

4th February 2011

Dear Parents,

I am sure that you will have read or heard about the news article that features in today's front page of the Bournemouth Echo. I felt it appropriate to write to you to reassure you that the safety and happiness of your child is of paramount importance to us at the Academy. Children will only flourish and fulfil their true God-given potential in a happy, safe environment.



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It is a sad fact that on occasions schools may have the unpleasant experience of dealing with students who have been involved with the misuse of drugs. At The Bishop of Winchester Academy, a small group of older students were recently involved in such an incident. Those involved, with the exception of two, were students who had joined the school having moved from other schools, over the last 2 years. Those involved were swiftly identified by senior staff, their parents were contacted, and they were sent home. The Academy is working with the police in dealing with these students and in providing support to ensure that they do not reoffend, and are offered appropriate counselling and guidance.

The Academy has a duty of care and is not willing to compromise the health and happiness of the children we serve. Their right to a high quality education within a safe environment is of paramount importance. Any form of drug misuse compromises that safety. The Academy is determined to demonstrate zero tolerance towards behaviours that threaten children's safety. As a consequence, it is with regret, that a small number of students involved in this isolated incident will be permanently excluded.

This has been a difficult decision but I have to consider the wellbeing of all students in the Academy.

Thank you to the many parents who have already contacted me to express their support in taking this stance.

Yours sincerely

Paul McKeown
Principal

