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Tuesday 9th October 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians and Pupils

Firstly can I say how pleased and proud I was to see such a large number of children running in the Marches cross country event last Thursday. Mr Thompson was thrilled that there were so many pupils wishing to take part. I look forward to another bumper cross country turn out on Wednesday.

Please could you read through the following letter sent by Mrs Grassby from the Marches regarding spectating arrangements for the upcoming event.

Many thanks,
Mr Jones

Dear Competitors and Supporters,

Once again the annual cross country event has attracted large numbers of competitors and supporters. It is great to see so many people enthused about physical activity and this event has been well attended over the last few years. The key aims are for our young people to experience this competition in safe and positive environment. The most recent event has given me cause for concern on both of these counts. Yesterday I was concerned for the safety of competitors.

I understand how exciting this event is for students, teachers and families and equally understand the desire to show support to students who are competing. However it can be very intimidating and frightening for students when crowds are surging towards them and shouting when they are trying to focus on their race.

At each event we have a "pen" for spectators to allow the runners to compete in a fair race and to make sure that their experiences are positive. I would ask that parents and competitors stay within the area of the pen. Whilst I understand the passion that some parents have shown towards the performances of their children and love the encouragement shown to all who take part, some pupils don't feel safe in this environment.

Safety of the competitors - some of whom are very young - is paramount. Running through a large crowd yesterday has not been a positive experience for some. If things do not improve I could be forced to make it a spectator free event. Please could I ask that spectators don't leave the cordoned off area and at no time should anyone other than the runners be on the course.

Please remember, they are children. They are trying their best and they need to feel safe when competing.

Many thanks,
Sian Grassby