



Howden
School



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Dear Parents and Carers,

The mocks exams for year 11 have now finished so our Mocks Results day will take place next Friday (24th November). The aim of mocks results days is to give a realistic setting for students to experience what it would be like In August but with time to improve their work based on the feedback given. It is worth noting that there are only nineteen school weeks to the first GCSE exam so every single lesson counts.

Attendance has been fairly steady this week, but we are still below national, and we have noticed that it drops on Fridays. We have introduced some new ways of encouraging good attendance where students are being rewarded which is having an impact. One new initiative is that in line with a number of other TCAT schools, we are going to be running a Year 11 Prom Passport as from Monday. There will be a separate letter to year 11 parents giving details as to how it will work, the main aim being to motivate and reward students in their lead up to the exams.

On Monday evening Senior Leaders carried out a work scrutiny looking at a small group of students work based on their attendance. It was quite insightful and good to see the high standard that some students are producing but it would also be true to say that the standard of presentation varied and just as importantly, the impact of a student being absent was very evident. What showed was not just the work that was missed, you could also see how students struggled on the work when they returned as they were behind. The analogy I use is that if you think of the year as a long-distance run, then absence is like stopping and sitting at the side of the road watching whilst other runners go ahead of you then you have to try and catch up. An occasional rest may be possible – but you will still be behind where you should be – but if you come out of the race more than a few occasions then you are so far behind everyone else meaning your results are far worse than they should be.


Every few weeks on a Thursday I attend the Wider Leadership Team meeting at our central offices in Cottingham. It is always a valuable morning where practice is shared, and agreements made between schools. One of the great benefits of TCAT is its size, big enough to have a variety of schools and approaches but small enough and located in the same region to enable good communication and for colleagues to visit each other's schools. There is a great deal of that taking place as shown on Tuesday when we had Richard Hill in looking at literacy and how we can develop reading and Angela Murphy who did a learning walk with Sue Issatt to see how we are progressing with the Howden lesson. Also, on Tuesday after school, our curriculum leaders had Teams meetings with their subject counterparts from other secondary schools to discuss improvement strategies.

The trust is updating its Drugs and Alcohol Policy. Although much of it is similar to before there is an additional paragraph which is headed "Alcohol Free Environment". You will shortly be able to read the policy for more detail on our website however two sentences are crucial. "Alcohol must not be brought onto our premises by any employee, volunteer, stakeholder, parent or carer at any time. This includes alcohol products intended as gifts". What it will mean is should you ever decide to thank a member of staff, they will not be able to accept alcohol.

My assemblies with year 8 and 9 this week have been about working together and that they are an important member of a large team (Howden School) then smaller teams in relation to their tutor group and different classes throughout the day. I also highlighted how families are a team and how by working together, they are the ones who benefit. Students are at the centre of the team. I am impressed at how students come into assemblies as a matter of routine and their concentration throughout. What has undoubtedly helped is the process we now go through of lining up before the ACE period, walking quietly into assembly in an orderly manner, standing in front of the chair then sitting down when being asked to do so.

I hope you have a fantastic 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