

HBK Update, Friday 30 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that your children in Year 11 and Year 13, in particular, are coping well with the inevitable stresses and strains of this year's assessments that will support the summer teacher assessed grading process. This is not an easy time for any of our young people but it must be especially challenging for those who are doing frequent assessments in lessons that count towards their teacher assessed grades. I know that our teachers and pastoral staff are doing all that they can to support them and we wish your child(ren) well as they do their remaining assessments.

Parent Survey feedback - message from Mrs Tandy, Vice-Principal

Over the course of the year, we survey parents to get feedback on how you think the school is doing. Although Year 10 and Year 12 parents have yet to be surveyed - this will happen later this term following each parents' evening - I thought I would share some of the responses we have had so far. It is really pleasing to see the range of positive feedback, particularly in some areas where the vast majority of respondents believe the school is achieving its aims. These include 'My child is happy at this school', 'My child feels safe at this school', and 'I would recommend this school to another parent'. There were a high number of other statements where parents were in almost total agreement also. This feedback allows us to be confident that almost all of what we do at Hinchingsbrooke is effective.

While there are no areas that have so far been identified by parents as requiring improvement, we are looking at ways to address aspects that have been identified by even a small number of respondents, to ensure that parents feel able to be even more positive in their view of the school. For example, we are currently considering ways to share more information about the curriculum with parents so you can know more about what your children are studying. The only other areas where the results were a bit lower than normal were the questions about extra-curricular and wider development opportunities. These have of course been hampered by the pandemic and the restrictions in place, however we are excited to be getting clubs up and running again this term. As COVID measures continue to ease, we will be able to offer further opportunities for personal development through trips, guest speakers and in-school events.

We are pleased that the vast majority of parents were happy with the COVID safety measures in place and the guidelines provided, both in September 2020 and March 2021 and appreciate your support in upholding these measures across the course of the year. I will update you with the parent survey results later in the term and also share feedback regarding the online parents' evening format. In school this week we have been seeking feedback from students, as their voice is equally important in evaluating how we are doing as a school, and I look forward to sharing the results of this survey with you later in the term.

Thank you once again for your support and feedback in this most valuable process.

Teacher Assessed Grades Assessments – message from Ms Nightingale, Vice-Principal

Another week done and the students have worked really hard in both their lessons and assessments! There are some students, however, who have made some poor judgements this week by not leaving their phone at the front of the classroom and then choosing to access it in their assessment. In addition, some students – a tiny number - have been writing information on their hands and arms. Such incidents are cheating and will be considered as such. Any cheating will result in the relevant assessment being cancelled and the student getting '0', which will negatively impact on the grade they achieve this summer. This message has already been reinforced with students.

There will be a video for parent/carers next week in which we will share the body of evidence to be used in each course in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. At the same time we will outline the process regarding mitigating circumstances.

Sixth Form News – message from Mrs Rix, Assistant Principal / Director of Sixth Form

We have launched our new student leadership initiative in the Sixth Form this week! Alongside the traditional Head Student roles, we now have additional opportunities for which our Sixth Formers can apply. These include Diversity Captain, Wellbeing Captain and Charity Captain who will all head up teams of students to lead on these important developments in our school.

We are looking forward to receiving lots of applications and watch this space to find out who our new student leaders will be!

COVID-19 updates from ACES Trust and the Local Authority

Please find attached a letter from our Trust, ACES, and a letter from the Cambridgeshire Local Authority that they have asked us to pass on to you.

The importance of testing for COVID-19 in school and reporting the results – message from Mr Cooke

Testing continues to play a crucial role, in and out of classrooms, in our fight against coronavirus (COVID-19). Students and staff should continue to test themselves and report results to the school and to the NHS. Reporting test results can be done simply and quickly, from mobiles, online or by phone, and should be completed straightaway. Reporting not only supports contact tracing in the event of a positive case but assists the government's understanding of community rates of infection. The government have produced a blog on [why reporting your test result is as important as taking a test](#), featuring further guidance and common questions. This also includes details on financial support available to parents whose children are asked to self-isolate after contact with a positive case.

Thank you for your child's participation in this highly important testing programme twice a week.

Change of date for Training Day during the summer term – update from Mr Cooke, Vice-Principal

Some parents have contacted us this week to query the change of the Training Day date later this term. Reprinted below is the message we sent by ParentMail on Friday 16 April, explaining the date change. We are very sorry for any inconvenience that this causes.

As the usual GCSE and A level exam timetables and processes will not be taking place this year, each school has to devise their own process for determining grades Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for the exam students. This is a complex process that needs to be largely completed before the half term break at the end of May, so we need to move our final Training Day of this year, which is currently scheduled for Friday 25 June 2021, to Friday 28 May 2021. Therefore, on Friday 28 May students will not attend school and parents/carers should make their own arrangements for child care, where this is needed. We are very sorry for any inconvenience caused by this late change of date; final details from the government regarding the TAGs process were only released during the Easter holidays. Thank you for your understanding as we make plans in response to ongoing government guidelines and requirements. To be clear, Friday 25 June 2021 will now be a normal school day with attendance expected of all students in year groups 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12.

My blog this week is about 'How we remember things, and why we often don't'. If you would like to read it, you can find it here:

<https://learningisthething.com/?p=124>

Bank Holiday, Monday 3 May – school is closed

As Monday 3 May is a national Bank Holiday, the school is closed. We will reopen on Tuesday 4 May.

Wishing you all a great Bank Holiday weekend!

We are Hinchingsbrooke.

Mark Patterson
Principal