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Dear Parents/Carers

Take-a-Break System – SEND Department

I am writing to inform you of some upcoming changes to the Take-a-Break (TAB) system currently embedded within the SEND Department.

Since taking on the role of SENDCo two years ago, I have inherited a system that was fit for purpose at the time. However, in light of developments in SEND provision and the evolving needs of our students, it is now appropriate to review and refine this approach.

As part of this review, I have consulted with staff to better understand the reasons why students request use of their TAB card. We have also maintained a detailed record of students accessing the NEST and the reasons for their visits. Through this process, we have identified several recurring reasons for TAB use, including:

- Friendship issues
- Difficulties in relationships with teachers
- Finding work too challenging
- Feeling unwell (e.g. headaches)

While these concerns are important, they do not align with the intended purpose of the TAB provision. Removing a student from a lesson, even briefly, represents a significant level of need. When used inappropriately, it can lead to missed learning and, in some cases, increased anxiety as students fall behind.

The TAB card is intended to support students with higher levels of need—for example, those who feel extremely overwhelmed in classroom environments, are unable to self-regulate, or experience significant difficulties with concentration and attention. It may also support students experiencing heightened anxiety, though this would typically involve collaboration with the safeguarding and pastoral teams to ensure the most appropriate support is in place.

How the provision will work:

There are several ways a student may be referred for a TAB card, including:

- Transition meetings in Year 6 or 7
- Referrals from staff
- Communication from parents/carers (email or telephone)

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In all cases, decisions will be made in collaboration with the pastoral team. If a student is experiencing difficulty in one or two lessons, or with specific areas of learning, we will not automatically issue a TAB card. Instead, support will be provided through faculty-based strategies or pastoral interventions. Our priority is to keep students in lessons wherever possible, supported through appropriate and targeted measures.

We also want to ensure that the NEST remains a calm and supportive environment. At times, high numbers of students accessing the space can make it less effective, particularly for those with the greatest need.

Misuse of the TAB card:

If a student is found to be misusing their TAB card—for example, using it to truant lessons—it will be withdrawn.

Stages of TAB Cards:

Type	Duration and amount offered	Who this might target	Review
Green	2 weeks only and 5 sessions in a week.	Students that need short term support, potential bereavements (although we understand this could result in a Blue TAB card), exam anxiety or stress. This may be for transitioning student (those starting in Year 7) and for any child who start mid-year.	No review 2-week card only.
Blue	Medium-term - reviewed at the 6 week point and if still required extended for a further 6 weeks. 5 sessions a week.	Students that are in need of longer term support however this will only be for 2 terms. Additional support will be needed either internally or externally sought by the school or family.	Review after 6 weeks
Yellow	Long-term, 5 session per week	Based on individual need	Review after 6 weeks
Purple	Long-term unlimited sessions a week.	Very specific high-need students with an EHCP plan	Review after 6 weeks.

Moving forward, most students will fall into the “green and blue” category. From September, unless the provision is specified within an EHCP or has been agreed prior to the end of the summer term, all students will need to be re-referred under the new system.

We understand that these changes may feel concerning for some parents and students. However, please be assured that our priority remains to support every child effectively. We believe that a more structured and consistent approach will enable us to do this more successfully. We would like to trial this system after May-half term so that we have the time to look at any issues should they appear.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards



Clare Smith
SENDCo