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20th September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

More than anything in this first letter of the new academic year I wanted to thank you for your support in ensuring that the new term has got off to a good start in school. I hope that students are enjoying a greater sense of 'normality' than was possible in 2020-21 and they have settled back into their learning most impressively. Particular thanks for your support with regard to ensuring that students are dressed appropriately for school and for making sure they are on time for school in a morning. Please see Dr Pritchard-Roberts' letter last week about all the activities they are undertaking in their form tutor period to see why this latter expectation is so important.

Although so many aspects of school life, particularly those in classrooms, are back to what we once thought of as 'normal', there can be no denying that we are still in phase where Covid has to be managed within society. It is that management that I will begin my updates with:

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

Thank you for your support of our on-site testing at the start of this term. We were very impressed with the maturity of our students as they undertook this process. Thank you too for supporting students now that they are taking the tests twice-weekly at home. One of the less high-profile elements of the 'Autumn and Winter Covid Plan' launched by the government last week was the announcement **that twice-weekly Lateral Flow Device testing at home by students should continue for the rest of this term**. This is probably no great surprise to parents and extra testing kits for this purpose should arrive in school soon.

Covid Measures

Our students continue to show their thoughtfulness in the way they are following our Covid control measures in school, such as the use of hand-sanitisers, the one-way system and the separate locations for purchasing food and drink at break and lunchtime. Please note that we have also issued 'wipes' to staff so that if any student would like to wipe their table at the start of a lesson then they just need to ask their teacher for a wipe in order to be able to do so.

Covid Vaccinations for 12-15 Year-Olds

Please see [COVID-19 vaccination programme for children and young people: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-children-and-young-people) for guidance issued to schools last week regarding the vaccination programme. As with other student vaccination programmes, the main role for the school is just to be a venue for the vaccinations, which are likely to take place shortly after the October half-term holiday. It will be the Local Authority's School Age Immunisation Service who will communicate with parents over the vaccinations and in particular on the issue of parental consent.

Enrichment Programme

We are very much looking forward to re-starting our enrichment programme shortly. Please look out for details of what is on offer to students between now and half-term in music, sport and lots of other areas of school life.

Diary Dates

Please note the following important dates for the next term or so:

INSET Days: Our remaining 4 INSET Days, when students will not be attending school, are all coming up over the next few months: this **Thursday (23rd September); Friday 22nd October; Monday 1st November and Tuesday 4th January.**

Open Evenings: Please see [Open Evening 2021 - Helsby High School](#) for details of our forthcoming Open Evenings for Year 6 students and parents on Tuesday 28th and Thursday 30th September. Thank you for your understanding that the need to limit numbers in attendance in the current circumstances means that unfortunately it isn't possible on this occasion for parents of current students to attend on these evenings.

Year 7 and 12 Pastoral Evening: Details of this on-line event on **Wednesday 13th October** will shortly be sent out to parents of Year 7 and 12 students, for whom the evening will provide a chance to 'meet' with their child's form tutor to review how the first few weeks of the new academic year have gone.

Sixth Form Open Evening: Our current intention is for this evening to take place on-site on **Wednesday 20th October**, giving Year 10 and 11 students and parents the opportunity to learn more about our vibrant and very successful Sixth Form. The evening will enable students and parents to meet with teaching staff and find out more about the 30+ A-Level and vocational courses on offer in what is one of the largest and most popular Sixth Forms in Cheshire.

Parent Information Evenings: These will be on-line events, providing parents with an overview of the academic year, including details of planned assessment windows. Also included will be information about supporting students with their learning, both in school and at home. Further details to follow ahead of the following dates:

Year 11: Thursday 23rd September (ie this Thursday)

Year 13: Wednesday 6th October

Years 7 & 8: Monday 1st November

Years 9, 10 and 12: weeks beginning Monday 6th & 13th December

Parent Consultation Evenings: We will decide near the time whether it is best to hold these in-person on-site or remotely, but our planned Consultation Evenings this academic year are as follows:

Year 11: Thursday 18th November & Thursday 17th March

Year 13: Thursday 2nd December & Wednesday 23rd March

Year 8: Wednesday 12th January

Year 7: Thursday 20th January

Year 12: Thursday 10th February

Year 10: Wednesday 16th February

Year 9: Thursday 3rd March (with Year 9 Options Evening on Tuesday 8th March)

Vacancies

We currently have a number of support staff vacancies, which may be of interest to parents, family members or friends - please see [Non-Teaching Vacancies - Helsby High School](#) for details.

As is always the case, but particularly so during the complicated times which we are living in, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any queries at any time. Please use contactportal@helsbyhigh.org for any urgent Covid communications, including at weekends. Otherwise the best way of getting in touch is usually the relevant pastoral team via the following:

- Year7admin@helsbyhgh.org
- Year8admin@helsbyhigh.org
- Year9admin@helsbyhigh.org
- Year10admin@helsbyhigh.org
- Year11admin@helsbyhigh.org
- 6thformadmin@helsbyhigh.org

Also available are admin@helsbyhigh.org for general administrative enquiries and head@helsbyhigh.org to contact myself directly.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill
Headteacher