



Howden
School



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

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Dear Parents and Carers,

For those of you who were able to come along to “Shrek the Musical” I’m sure you had a very enjoyable evening. It was great to see the students enjoying performing in front of a captive audience – including lots of proud parents and carers. It is always the time and energy that goes on behind the scenes and leading up to such events that impresses me as much of it is unseen unless your child is involved. My thanks to Mr Steels and Mrs Murray for their hard work and commitment. As a parent, I remember both my sons practising various musical pieces over and over again so that it was just right. Sometimes there would be difficult section in the music, just a couple of bars, so you would hear those time and time again. It is exactly that kind of dedication that impresses me as it is how high standards are achieved. There is a quote I like which says, “the magic you are looking for is in the work you are avoiding.” We can fall into the trap of thinking that excellence is a natural talent when it is often a result of hard work and commitment along with the determination not to give up. Key Stage 4 students should take particular note.

The House Dodgeball competition that has taken place at lunchtimes this week has been very popular. The games go right back to when I was at school, though the rules are (thankfully) quite different than they were then. The students loved it, there was lots of talk about who won at the end of lunch. Congratulations to Mandela House who won the competition overall.

Just a reminder that we use ‘X’ (formally known as Twitter), to celebrate and promote events in school, you can follow us via [@HowdenSchool](https://twitter.com/HowdenSchool).

Senior leaders met with Governors on Tuesday to look at what used to be called Year 9 Options but will now be referred to as Guided Choice. Year 9 parents will receive a letter on our first day back after half term outlining the process and the relevant dates. What I would like to emphasise is that it will literally be “guided” with students at the centre of the decision and that having had all the relevant information and professional input, the decision is up to them.

It was good to walk around the school on Wednesday hearing staff “Read Aloud” in all the classrooms. The variety of books and topics really interested me as it did the students who were not only talking about it on the day itself but again on Thursday. It is something I always did with my boys every bedtime and even to this day, they still remember many of the books and stories they listened to. They are both now avid readers. When I have visited primary and junior schools, reading is always at the centre of what they do, and secondary schooling should be no different. Language is a very influential and powerful tool as it determines your future employment and gives you the skills of persuasion which in itself is crucial to life.

Almost all of our students work hard, turn up to school on time and wear the correct uniform so many thanks again to you for your support. Our rewards are still running at nine times more positives than sanctions which is very pleasing as I believe it recognising good behaviour. Just a final reminder that after half-term students are not allowed to wear hoodies, it has been part of the school uniform for some time now so all I am doing is emphasising and enforcing it. You’ll be pleased to know that our “on site, out of sight” mobile phone policy continues to be a success and is now just part of the school culture. Students continue to chat with each other at breaks and lunchtimes, something are rarely happened before. Again, a huge thanks for your support in making the new policy so successful; your child is benefiting from it.

Today we say farewell to Wendy, one of our cleaners, who has been a real stalwart of the school for many years. She will be greatly missed and we wish her a long and happy retirement with Paul and her beloved Old English Sheepdog, Louie. We are also saying goodbye to Miss Norman today and we wish her every success for the future and thank her for her dedication during her time with us.

Have a great half term.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Nixon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mr Jim Nixon
Headteacher

Future events:

- 19 February - School reopens
- 19 February – Y11 Mocks continue
- 29 February – TCAT Learner Conference