



HOWDEN SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr G Cannon

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Dear Parents / Carers

As we reach the end of another week of this unprecedented situation I, like many of you surely do, feel that I have lost count of the weeks since we had to close the school to most pupils. It is becoming increasingly difficult to remember what the school was like when it was bustling with pupils and members of staff. I, and the rest of the staff, very much miss seeing our fantastic young people every day and all the excitement and drama a building full of teenagers holds.

The major focus for me and my team in the last few weeks has been preparing the school for wider re-opening. Hopefully, many of you will be keeping yourselves updated through our social media pages and will be seeing some of the photographs of the measures we are putting in place. Social distancing notices have been appearing all over the school and the site team are working incredibly hard to make the site as safe as possible for returning staff and students. I certainly would never have expected to see the school with 'stay 2 metres apart signs' and all the soft furnishings locked away to reduce the spread of infection.

We will be sending out detailed information to parents of Year 10 students, which will allow them to see the extensive planning that we have put in place and hopefully answer many of their questions. This will enable them to make an informed decision regarding whether to allow their children to return to school in the coming weeks. The leadership team have worked very hard putting together these preparations and have consulted with our colleagues at TCAT, the trade unions and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. I would never have believed when I started my teaching career that I would have become such an expert on infection control!

As ever, I would like to thank all the parents and carers for their support with home-learning. Many of the staff are parents too and understand the challenges of working from home whilst supporting our children with tasks that we do not necessarily understand. The shout of 'mum / dad, can you help me with this' whilst trying to work from home will live with us all long after lockdown is over.

Some of the work students are submitting continues to amaze us. The twitter page has been filled this week with beautiful still-life photographs, Emojis, building designs, medieval siege weapons, delicious looking dishes and large-scale technology projects. Staff love seeing these images, as well as written tasks that are sent into us, so please keep them coming.

In what has been a challenging and at sometimes upsetting time in the news, I have been thinking of all the decisions that we are all having to make at the moment. Some of those decisions have been very difficult for me as a Headteacher to make, such as cancelling the Prom and Work Experience, which we know are so valuable for our young people. As parents, you are having to make difficult decisions about how to support your children and how to monitor whether your children are working hard, without making them feel unduly stressed. It is clear that this situation is going to continue for some time so it may be a good opportunity to consider how to ensure your child is preparing as best they can for their return to school, whenever that may be. It is important that students do not get out of the habit of learning. All these decisions, even those that are hard, have one clear focus and that is

caring for the wellbeing of the young people around us and our community. Nobody has all the right answers, but we can all try our best.

It has been a real pleasure this week to see so many of our Year 11s coming into school to pick up their leavers' hoodies. Many of them looked really happy and have adjusted well to these challenging circumstances at such a crucial time in their lives. Please look out for all the leavers' hoodies for the class of 2020 as you drive or walk around the area. We really hope we will be able to get them together again before too long to say goodbye to them properly as a group.

Please continue to communicate with us, we cannot guarantee to solve all issues exactly as you would like but we are always keen to do our best and are always willing to listen and discuss issues with parents and carers. We appreciate all the really kind messages from parents, and this is always a boost for our staff.

As is usual, I would like to end with a quote. This week it seemed fitting to turn to the words of Dr Martin Luther King, "We have all come on different ships, but we are in the same boat now." In the future we will always remember 2020 and what we did during this time.

Best wishes to you all and please keep safe, especially as some lockdown measures begin to be eased. We look forward to beginning to see more of our young people in school over the coming weeks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Cannon', written in a cursive style.

Mr G Cannon
Headteacher