm Ex-pupils who are now in years 7,8,9 and members of the Rhodes community have targeted our kick pitch area, school field and playground (the fields at the back of our school and behind the church grave yard actually belong to school via land shares between Manchester Diocese and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough council, which is why we pay to have the grass cut).

Under safeguarding and health and safety systems from the LA we have to ensure the fields, kick pitch etc. are safe before we allow children and families on it. Unfortunately, due to the field being used all day and evening by dog walkers, members of the public using inappropriate and dangerous items on the field this is why we had to move our sports events onto the kick pitch.

I know you will be as saddened as we are that this weekend and each evening last week these children between the ages of 12 and 15 trespassed on to our grounds and caused damage to the kick pitch. Worse still they sought the assistance of an adult, who then use bolt cutters to cut our padlocks when their repeated attempts to yank up the gates failed (resulting in serious damage to the top and bottom lock sections of the fences and gates- the back fence is almost 12ft so not an easy feat to fix).

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Thankfully, some of our year 6 pupils attempted to 'clean up' the mess that had been made on the kick pitch and reasoned with these boys and begged them not to destroy our basketball hoops. They were able to return the hoop posts to the kick pitch. (No mean feat, as they are very tall and heavy).

Unfortunately, we have had no other options but to:

- Report the matter to Greater Manchester Police as it was criminal damage
- Report the trespass and verbal abuse
- Informed the High schools and requested their support
- Re –organise our healthy schools week activities and whole school sports day events for July.
- Change the location of sports day which means parents will not be able to observe from a safe space.

I would like to thank you for your support in this troubling attitude towards YOUR school community and thank families who reported it, are keeping a watch out for the school and our wonderful pupils who tried to stop it and informed us of the events which had occurred.

If anyone spots trespassers around our building, or has any information regarding this weekend's events or the earlier trespass event, which resulted in the fire bridge having to assist young people stuck on the kick pitch, please inform GMP on 101 or crime stoppers as well as the school office.

Yours faithfully,

Miss JL Hulme
Head Teacher

Mr E Whitworth
Chair of Governors