



HBK Update, Friday 25 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to your weekly HBK update! I hope that you and your children were able to enjoy some quality time together over half-term and that you are all feeling well.

Thanks@HBK - message from Mrs Tandy, Vice-Principal

Times are tough for us all at present, and one of the things that keeps school staff going through difficult times is a kind message from a student or a parent/carer or a colleague. Indeed, kind words and a 'thank you' often have a much bigger impact on staff wellbeing than anything else, so I am asking whether you could all take a couple of minutes to send a message to thanks@hbk.acesmat.uk for us to pass on to our staff. This might be a message for the whole staff, or you might want to single out one or more staff members who you feel have gone over and above this term. We can add your name to the messages or keep it anonymous if you prefer. Thank you in advance for any words of encouragement and support you are able to offer - the 'Thanks@HBK' messages that came in last term were greatly appreciated by staff!

Covid-19 Update – message from Mr Cooke, Vice Principal

Since returning from the half-term break our COVID-19 rates have remained low amongst students and staff. We hope that the rates will continue to remain low, although we may see a small rise in cases now we are all back in school. Thank you for your ongoing support for the school with managing the COVID-19 situation, in constantly changing circumstances. Earlier this week the Government made some significant COVID-19 announcements regarding changes to self-isolation and testing. Here are the key points from the **Government guidance** that they have just issued to schools (these are mostly direct quotes from the guidance document):

Self-isolation

- From Thursday 24 February, the Government is removing the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. However, adults and children who test positive will continue to be **advised** to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least five full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received two negative test results on consecutive days, from Day 5 onwards.
- If a pupil with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 attends school, the school can take the decision to send the pupil home if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. The 'Schools COVID-19 operational guidance', produced by the Department for Education (DfE), states that *"If anyone in your school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice"*.
- Routine contact tracing will end. Fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 will no longer be asked to test daily for seven days, and close contacts who are not fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate.
- More details can be found in the [Living with COVID-19](#) plan. Further details will be published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on Thursday 24 February.

Testing

- With immediate effect, the Government has removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing.
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak within the school, the school will be able to order tests to distribute to staff and pupils, if advised to do so by the Public Health team.
- All staff and students will continue to be able to access test kits from their local pharmacy or [online](#).

- **Anyone with symptoms should take a PCR test, stay at home and follow Government guidance if positive.** People who have tested positive will continue to be advised to stay at home for five full days and then receive two negative test results on consecutive days before returning to their workplace or setting.
- Staff and pupils who test positive should use any test kits they already have at home to undertake testing on days five and six, before returning to school if they test negative. If they do not have test kits, they should order them online via gov.uk.

Remote education

- The regulations requiring education settings to provide remote learning to pupils isolating for COVID-related reasons lapse on 24 March. Therefore, schools are only legally required to continue to provide remote learning in these circumstances until that date.

Longer-term plans

- From Friday 1 April, the Government will no longer provide free to order universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England. The Government will update guidance on the steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people accordingly.

In summary, this is the school's current position in response to the guidance (this may change in response to any changes in the Government guidance or in our own circumstances):

- The school no longer receives supplies of test kits which we can distribute to students and staff. Therefore the twice-weekly testing programme has now ceased with immediate effect
- If your child has COVID-19 symptoms they should *"take a PCR test, stay at home and follow Government guidance if positive"*, as stated in the Government guidance. Here is a link to where you can access a PCR test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>
- If the school suspects that a student has COVID-19, because they are presenting COVID-19 symptoms, we will continue to contact a parent and ask them to collect their child immediately and seek a PCR test
- The school aims to continue to provide work for students who are self-isolating, until further notice
- We will continue to update you on any changes in the Government's guidance as we get it

Cambridgeshire County Council have asked us to share the [Parent Letter](#) on changes to restrictions from 24 February 2022 with Parents and Carers.

'Mock' Examinations - message from Miss Nightingale, Vice-Principal

Congratulations to the Year 11 students who completed their mocks this week! The baton has now been passed to the teaching staff to mark and grade the papers, getting them back to students in the next couple of weeks, so gaps in learning can be worked on!

Year 11 Intervention - message from Miss Nightingale, Vice-Principal

Easter School was launched with the Year 11 students this afternoon (Friday 25 February). We have explained to the students how 'Easter School' will work and the huge benefits it could bring. Students will be coming home with a letter explaining the application process, the sessions available and there is a reply slip for them to complete and return to their form tutor by **11 March**. Please take an opportunity to go through this if your child is in Year 11 and encourage them to apply – Easter School could really boost both their revision and their confidence.

On Monday (28 February) the National Tutoring Programme restarts. Students who have already been attending sessions will be able to pick up where they left off before half term. There are also an extra 9 tutoring sessions going forward, due to student requests, which I am thrilled to say we have been able to meet. Letters for those who will be starting on Monday the 28th should have been received already stating where and when the tutoring will take place. Recent feedback to the school from the Programme tutors was exceptionally positive; comments such as the students are 'well engaged', 'polite' and they 'support each other'. It has also been great to hear from the students who say they feel the tutoring is making a real difference! All session will take place in Room 190 from now on.

Summer Exams - message from Miss Nightingale, Vice-Principal

There has been a lot released recently about the summer exams, not least the 'advance information'. Staff have now had a chance to go through this information and are using it to plan lessons for the next 10-11 weeks before the summer exams commence. Please be aware that although the advance information states the subjects which will be higher tariff questions on exam papers, the information makes it clear that lower tariff questions could still come from anywhere else on the syllabus! As such, we would strongly advice against students ONLY revising the topics outlined on the advance information. Teachers will be guiding students as to what they will need to focus on going forward.

Also, there has been much made of the 'more generous' marking of the exams this summer. In fact, the small print suggests that only those on the cusp of a higher grade will benefit this summer. Those achieving a mid-grade or lower grade are likely to have a similar grade boundary to those that were used in Summer 2019. Boundaries will not be decided, however, until all of the papers have been marked, nationally.

We will share more information about the summer exams as it becomes available.

Making the correct career choice? - message from The HBK Careers Team

Choosing a career can be tough. According to UCAS, one in five university students say they were unable to study their chosen degree because of the subjects they chose at A-Level.

To help explore the options available and gain an insight into various pathways 'CareersDays' are offering several 1-day online events to share with students and their parents/carers. Further details and prices are available here: <https://www.careerdays.co.uk/apply-now>

Options include - Architecture, Dentistry, Midwifery, Medicine, Psychology and Business.

The HBK Careers Team



Well done to our Sixth Form Chemistry Students!



On Saturday 19 February, a group of our A Level Chemistry students took part in the Cambridge Chemistry Race at the University of Cambridge - a national competition for teams of sixth form students.

Our students were initially quite apprehensive but finished a **very** creditable 26th out of 51 schools. Well done to Angus H, Fred T, Ruby L, Eilidh C and Pablo V-G!

Last day of the summer term this school year: reminder

Our last day is Thursday 21 July. This is because we are taking Friday 22 July as our extra day's holiday, in light of the Queen's jubilee.

Our [term dates](#) for 2021-22 and 2022-23 can be found here.

This week's Blog

This week's blog is entitled: *'Thinking: essential for learning, but not sufficient'*. If you would like to read it, it's here: <https://learningisthething.com/?p=589>

We are Hinchingsbrooke.

Have a lovely weekend.

Mark Patterson
Principal