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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that all of our students are looking forward to a well-deserved break over the next two weeks. Given that it is only a few days since my last update ([Letter-to-Parents-26.03.21.pdf \(helsbyhigh.org.uk\)](#)), I'll try to make this as brief a summary as possible of both developments since then and also reminders ahead of the forthcoming holiday period.

### **Asymptomatic Home Testing**

Thank you for continuing with the twice-weekly (Monday and Friday) Lateral Flow Device testing at home over the Easter break. It continues to be the case that any positive result with these tests should prompt the immediate self-isolation of households whilst a confirmatory PCR test result is sought and waited for. Please do let us know, via [contactportal@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:contactportal@helsbyhigh.org), of any positive Covid test results received over the Easter break, although obviously the only ones which would require us to do any 'track and tracing' to identify in-school 'close contacts' are where the actual test or any emerging Covid symptoms occur in the first two days after the end of term this afternoon.

### **Summer Term**

Although the government recently made some minor updates to the expectations of how schools should be operating after the Easter break (see [Schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for the updated document), they have yet to confirm whether students will be required to continue to wear face-coverings in classrooms at the start of the summer term. Hence there is likely to be a major announcement on this over the holiday period, most probably before the majority of secondary schools in the country return on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Winter Grant Scheme**

Parents will be aware from my letter last week that the government set up a 'Winter Grant Scheme', providing Local Authorities with funding to support families directly rather than continuing the Free School Meal Voucher Scheme over holiday periods. Eligible families will be contacted by e-mail over the forthcoming spring break with £35 e-vouchers for each child and so it is very important to look out for this communication when it is sent over the holidays.

## Summer 2021 GCSE, A-Level and Vocational Qualification Result Awarding

Year 11 and 13 students and their parents will be aware that we received the long-awaited national guidance on the awarding of grades this summer late last Friday afternoon, followed by receipt of the first part of the promised subject-specific information yesterday. As a result of this, we have focused this week on providing our students with as much guidance as possible over what they can do over the next two weeks to prepare for the assessments after Easter which will form part of the evidence base for their grades.

In the first week back after the holiday we will finalise the assessment schedule and host an on-line Information Evening for students and parents to ensure that they are as fully informed as possible. We are very aware of how anxious our students must feel at only finding out this information in the last few days. It is really important that they reassure themselves that the forthcoming assessments are just opportunities to show us how successful their learning has been despite all the challenges over the last 12 months. They are not examinations where they will be competing for grades against students from other schools or colleges. A key part of the guidance for schools is that results should broadly be in line with those from previous years and hence the successes of the school's cohorts over the last few years should provide further reassurance for both students and parents.

### 3G Pitch

I am sure many parents will already be aware of the wonderful news recently that the construction of our new all-weather 3G Pitch is about to begin (see [Work to begin over Easter on Helsby High School's new all-weather artificial grass pitch! | frodsham.nub.news](#) for full details). The first stage, which will hopefully take place over the Easter break, is the construction of a temporary road at the bottom of the field that will provide constructor access from the Bus Park to the site of the pitch, which will be adjacent to S-Block. Parents may also be interested in recent allocation of funding to allow the school to further use and promote sustainable energy sources as part of its operations ([Helsby High School welcomes government funding for new sustainable energy initiatives | frodsham.nub.news](#)).

### Staff Farewells

Sadly, we say 'farewell' to four members of staff this week as they begin the next step in their careers after Easter. Mr Dowler is leaving the IT support department after over 3 years at the school and, after two years at the school, both Miss Essam and Miss Barker are leaving their respective Teaching Assistant and Student Support Co-Ordinator roles to begin work at the Local Authority's Ancora House mental health provision for children and young adults. We are very grateful to all three colleagues for all the support they have provided to our students and their families, especially over the last 12 months, and wish them all the very best for the future, as we do Mr Lloyd, who has worked in the Mathematics department (in very unusual circumstances) this term. In April we will welcome Mrs Balmer to the school, who will be joining the Mathematics department in the summer term following Mr Lloyd's departure.

### And Finally

After such a long and unique Spring Term I am sure that all of our students are looking forward to a break and I hope that all of our families have a very restful and enjoyable Easter period with families and friends. It is incumbent upon me though to remind our students, via yourselves, that we are still under national restrictions and hence it is also very important that our students continue to play their part in this on-going national emergency situation by adhering to current regulations around social distancing and mixing with others.

As the weather slowly improves, I am sure that the opportunity to meet up outside with friends will become an increasingly attractive proposition. Students are fortunate to live in an area with attractive countryside to visit, both on foot and by bike. I have though been asked by local communities to ask students who may be thinking of heading out on their bikes to be considerate of other families if venturing out, particularly into the wooded areas on Helsby and Frodsham hillsides and towards Delamere Forest. Students should only use routes designed for bikes and should be alert to the presence of others in the speed they choose to cycle at.

All of our students should feel proud of how well they have coped with exceptionally challenging circumstances this term, both whilst learning at home and also in adapting upon their return to all the unusual routines we have in school at present in order to keep all members of the school community safe. As I have mentioned before, the attributes they have developed over the last 12 months in terms of resilience, adaptability and independence will eventually go a long way, if not all the way, to making up for what they have missed out on in school. Thank you to all of our parents for all the support you have provided throughout the various stages of this term, without which our students would have found circumstances so much more difficult to deal with. It is appreciated by all the staff and governors at the school (and I am sure by students too).

I hope you all have a lovely Easter break, ahead of a summer term which will be busy, but also hopefully one in which brighter weather will be accompanied by brighter times ahead for everybody.

Very best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher