



4 September 2020

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Dear Parent/Carer,

First and foremost I would like to start by sincerely thanking parents for their support of students' return to school this week. Student attendance has been over 97% and we are very appreciative of, and certainly don't take for granted, the trust that this represents in terms of the arrangements made to re-open the school and keep students and staff as safe as possible. Thanks to the support and guidance you provided in advance of their return, students have been well-prepared for their return and we have been very impressed with the calm and mature way in which students have quickly adapted to a completely different way of operating as a school. I hope that students have enjoyed returning to school, seeing all of their friends and teachers again and settling back into classroom learning and it has been particularly lovely to see our new Year 7 students appearing to feel so settled after just a few days with us.

### **The National Approach to Keeping Secondary Schools Open**

With the pandemic still not over, last week the government unveiled a 'tiered' approach to keeping schools open in the coming months. At the moment, all regions in the country are in 'Tier 1', even those in areas subject to 'local lockdown' restrictions, but should the prevalence of the virus increase then regional health protection teams could adopt different tiers as follows:

- **Tier 1:** All schools open (the current position, even in 'local lockdown' areas).
- **Tier 2:** Secondary schools to move to a 'rota-system' and introduce mandatory face-covering wearing in corridors. For all students except key worker and 'vulnerable' children, the 'rota-system' would involve attendance at school for two weeks, followed by remote learning at home for two weeks.
- **Tier 3:** Secondary schools to close (except to key worker and vulnerable children).
- **Tier 4:** All schools (secondary and primary) to close (except to key worker and vulnerable children).

As a school we are making preparations for how we would operate should our region move below 'Tier 1' at any stage in the coming months.

### **Current Teaching and Learning**

Our priority this week has been to establish safe working practices in school and restore students' confidence as learners after such a long break from school. As you will be aware, there are several aspects of the necessary ways in which we are operating at the moment that will unfortunately mean, hopefully only in the short-term, that the education we provide is not the normal offer we would like it to be. Thank you for your understanding that in subjects like Art, Computing and Food, particularly in Years 7-9, we are limited in how much practical work is currently possible due to the use of 'zones' in the school building. In all subjects, the way that students and teachers are currently positioned in classrooms means that the full variety of normal approaches is not available. Students will be working in groups less than they would usually do and it is also impossible for teachers to sit alongside students to provide individual support in the way in which they would normally do within lessons. This is frustrating for both staff and students, but very necessary at present. We are also reviewing how we will mark

students' work moving forwards as government guidance makes it clear that simply collecting in students' books and taking them home to mark is not the straightforward task it once was either. Whilst we undertake this review we are asking all students to keep their exercise books with them between lessons.

### **Uniform**

Thank you to parents and students who have refrained from the full wearing of uniform this week due to the fact that many students are still waiting to collect their orders of blazers and ties. We are progressing the distribution of ordered uniform as quickly as possible and hope to be able to move to the wearing of full uniform sooner rather than later this month. We will let parents know when students should start wearing their blazers and ties.

### **'Scopay' Payment System**

Year 7 students have been given their families' 'Scopay' codes and hence all parents should now be in a position to be able to make payments for school-related purchases on-line. This is the school's preferred way for parents to provide students with money for lunches in school. Year 7 parents can also pay for uniform on-line if they would prefer not to send students in with cash or cheques.

### **Autumn Term GCSE Examinations**

It was lovely to see to many of last year's Year 11 students return to join our Sixth Form this week, which as a result remains as large and as vibrant as ever. Following the cancellation of this summer's examinations there is a full GCSE examination season taking place this November and any of our students (regardless of whether or not they are still enrolled with us) should get in touch if they wish to enter any of these examinations. The deadline for entering GCSE English Language and Mathematics is Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, with the deadline for all other subjects over two weeks earlier (Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September).

### **Getting In Touch**

Particularly with so many different ways of working at present, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any queries, issues or concerns at any stage. The usual point of contact is the relevant pastoral team via the following:

- [Year7admin@helsbyhgh.org](mailto:Year7admin@helsbyhgh.org)
- [Year8admin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:Year8admin@helsbyhigh.org)
- [Year9admin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:Year9admin@helsbyhigh.org)
- [Year10admin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:Year10admin@helsbyhigh.org)
- [Year11admin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:Year11admin@helsbyhigh.org)
- [6thformadmin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:6thformadmin@helsbyhigh.org)

Also available are [admin@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:admin@helsbyhigh.org) for general administrative enquiries and [head@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:head@helsbyhigh.org) to contact myself directly.

Thank you once again for all the support you have provided this week and once again I hope that all of our students and their families have an enjoyable weekend. For the first time in a long time though, weekend time spent with family at home will be very different to the days that have gone before it. I know I speak on behalf of all of my colleagues when I say how very much we have enjoyed seeing and working with all of our students in school again this week.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher