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Dear Parent/Carer,

I am sure that our students will be looking forward to the half-term break after a long and intense half-term. As parents you should be very proud of the way they have adapted to so many different ways of working and operating in school. Despite all of the restrictions on both their lessons and their social time they have shown a very impressive adaptability and maturity. I am sure that they would love to return to being able to use changing rooms for PE, to doing practical lessons in Food and accessing meals in the canteen, but unfortunately, the national Covid picture suggests that some of these things, and many others, may be a little while off still.

Yesterday I was joined by some Year 7 students for a 'Zoom' meeting with a Year 6 class in one of our partner primary schools and it really struck me how much of the school our Year 7 students have still to experience. They did a wonderful job of answering all of the questions they were asked by enthusiastic Year 6 students, but they couldn't really talk about the school's after-school clubs, trips, science laboratories, musical instruments, sports hall or drama theatre. They have settled in wonderfully well in the school though and I guess it's nice to know that they still have so many exciting discoveries to make ahead of them when the time is right.

Thank you to all of our parents and carers for your understanding this half-term over how we are operating and for the support which you have given your children and hence the school. I do hope that all of our families are able to have a lovely week and a chance to rest and relax. Sadly though we are all very restricted in how we can spend the week and thank you for the guidance which I know you will give our students in this regard. Despite all the usual attractions at this time of year, such as Halloween and Bonfire Night, at present the 'Tier 2' restrictions in Cheshire West and Chester mean that students cannot mix indoors over half-term with anyone beyond their own household or 'support bubble'. Please note that this 'support bubble' is not the same as the students' 'bubble' in school and hence our students can only mix together outdoors (and even then in groups of no more than six).

Contact over Half-Term

Please do use the contactportal@helsbyhigh.org.uk e-mail address if you need to contact the school over the half-term break. In particular, even though it is the half-term, please do let us know if any of our students receive a positive Covid test result so that we can respond and inform local agencies appropriately.

Next Half-Term

At present there is no suggestion that next half-term won't start on Monday 2nd November, although we will of course inform parents immediately if we learn of any proposed changes by the government in this regard.

Mindful of the changing seasons, and also having reviewed arrangements currently in place, we are making a few changes to how we operate in school after half-term. These changes include the following:

- Not using the school field to gather at the start of the school day.
- 'Swapping' the Year 8 and Year 9 'zones' in school (and hence also their entrances to the building).
- At some stage in November, starting to offer a food service at morning break as well as at lunchtime.

Students have been, and will continue to be, provided with full details regarding all of the above changes by their Form Tutor.

2020-21 School Development Plan

Please see <https://www.helsbyhigh.org.uk/2020-21-sdp/> for a summary of our School Development Plan objectives for this academic year. Despite the current circumstances, where things seem to change on a near-daily basis, the Plan is an attempt to ensure that as a school we also have a longer-term view of our work and continue to develop and aspire to provide the best possible educational experience for students who deserve nothing less.

Summer 2021 Examinations

Apologies for any confusion caused by an error in my previous letter regarding the dates of next summer's examinations. The recent changes announced by the government mean that they will start on Monday 7th June and end on Friday 2nd July.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher