



16th September 2013

Dear Parents/Carers

Personal Development Day for Year 11 – 26th September 2013

I am writing to give you more information about the first of our Personal Development (PD) days, which will take place on Thursday 26 September. You may be aware that we have decided to suspend our normal timetable on four days this year, in order to focus on helping students develop some of the key personal skills they will need to be successful learners both in school and when they leave to complete further study and (ultimately) employment. We undertook an extensive review of our curriculum last year, and a small group of staff have worked extremely hard since then to bring this first day to fruition.

The theme for our inaugural PD Day is 'Determination'. Thus, on the 26th September, your son or daughter will be engaged with activities which focus on developing their resilience, teamwork and creative thinking. They will undertake a series of tasks and challenges which will be unlike anything they have ever done in their regular curriculum at Hinchbrook School. We are keen to maintain an element of surprise at this stage, but we are able to outline some of the detail of the activities and thinking behind them for your child's year group on 26th September as follows;

Year 11's day is entitled 'Cast Away'. Activities are designed to reflect the fact that at the end of this final year of Key Stage 4, students will play a key role in determining their own next step (whatever that might be). In a sense they will be 'set free' from the safe cocoon of Key Stage 4 and unleashed into a much wider educational world. They will work in groups, developing the skills necessary for effective team work, on a series of mental and physical challenges. These include archery, climbing, mini boat race and an assault course. They will need to wear clothing suitable for wet activities, and will experience tasks that will take them out of their 'comfort zone.'

Further detail of the practicalities, including groups, clothing, timings etc. will be available from form tutors in due course. Rest assured that we have undertaken a full risk assessment for each of the activities, and we will be using fully qualified instructors for any of the more adventurous activities. Teaching and support staff, as well as 6th form students, are assigned to each of the year groups, and so there will be a high degree of supervision at all times during the day, with purposely low teacher: pupil ratios. The start and finish times for PD days are exactly the same as a normal day, lunch will still be provided and buses will also run as normal.

This first PD Day promises to be a landmark moment in the educational lives of the students, with a specific focus on building their portfolio of skills and attributes and enabling them to become more determined to succeed in other areas of their lives (both educational and extra-curricular). In addition, the successful completion of the activities offers an excellent way for students to earn points for their house. I hope that you will agree that our plans are exciting, ambitious for our students (and staff) and will lead to excellent outcomes.

Buses will run as normal on the Personal Development day. Please note that it is the responsibility of any child who uses an asthma inhaler or similar to carry this with them at all times on the day.

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If you have any questions relating to these arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance and I will be only too happy to provide further information.

Yours faithfully,

Lee Walker – Vice Principal
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