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16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Careers Day**

I would like to thank students for their enthusiasm and endeavour on Wednesday this week. Our 'Futures Day' (and the work Year 12 have been doing with the National Citizen Service since then) has been the real highlight of this final week of term. After the restricted year we have had in school, I think students and staff really enjoyed doing something different to normal and the sense of excitement around school was palpable. I hope students found the day useful and interesting, as well as enjoyable. They certainly gave the many visitors who worked with them a very positive impression of both themselves and the school.

### **September**

Given the current rise in Covid cases in both the region and nationally, it is difficult to predict at this stage how we will be operating at the start of next term and what in-school restrictions may or may not still be required either nationally or in our Local Authority. We will monitor the situation over the next month or so and then finalise and publish our plans nearer to September. Hence please do look out for e-mail, website and social media updates towards the end of the holidays (ie from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August onwards).

One very important update that I can confirm though is the September return dates for students. Schools have been asked to conduct two on-site Lateral Flow Device tests with students (those for whom parental consent is provided) at the start of September. This should be done as soon as possible, ie on their first day back in school. Given the scale of this task, it isn't possible for all students to start back on the same day – we can only physically do about 500 tests per day. Hence the start dates for students will be as follows:

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September – Year 12 enrolment** (further details to follow separately)

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September – Years 7 and 11** (who will be tested on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September)

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September – Years 10, 12 and 13** (who will be tested on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September)

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September – Years 8 and 9** (who will be tested on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September)

Further details to follow in August. Please note that students do not need to take their test before entering classrooms and that due to a change from next Monday onwards, 'close contacts' of any students who test positive will not be required to go home and self-isolate.

### Contact Portal e-mail Address

Please do use the [contactportal@helsbyhigh.org](mailto:contactportal@helsbyhigh.org) e-mail address over the summer holiday for any queries, which will be checked on a regular basis. Please note though that from Monday (19<sup>th</sup> July) onwards, any positive Covid test results do not need to be reported to the school and schools will no longer be responsible for the identification of, and communication with, 'close contacts' of positive cases.

### Covid Local Support Scheme

Administered by the Local Authority through schools, this national scheme will be providing £90 per student to eligible families. Hence eligible families should look out for 3 e-vouchers delivered by e-mail (each for £30) - one at the start, one in the middle and one at the end of the summer holiday.

### Site Development

The summer break will be exceptionally busy in school with a large number of developments taking place to the school site and facilities for students. These include: construction of our 3G pitch (which we hope will be ready for use early in the Autumn Term); refurbishment of classrooms for Design & Technology, Media Studies, Modern Languages, PSHE and Science; installation of a hybrid air source heat pump and extra solar panels (see [Helsby High School welcomes government funding for new sustainable energy initiatives | frodsham.nub.news](https://www.frodsham.nub.news)) and completion of CCTV coverage around the school site. This latter work is very much being undertaken in the interests of student safety and will include the communal, but not the cubicle, areas of the student toilet blocks.

### Forthcoming Parent Governor Elections

We currently have vacancies on the school's Governing Body for parent governors and will be inviting nominations, and then possibly running an election, for these positions early in the Autumn Term. The reason for mentioning this now is to give both current and prospective parents the chance to consider whether they might be interested in this exciting opportunity to shape and support the strategic development of the school over the next few years. Further details to follow in September.

### Staff Farewells

The end of the Summer Term in schools is always tinged with a little sadness as colleagues move on to pastures new and this summer is no exception at Helsby. I am sure that all parents would want to join me in thanking the following for their wonderful contributions to the school and wishing them all the very best for the future:

- Mrs Balmer and Mr Short, who have worked in our Maths department for this term and the last two years respectively. Mrs Balmer will be joining Padgate Academy's Senior Leadership Team as their Mathematics Lead in September and Mr Short will be joining the Maths department at Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy in Runcorn.
- Miss Crabb, who has secured an exciting opportunity to continue teaching PE in Dubai.
- Mr Scarisbrick, who is moving to a D&T Technician post at Sandbach School.
- Mr Jones, our Attendance and Welfare Officer who is moving on a role with North Wales Training as a Recruitment and Placement Officer.
- Mrs Schofield, who is retiring from her post as Careers Advisor after many years of providing very thoughtful support and guidance to our students.
- Miss Riley, who is moving to a very well-deserved promotion to the post of Assistant Head of Humanities at Winstanley College in Wigan. After 9 years at the school, Miss Riley's love of geography and thoughtful support will be very much missed by students.

