

01 December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

To my mind it is quite scary that we are now in December 2023. It really does not seem that long ago when I arrived, looking to support the school for a term before moving on to another school. There is still so much to do before we break up and so everyday counts, even the very last day of the term (Thursday 21st September). There will be some Christmas events taking place between now and then however my expectations are the same on the last day of term as any other day. This means that lessons will be as normal so please make sure your child attends school as they will have the whole holiday to enjoy.

On Tuesday I met with Senior Students and as always it was a very good meeting. Quite a bit of the time was going over actions from the previous the meeting just to make sure that everything is followed up. I also report these meetings to the Local Governing Body. We discussed what events could be planned for the run up to Christmas as in the past we have had a "Santa Run" which has raised money for the "Shining Light" charity. With such events I am looking to Senior students to take responsibility - working with a member of staff of course – however I am also mindful that they also have a lot of work to do for their exams, so we need to ensure we have the right balance of commitment. They are doing a great job and I thoroughly enjoy the meetings.

Our after school professional development training for staff on Monday after school, the focus was on behaviour. One of the things we have developed since I joined is systems and processes for various aspects of running a school – behaviour is just one of them – so it is useful to revisit what we have to do in certain scenarios. When I first started teaching, new teachers were given one day of additional training and that was it. The rest you were left to work out for yourself. Education has moved on since those days and what we call "Continuing Professional Development" or CPD as it's often known, is crucial to a school moving forward and staff being recognised and valued.

I rarely mention individual staff, but I think it is especially relevant in this instance. Mr Gardner, who as you will probably know gets involved and leads endless enrichment activities, received the Silver Award in the National Teacher of Year Awards in the "unsung hero" category. It will come as no surprise to you to hear that he was reluctant for his award to be announced to staff such is his genuine modesty. It is richly deserved, so my public congratulations to him again, not only for the award for all the incredible and seemingly endless effort he puts into supporting Howden school and the community.

The Prom Passport is now up and running and I am pleased to say it is having a positive influence on year 11. Their mock exam results were as expected with few surprises with student outcomes all following the same theme. Those who had good attendance and worked hard did well and those who didn't have good attendance or didn't work hard didn't get the results they should have.

Year 10 Parents' evening is this coming Wednesday so please make sure you make an appointment. Just a few minutes of your time with each of your child's teachers can make all the difference. I

know as a parent; such feedback was invaluable and became more precious when my boys went into year 10. We are currently looking at a process for letting parents know in advance of any staff who will not be able to attend parents' evening.

Events coming up are:

4 December - Winter Showcase

6 December - Y10 Parents evening 4pm to 7pm

13 December - Flu vaccination catch up session

14 December - Christmas dinner & Bite back initiative (Y7 to Y9)

21 December 3pm - School closes for Christmas

I hope you have a great weekend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Nixon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Jim Nixon
Headteacher