



21 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that this email finds you and your family well.

Excellent start by Year 7!

I'd like to begin by saying a huge well done to our Year 7 students on completing their first half term at HLS. They have really impressed us with their cheerfulness, enthusiasm, passion for learning and smart uniform. They are an absolute credit to their parents/parents.

Year 11 trial exams

Year 11 students have been working hard and it has been pleasing to see the numbers of students attending after-school revision classes. The students understand the importance of the trial exams that will be taking place after half term. As well as taking a bit of a break over half term, I know they will be revising hard and completing practice papers. Any support from family members is always appreciated. Thank you.

Able and Ambitious lecture programme

Our lecture programme, ably led by Mr Bottrill, has been up and running for a few weeks now and is going really well! We have had amongst others, Paul Fieldhouse, the official James Bond car designer/engineer, Paul Gibson, a film producer and our very own ex-student, Charlotte Bailey - a successful entrepreneur who appeared successfully on Dragon's Den earlier in the year. After half-term, we have a national Rugby player coming in to present to students along with successful medics to talk about their work and journey. Our local MP, Marcus Jones, will also be paying a visit.

These lectures take place every Thursday after school in Coombe Hall. Please encourage your child/children to attend if they can. Such experiences are excellent for students' listening skills and enhance their cultural capital and knowledge of different career options.

Covid-19 situation being managed effectively by the School

This half term has felt like something of a return to normality with no year group bubbles, students and staff not having to wear masks and teachers being able to be based in specialist classrooms once again. Extra-curricular activities have also thankfully returned. We certainly have not missed having to send large numbers of students home to self-isolate as close contacts of positive Covid cases, as we had to do so often last year. A number of students, of course, have had to stay off school whilst awaiting a PCR test result because of displaying major or minor symptoms of Covid and some have tested positive. Overall, we feel our approach is working successfully, as indicated by the relatively low number of positive cases across the School. As I have said previously though, and given the very worrying local and national figures, we can take nothing for granted. Our control measures remain in place and we may have to return to some previous measures, such as face coverings, at some stage in the future if the indicators suggest this is the correct course of action. Thank you for your on-going support and understanding.

Maintaining twice-weekly LFD testing at home over half term

Please can I ask that your child/children continue to complete this important activity on Sunday evening/Monday morning and Wednesday evening/Thursday morning. It is an essential part of our control measures.

Maintaining the excellent standard of behaviour at HLS

Over the past two weeks we have held year group assemblies in our large Sports Hall ensuring safe distancing.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of our students behave superbly at all times in our school, a small minority are currently not meeting our expectations. It is essential that schools are tightly-run and that excellent behaviour is maintained at all times so that teachers can teach, children can learn and that everyone is safe and feels safe, including at break and lunchtimes. We ask and expect parents/carers who send their child to our school to fully support our rules and our ethos. As I always say to our parents: "Please support the School and be seen to support the School by your child". It is essential that we work together and are seen to work together by your son/daughter. We expect parents/carers to support sanctions that the School issues to students who do not follow our rules and expectations. These are not negotiable. On the rare occasions a parent/carer says to me, "I don't agree with the rules", I reply, "Perhaps you need to find a different school with different rules which you do agree with". The overwhelming majority of our parents/carers accept and actively support our rules. This is essential. Thank you.

I would really appreciate it if you could **support the following key messages at home**, which we have been reinforcing with the students during recent assemblies:

- One of our overarching expectations is that **students do as they are instructed first time by a member of staff** and do not to get into a conversation or begin answering back about whether they should be doing it or questioning what the member of staff has just said. Students should follow instructions first time from all members of staff.
- **We expect politeness and good manners at all times** and staff are expected to role model this themselves. Students should respond to a member of staff with: 'Yes Miss/Sir.' 'Please' and 'Thank you' are also important. If a student needs to ask a question, they should say, 'Excuse me Sir/Miss, can you tell me' etc.
- **Messing about and horseplay** on the playground and pushing and shoving in break and lunch queues are not tolerated. Such behaviour can lead to health and safety concerns and dangerous incidents.
- **Students should not take their tie or blazer off** unless given permission to do so during the day at break or lunch or touch or remove other students' ties.
- **Uniform expectations and personal appearance should be followed at all times**, as clearly stated in the Student Organiser, for example, regarding school coats, skirts, earrings, black trainers, not rolling blazer sleeves up and so on.
- **The School's rules regarding phones** are very clear. Some schools ban students from taking phones into school; we do not. We simply say that phones should not be seen or heard. Phones should be turned off and out of sight, including on the playground. Students seen with their phones out during the school day can expect them to be confiscated and a sanction issued.
- Some schools have silent corridors! We choose not to do this but **we do expect appropriate behaviour on corridors**. There should not be shouting and loud voices down the corridors. Students

should talk quietly as they move between classes. This is helping students to practise social interactions in a mature manner.

- **The canteen is our school restaurant. Students' behaviour there should be like it is when they go out for a meal in a restaurant.** They should be polite to members of staff who are serving them food and supervising them. Students should take their rubbish with them and place it in a bin.

- **Students who have an issue with another student, must walk away and inform a member of staff.** Not doing this, causes things to escalate.

- **If a student has a concern during the day, they must report it to a member of staff.** They should not phone home. A student phoning home is breaking the rules by using their phone and also often causing unnecessary anxiety to parents who do not hear the full story or may be working at the time. If it is an issue in school, please allow staff to try and deal with it in school.

- **Students should not get involved in something which doesn't concern them** and stir things up.

These are our some of the rules for our school. Other schools have some different rules but most schools have similar rules. Higham Lane School has a waiting list because parents/carers know what a good school we are. Students who leave are replaced within 24 hours by one of the large number of students on our waiting lists.

Black waterproof coats for school

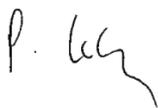
As you know, students should have a plain black coat for school. As the weather deteriorates, it is important that students have a plain, black waterproof coat. Just wearing a blazer on days when it rains is not adequate protection and may lead to students catching a cold.

End of half term and start of next half term

The School closes to students at the end of the school day on Thursday, 21st October and re-opens at the normal time on Monday, 1st November.

Thank you for your fantastic on-going support for your child/children and for the School.

Yours sincerely,



P. Kelly
Headteacher