- Mrs Holland and Mrs Eglin, who after a combined total of 47 years' dedicated service to Helsby (and also formerly Frodsham) High School will both be beginning very well-deserved retirements this summer. Both Mrs Holland (in her various administrative roles) and Mrs Eglin (as Resources Manager) have been wonderful examples of the type of support staff colleagues without whom schools simply would not function successfully. Often unseen by students, their work is certainly no less important for being so. Both colleagues are well-known for their commitment to doing the very best for the school and for their unwavering willingness to support students and colleagues in whatever way they can. They will be sadly missed.
- After 18 years at the school, Mrs Wroblewski is retiring this summer from her role as Department Leader for Food and Health and Social Care. Well-known by students for her determination to enable them to be as successful as possible in the subject area, her thoughtful support, care and guidance will be very much missed by them. She has developed and led the department with vision, enthusiasm and wisdom and enabled it to consistently be a very successful part of the school's curriculum offer. After such dedicated commitment to the school over many years, her retirement is certainly very well-deserved.
- After 26 years at the school, Mrs Neal is retiring from teaching this summer. During her time at the school, Mrs Neal has had a variety of roles, most recently Senior Assistant Headteacher, working in the both the Languages department and on the Senior Leadership Team. As a Senior Leader she has led and worked in many different aspects of the school's work and over the last few years she has thoughtfully led the work of our team of subject leaders and the whole-school development of our teaching and learning practice. Although her roles may have varied over time, what has never changed has been Mrs Neal's commitment to the school - to students and to colleagues. She has played a major part in making Helsby the special school that it is today and her commitment, wisdom and sense of humour and perspective will be very much missed by colleagues and students alike.

### **New Staff**

Despite the staff mentioned above moving on this Summer, we are fully-staffed for September and I know that students will enjoy meeting and working with the following colleagues who we will be welcoming to the school at the start of the Autumn Term:

Miss Collier (Science, who has been with us this year on her PGCE course)  
 Miss Hughes (Geography)  
 Miss Mitchell (PE)  
 Miss Morton (History)  
 Ms O'Hara (Computing)  
 Mrs Owen (Food, who has been with us this year on a temporary basis)  
 Mr Probert (our new Deputy Department Leader: Mathematics)  
 Miss Weaver (PE)  
 Miss Wright (who is returning as part-time ICT Technician)

We also have several colleagues taking on new roles in school in September:

Mr Duffell – Deputy Headteacher  
 Dr Pritchard-Roberts – Deputy Headteacher  
 Mrs Lindop – Assistant Headteacher (Director of Sixth Form)  
 Mr Davies – Faculty Leader: BCE  
 Mrs Stewart – Deputy Department Leader: D&T  
 Miss Tatham – Deputy Faculty Leader: BCE  
 Mr Singh – Assistant Deputy Leader: Expressive Arts  
 Mr Parkes – Student Support Co-Ordinator

It is only natural at the end of the school year to look back on everything that we have been through over the last 12 months. If we had been told last September that students wouldn't be able to access specialist classrooms until June, that they would be learning from home for over two months in the Spring Term and that once again Year 11 and 13 students wouldn't be sitting their GCSE and A-Level examinations, then I don't think we would have believed it. What our students have had to cope with, and the way they have coped, is simply remarkable and a real testament to their character, resilience and determination to overcome barriers put in their way.

It is also a testament to the support that they have given, both in school and at home. Thank you so much for all your support and partnership-working this year to enable us to work together to support students through all the many challenges they have faced. As a school we have really appreciated, and been very grateful for, your support through a very difficult academic year. Students' learning may be slightly behind where it would otherwise be if it wasn't for the pandemic, but that can be easily put right over the next year or so with some thoughtful curriculum planning by staff and hard work by students. I suspect their levels of resilience, maturity and resourcefulness though are way ahead of where would be if they hadn't been through the experiences of the last 16 months and ultimately these attributes will very much allow them to succeed and thrive in the future.

In the short-term though I suspect that our students and families are looking forward to a very well-earned rest over the summer break. I hope that you all enjoy a chance to relax and enjoy time with families with family and friends over the next 6 weeks and we very much look forward to seeing our students back in school again in September.

Very best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher