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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you are all keeping well and are having a good final week of what has been a very unusual summer term. Thank you once again for your support of our students this week as they have completed what we all hope will be their final week of learning from home. I hope that the virtual 'Futures Week' and 'Sports Week' (accessed via ShowMyHomework) have added interest to this week's 'remote' learning. I also hope that all of our students in Years 7-10 have had an opportunity to view their end-of-year Celebration Assembly. In doing so, they will have hopefully picked up on how proud their form tutors are of how they have coped over the last few months and how much they are looking forward to seeing them again in September.

Thank you also to parents of Year 10 and 12 students for your encouragement and support of attendance in school over the last month or so. We have been delighted at the consistently high attendance throughout this provision and hope that the students have enjoyed and benefitted from this work with their teachers as much as their teachers have themselves.

## Summer Holiday

This Friday marks the end of the academic year and although inevitably this summer is unlikely to be as 'normal' as usual, I do hope that all of our students and parents have an opportunity for a very well-earned rest after all the challenges of the last four months. As mentioned last week, we have uploaded some optional activities onto ShowMyHomework for our students to access over the summer if they would like to carry on doing some learning through July and August.

Thank you for your understanding that we would like to review the national and local Covid-19 picture in a month's time before finalising the detail of our plans for September. The way the issue of 'face-coverings' has evolved over the last week or so shows just how quickly things can change at present and we are very keen that our plans take all the relevant information into account. These weekly updates for parents will resume in the week beginning Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August. During the final three weeks of the summer holiday we will provide all the information required and also be available to answer any queries ahead of the start of the Autumn Term.

Hopefully the following though allows a little preparation to be undertaken straightaway if desired:

- The confirmed start dates for the new academic year (Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September for all Year 7 students and for Year 12 enrolment, Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September for all other students).

- The uniform arrangements for the start of term which were shared last week (shirt, trousers/skirt and shoes only in the first instance).
- The inevitable restrictions that are likely to exist in the Autumn Term in regards to borrowing/sharing equipment. Hence this would be a good time for our students to be topping up their pencil-cases and making sure that they can be as self-sufficient as possible in September.

## Staff Farewells

Although having to do so very differently this year, we are sadly having to say good-bye to a number of colleagues at the end of this term. I know all parents would want to join me in thanking the following for their contribution to the school and wishing them all the very best for the future:

- Miss Wetton, who having covered Mrs Jones' maternity leave this year is now joining the History department at Pleckgate High School in Blackburn after the summer holiday.
- Miss Bargh, who is relocating to Sweden this summer.
- Miss Kady, who will be moving to a promoted English post at The Academy of St Nicholas in Liverpool from September.
- Miss Yates, who is moving on to the Director of Music post at St Ambrose College in Manchester in September.
- Mrs Vandermark, who has taught Maths at the school since 2008, supporting, guiding and facilitating the progress in the subject of many students during her time at the school. We wish Mrs Vandermark and her young family all the best for the future.
- Mr Shelton, who is moving on to the role of Head of Business Studies at Wellington School in Timperley, Manchester. Mr Shelton also joined the school in 2008 and has made a significant contribution to the school over the last 12 years, both as a successful Business and IT teacher and also through various leadership roles, including development of the school's careers provision and most recently as a member of the Progress and Pastoral Leader team. We wish Mr Shelton all the best for the future and look forward to hearing about how his career progresses further in the coming years.
- Last but by no means least, Mr Wise retires this summer after 31 years at Helsby, 25 as Head of the Science department. To describe Mr Wise's contribution to the school as "huge" would be an understatement - he has led the successful delivery of science to literally thousands of students, many of whom will have gone on to work in scientific jobs both locally and further afield. He will be remembered for his professionalism and genuine support and care for all of his students and colleagues, who will miss him very much. Thank you from everybody connected with the school, Mr Wise - and very best wishes for an incredibly well-deserved retirement from September.

Best wishes also to Mrs Jackson, who begins her maternity leave in September.

## New Colleagues

I know that you will want to join me in welcoming the following colleagues to the school in September:

- Mr Duncombe, who will be taking over from Mr Wise as Science Department Leader
- Mrs Walker, who will be joining us as our SEND Coordinator
- Mr Lawless, who will be joining the Social Sciences department and the Progress and Pastoral Leader team
- Miss Bollard and Miss Twist, who will be joining the English department
- Miss Smith and Miss Williams, who will be joining the Maths department
- Mrs Farrell, who will be joining the Modern Foreign Languages Department
- Miss Kavanagh, who will be joining the Business, Computing & Economics department
- Miss Eddleston and Miss Terry, who will be joining our Student Support Co-ordinator team
- Mr Lalev, who will be joining us as IT Technician on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July

We also have a number of colleagues who are taking on new roles in the school from September:

- Mrs Dougherty as permanent Department Leader for Careers
- Mr Callaghan as permanent Department Leader for PHSCE
- Miss Shute as Deputy Department Leader for Modern Foreign Languages
- Mrs Ramage as temporary Deputy Department Leader for Maths (during Mrs Wasson's maternity leave)
- Mrs Jones as Progress Pastoral Leader for Years 7 & 8 (with Mr Lawless the Progress & Pastoral Leader for Years 9 and 10 and Dr Ravetz the Leader for Year 11)

I would also like to particularly thank two colleagues who are completing their work in specific roles at the end of this term:

- Mrs Jones, for her work as Acting SEND Coordinator and Transition Lead in very challenging circumstances this term. I am very appreciative of the creative ways in which Mrs Jones has put together a transition programme this summer, despite our Year 6 students being unable to visit the building in person. Mrs Jones has also spent many hours in telephone conversations with Year 6 teachers and live 'Zoom' lessons with Year 6 classes in our partner primary schools, trying to provide as much support as possible for our Year 6 students and parents ahead of September.
- Mrs Turner, for her hugely significant contribution to pastoral work in the school over many years as first Year Leader and then more recently Progress and Pastoral Leader for Years 7 and 8. Mrs Turner will have provided support for hundreds of students and parents in these roles and there will be many current and former students with reason to be grateful for her guidance, support and care. Thank you on behalf of all of those students, Mrs Turner.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff at the school, I would like to thank all of our parents for their support of both our students and the school itself over this term. The challenges of 'home-learning' have been well-documented and we are so appreciative of the support you have given to enable students' learning to progress despite the difficult circumstances. Staff were delighted when they met Year 10 and 12 students again this term to find out just how much, and how well, they had learned at home and I know that will be the case with our younger students too.

Staff are now very much looking forward to the return of all our students to the building in September. We know that it will not be straightforward for students to adapt to being back in lessons after half a year away from classrooms but we are determined to give them as much support as possible to restore their confidence, their educational progress and hence their life-chances after what has happened this year. I know that with such resilient students, committed colleagues and supportive parents, what is becoming known as the 'recovery year' in schools will be very successful at Helsby.

I wrote back in March that the school wasn't actually 'closing'. It was just the building that closed - the school is a community that very much stayed 'open' and I would like to think that the partnership between the school and parents has never been stronger as a result of what we have been through together since then. That partnership will continue to be crucial in September as our students return to school, but in the meantime all of our students, colleagues and parents deserve a very well-earned break. Hence I hope that you all have a very enjoyable and restful summer with family and friends ahead of what will be a very special Autumn Term.

Very best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher