



Howden
School



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15 December 2023

Dear Parents and carers,

On Thursday years 7, 8 and 9 were engaged with the Bite Back Curriculum Enrichment event. This is a project for Key Stage 3 students that investigates food, diet, food markets and injustice in the food markets. Over the day I went into various sessions and was impressed by the quality of the materials and how engaged our students were. It was the launch of a programme that will continue throughout the school year looking at how everyone can have access to nutritious food. It is a fully funded programme that works towards a social action project in which a group of students will be heavily involved in influencing and developing provision. This will also add another dimension to our student voice input when meeting up with the area manager of ABM (our food provider) after Christmas when it is planned for them to attend a meeting with our senior students. I am confident that we can work together to meet the long term aims of the Bite back project that was launched on Thursday as the canteen team in school are excellent and do a superb job.

As a trial we have extended the areas of the school when students can go at breaks and lunch times due to the field and grounds being very wet at present. Previously students were not allowed behind the science block as cars were parked there but we recently re-arranged the main car park so it can take a few more cars which now frees up that space for them to use. It is also used by years 10, 11 and 8 for lining up before their ACE period.

On Tuesday morning we had a school review carried out by the Trust. It is a half termly event where the school development plan is evaluated as is our progress against a number of targets. The overall picture is one of improvement however there is still much to do, a phrase I use often. I have always said since the day I arrived that "certainty" is one of the key themes of school improvement, whether it be in relation to a reward or a sanction. Our rewards are still significantly higher than sanctions, running at nine positives to every one negative which is an excellent ratio. On the negative side, there must also be a certainty to a sanction. Each week we analyse the "completion" of sanctions, taking into account the mitigating circumstances.

There is also a lot of work going on behind the scenes with regards to the curriculum. When a senior member of staff met with a group of students, I was pleased to hear that they knew all about the HOWDEN lesson. Classrooms have a poster outlining how each lesson is structured as not only does this help with the lesson, but it also means students go through the same process in every subject. This routine will help them as they know what is coming next which provides a rhythm to the lesson.

We are concerned with the attendance of some individual students with years 11 and 8 having the lowest attendance of all the year groups. There are lots of initiatives that have been put in place, the most recent one being the "12 days of Christmas" where every student who attends every day over this period will receive an award. At present we have 443 students who are in line for a reward. Punctuality to lessons has improved since I joined which again is pleasing, we are now dealing with a small cohort in each year group who are late to lessons. Can I ask that you emphasise the

importance of punctuality to your child as it is an important life skill? Also, on the subject of attendance, I would like to make you aware that if your child is absent from school, you may receive an attendance welfare visit from us. This is part of our attendance procedure and an essential part of our continuing safeguarding commitment to all students.

Christmas lunch was yesterday, it was good to see so many students enjoying a festive meal and sat chatting round the table. Other events taking place this week and next week include the Santa Run in PE, for which communication was sent out this week and Christmas themed reward events.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that we will be teaching as normal right up to the last day of term so please ensure your child will attend otherwise they will miss their valuable education. We can then all leave and hopefully have a good Christmas holiday.

Looking ahead to the next two weeks – including the first week back after Christmas - we have:

Monday 18 December - Y7 Oddballs presentation

Thursday 21 December - Reward Events

Thursday 21 December 3pm - School closes for Christmas

Tuesday 9 January - School reopens to students

Thursday 11 January - Year 7 Parents Evening

I hope you have a great weekend.

Yours faithfully

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

Mr Jim Nixon
Headteacher