Stour Valley Community School
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Headteacher Mrs Rachel Kelly BA (Hons)

22 October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the half-term break, it is hard to believe how quickly the first half of the Autumn Term has passed. Our Year 7 students have settled in really well, and it has been lovely to see them becoming increasingly confident and familiar with life at Stour Valley.

The positive start across the school is reflected in our achievement figures. Since the beginning of term, a total of 20,180 achievement points have been awarded. We have also celebrated 21 weekly Learning Champion winners and invited 20 students to join me for Hot Chocolate Friday. These are wonderful opportunities to recognise students who demonstrate our values of being kind, brave and ambitious, and who contribute positively to our school community.

Our Open Evening at the beginning of October was another highlight, with record numbers of visitors coming to see Stour Valley in action. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a success, and to those in our wider community who continue to support and recommend our school.

Thank you for your feedback

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete a parent and carer survey recently. I would also like to apologise that you received two surveys: one from Stour Valley and one from Anglian Learning. We appreciate that this may have been confusing and that your time is valuable.

We received a good response to the Stour Valley survey, and I am grateful for the thoughtful feedback you shared. I will send a separate communication of the collated feedback to share the key themes that emerged and explain what we will be focusing on as a result. It is important to us that we listen to your views and use them to help shape our priorities and improve the experience of our students.

Looking ahead: a few important reminders

As we move into the second half of the Autumn Term, I would be grateful for your support with three practical areas.

1. Communication routes and pastoral support

We want to ensure that parents and carers can access the right support promptly and that concerns reach the colleagues best placed to help.

- Subject or lesson-related concerns: Please contact the teacher in the first instance. All staff contact details are available on our school website.

- Pastoral concerns: Your child's Form Tutor should be your first point of contact. If further support is needed, our Raising Standards Leaders are Mr Craig for Years 7 and 8, Mr Kerley for Years 9 and 10, and Mr Sims for Year 11.
- Urgent concerns during the school day: You can telephone the school and ask to speak to the relevant member of our pastoral support team. Mrs Hare supports Year 11, Mrs Hearn supports Years 9 and 10, and Miss Abrey supports Years 7 and 8. As non-teaching members of staff, they are available to take calls during the school day.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Mr Sims and Mr Lee are our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). Mr Craig, Mr Kerley, Mrs Hare, Mrs Hearn and Miss Abrey also support the safeguarding work of the school.

Students can speak to their Form Tutor or any member of staff if they need help, support or advice. Students and parents or carers can also raise safeguarding concerns by emailing safe@stourvalley.org.

Please do not hesitate to contact us when you need support. We want every student to feel safe, listened to and valued, and we recognise the importance of working in partnership with families to achieve this.

2. Uniform policy

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that students attend school in the correct uniform. Our uniform policy helps to create a sense of belonging, shared identity and high expectations.

As we move into the colder and wetter months, please ensure that your child brings a suitable coat to school each day. We actively encourage students to spend time outside during break and lunchtime to get some fresh air, and we want them to be comfortable doing so whatever the weather.

As the weather gets colder, a reminder that hoodies are not permitted as part of school uniform. The only permitted jumper is the official school jumper.

If you are unsure about any aspect of uniform, please refer to our School Uniform Policy.

We appreciate your support in helping us maintain these expectations consistently. If your child has a particular need or circumstance that may affect their ability to meet the uniform requirements, please contact the school so that we can discuss this appropriately.

3. Mobile phone policy

Thank you for supporting our mobile phone policy, which is designed to minimise distractions, support positive social interactions and help students focus on learning throughout the school day.

As a reminder, mobile phones must be switched off and stored in students' lockers during the school day, in line with our policy. Smart devices, including smartwatches, are not permitted for use during the school day.

Your support in reinforcing these expectations at home makes a real difference and helps us maintain a consistent approach across the school.

Half-term break and November training days

A reminder that the school will be closed for the half-term holiday from Monday 26 October to Friday 30 October 2026. Monday 2 November is a staff training day, so students will return to school on Tuesday 3 November.

There is also a further staff training day on Friday 27 November, when students will not be in school.

I hope you and your family enjoy a restful half-term break, and we look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday 3 November.

With kind regards

Rachel Kelly
Headteacher