



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 23RD JANUARY 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to thank you sincerely for your understanding, patience and unwavering support over the past few weeks. It has been amazing to have all of our students back!

Following the cyber-attack, the school was closed for four days and then operated a rolling programme, with different groups of students attending at different times across our two school sites. These arrangements were far from ideal, but they were put in place to try to get students back into education as quickly and safely as possible under extremely challenging circumstances whilst staff worked tirelessly to restore critical systems. Your cooperation and encouragement at home played a vital role in making this work.

I would like to pay particular tribute to our staff. The way they have responded since the cyber-attack has been nothing short of outstanding. Teaching and supporting students without access to normal systems and resources, and often working very long days, they have delivered some truly wonderful lessons in very difficult circumstances. Their professionalism, creativity and commitment to our students has been remarkable.

Our students also deserve enormous praise. Since returning to school, they have shown a positive, resilient and mature attitude to learning. It has been fantastic to see all of our students back on site, and their willingness to adapt and get straight back into learning has been a real highlight during what has been a challenging time for everyone. Many lessons have not taken their normal format as staff have had to adapt due to a number of key systems still being down.

Cyber experts from the Department for Education who have supported the school throughout, have commented that, given the nature and severity of the cyber-attack, many schools they have worked with would have been closed for a much longer period of time. Thanks to the hard work, dedication and long days put in by staff, we were able to restore some key systems far quicker than expected. This meant the school was closed for significantly less time than would normally be anticipated in such circumstances. I would like to personally thank our IT team and colleagues from across Central England Academy Trust for their outstanding support in getting some of the critical systems back online.

While the school is now safe to open – with the functionality of the gates, fire alarm systems and electronic registers restored, some systems are still not fully operational. A small number of staff are still required to take paper registers, and we do not yet have access to many of the systems we would normally rely upon including school phones and printers, many staff have no working school device yet as every device has to be manually reprogrammed. We appreciate your continued patience as this work continues.

In separate communication, we are also writing formally to any individuals whose data may have been affected, explaining the situation clearly and transparently; you will receive this communication shortly if you have not already received it.

We are also currently liaising with all examination boards, each of whom has been informed that the school experienced a very serious cyber-attack. Working closely with cyber experts from the Department for Education, we are establishing exactly what data may have been compromised. We will work with examination boards to ensure that no student is disadvantaged should any GCSE or A Level work have been affected, and we will continue to keep parents, carers and students fully informed.

Moving on to other school news, as winter reminded us of its presence this morning, with temperatures around 3 or 4°C – roughly the same as a refrigerator – we wanted to make sure students had a warm and welcoming start to the day. Free toast and hot chocolate were provided in the canteen, giving students a chance to warm up, chat with friends and start the day on a positive note. Please ensure your child has a suitable coat for this inclement weather and we also advise a small umbrella and gloves.

I would also like to congratulate our Sixth Form Law students who attended a Bar Mock Trial competition at the weekend. Their performances were exceptional, and I am delighted to report that they won the entire competition due to the quality of their defences and prosecutions. They now progress to the national finals in March! This is a fantastic achievement and one we are incredibly proud of.



Yesterday, I welcomed a visitor from another local school, and we popped into some lessons. He was amazed at the standard of work produced by our students, the use of purple pen to upgrade work and the quality of the lessons, especially taking into account that many staff had no access to their normal resources. The Year 11 Trial Examinations have gone very well, and we look forward to getting the papers marked so we can give our Year 11 students the feedback they need to further improve. If your child is in Year 11 or 13, please ensure that they have a quiet place at home, away from distractions such as mobiles, tablets or TVs, where they can be revising for their forthcoming exams. Whilst there is no definitive answer, some research indicates that on average, students should be undertaking around 2 or 3 hours of revision each night at this stage in Year 11 in addition to homework and also revising at weekends and in school holidays. However, balance is key and students also need time to relax and enjoy hobbies. Please see our exams and revision section of our website for further information:

<https://www.hightamlaneschool.co.uk/examinations-and-revision>

Finally, I would like to invite parents and carers to consider applying for the role of school governor. Information about governor nominations is attached to this newsletter. The local governing body plays a crucial role in supporting and being a critical friend to the school, helping to shape its strategic direction and ensure the best possible outcomes for students. It is a highly rewarding role, but it is also a significant time commitment, and I would encourage anyone interested to read the information carefully. You may have a skillset, qualification or experience that you may feel would add to our highly skilled Local Governing Body; please see the attached information for further details if you are interested. Please contact Mrs Clarke via contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk for an application form and further guidance.

Thank you once again for your omnipresent support. I wish you a very enjoyable weekend with your families, and hope you are able to spend some valuable time together.

Yours faithfully,



Michael Gannon
Headteacher
Higham Lane School



20th January 2026

Dear Parent / Carer,

Re: PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTION

I am writing to invite you to stand for election as a parent governor or nominate another parent to do so. In our school, we have provision for two parent governors and there is currently one vacancy. Nominations can only be accepted from parents or carers who have children registered at the school on the day that nominations close.

The Governing Body, with the headteacher, has overall responsibility for the running of the school. The role of a school governor is to contribute to the work of the Governing Body (GB) in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school, its students and the performance management of staff.

The role of a governor can be demanding but very rewarding. Parent governors serve a four year term of office and under usual circumstances, can expect to spend up to 10 days a year on governance duties. These include:

- attending meetings of the Governing Body, usually outside of school hours and contributing to Governing Body business.
- reading reports and papers and keeping up to date on the progress that the school is making; and
- visiting the school from time to time during the school day.

You will be expected to, undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and sign a Governors' Code of Conduct and have:

- a strong commitment to the role and improving outcomes for children.
- the inquisitiveness to question and analyse.
- the willingness to learn.
- good interpersonal skills.
- appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a GB is prepared to make special arrangements); and
- sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data.

Training is available for all governors and the Governing Body has an expectation that those new to school governance attend induction training such as that provided by the Local Authority's Governor Services Team which we subscribe to as a Trust. The enclosed sheet summarises the circumstances under which someone cannot serve as a governor.

If you would like to stand for election, please complete the enclosed nomination form and return it to the school no later than Friday 6th February 2026. You should also include a personal statement to support your nomination of no more than 500 words. We encourage candidates to be succinct when setting out the skills, experience, and attributes that they can bring to the GB to support their nomination. Self-nominations will be accepted, but if you are nominating another parent, please seek their prior consent.

If there are more nominations than vacancies, the election will be by secret ballot on Wednesday 11th February 2026. If a ballot is necessary, voting papers will be sent to all parents together with details of the ballot procedure.

To find out more about our school's governing board (i.e., frequency of meetings etc.) and the Governing Board's Code of Conduct, please contact Mrs S Clarke, PA to the headteacher via the school office.

Yours faithfully



M Gannon
Headteacher

Enc: Nomination form
Parent Governor Fact Sheet
Disqualification of Governors Form