



**Howden**  
School



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12 January 2024

Dear Parents and carers,

Firstly, I hope you had a good Christmas and a restful New Year. I would also like to say that the last day of term was excellent with lessons being purposeful – but with a festive feel – and students left in a very calm and considered manner.

It was good to have all the students back on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> and I was pleased to see that attendance had much improved from the last week of term so thank you for your support in this. The Spring term is short, only fifty days, as opposed to seventy-five in the Autumn term and seventy in the summer. My understanding is that the original purpose of the long summer holiday was to release children to help with the harvest which I suspect doesn't apply to that many of our students these days, despite living in a rural area. So, this term, especially for year 11 with mock exams looming (starting week five), is not only short but crucial. In week five, all TCAT schools are doing their year 11 mock exams.

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> we are sending some students to the Year 11 Success Event at Hull University. This is a new initiative discussed and agreed by all the secondary Headteachers in TCAT with aim of improving outcomes for targeted students in maths and English. There are other events taking place this term as well and we are looking forward to seeing the impact it will have. Students from all other TCAT schools will be present which will be a new experience for many if not all of them

The school has recently had a couple of technical difficulties caused by external systems which will have caused some frustration so my thanks to you for your understanding. In the canteen, an update of the company's software meant that the system couldn't be used to log purchases, so canteen staff had to log their names. They know the students very well so that made a big difference however to make sure students were able to get fed, we allowed year seven and year ten out early for both break and lunch to help manage the situation. We also had an issue with Arbor which doubled up appointments for year 7 parents' evening forcing us to have to delete and start appointments again. Again, we were not the only school that had to deal with this, so it has been raised at a higher level to avoid such a scenario again.

With regards to parents' evenings, it is probably worth me highlighting that in certain subjects, usually the ones with a single teacher such as music, drama, etc with one lesson per week at Key Stage 3, the member of staff may well be teaching the whole year group. This means having 30 appointments but over 150 students. The benefit of the timetable however is that your child gets a specialist teacher. Having said all that, my thanks to everyone as the evening itself was a success with a good turnout.

As part of my strategy to further strengthen transition, today I visited Gilberdyke Primary School and met with Melissa Shirley the Headteacher. It was a very interesting morning, chatting about school improvement and meeting some students who will hopefully be joining us in September. The work that we are planning also involves year 5 students which I think is a good idea. What I saw was

plenty of good work and a very purposeful atmosphere. Having visited Howden Primary last term, I have other visits in my diary, the next one being Eastrington Primary which I am really looking forward to as well. It's been a good start to 2024 with plenty more to do.

Future events:

16 January - Y11 Success Event

17 January - Poetry Live Trip in Bradford

22 January - Year 11 Success Event

23 January - Prison me No Way (Year 9)

24 January - LGB Meeting

Yours faithfully

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

Mr Jim Nixon  
Headteacher