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Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another incredibly busy and successful week at Howden School and one that perfectly demonstrates what makes our school community so special.

Yesterday, we welcomed an independent safeguarding reviewer into school to undertake a comprehensive audit of our safeguarding provision as part of a larger review across our trust schools. The review included interviews with students and staff, observations throughout the school day, scrutiny of policies and procedures, and a detailed exploration of a number of individual cases.

I am delighted to share that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The reviewer commented on how enormously impressed they were with the work taking place across the school and described our safeguarding culture as "fantastic". Particular strengths identified included the calm and positive culture across the school, the excellent knowledge staff have of students, including those with complex needs, and the strong systems and procedures we have in place to keep young people safe.

Perhaps the most pleasing feedback came directly from our students. They spoke positively about the support they receive and explained that our values and safeguarding culture are not simply posters on walls, but something that is lived and breathed every day. As I often say, our greatest strength is our relationships. Staff know our students exceptionally well, care deeply about them and work tirelessly to ensure every child feels safe, supported and valued.

Last night we also welcomed prospective students and parents to our Open Evening. Attendance was outstanding as families explored the school and attempted to identify the "traitor" hidden amongst our staff and students.

Our senior students were exceptional, speaking confidently to families about their experiences at Howden and what makes our school unique. We also had a significant number of student ambassadors supporting throughout the evening. They worked tirelessly, giving up their own time to help visitors, answer questions and showcase our school. The feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive and our students should be incredibly proud of themselves.

I would also like to thank every member of staff involved. As they always do, they went above and beyond to demonstrate the incredible opportunities available at Howden and the outstanding work that takes place every day. Events such as Open Evening remind me how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated staff team and such remarkable young people. Our values of Aspiration, Courtesy and Excellence underpin everything we do and were evident throughout the evening.

This week, a group of our Year 9 students visited the Amazon Robotics facility. Students took part in a variety of activities, gained an insight into cutting-edge technology and engineering, and learned more about apprenticeship opportunities and future career pathways. Visits such as these are invaluable in helping students understand the wide range of opportunities available to them in the future.

Looking ahead, many of our Year 10 students will be taking part in their Duke of Edinburgh expedition over this weekend and next. The expedition provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop resilience,

teamwork, independence and problem-solving skills. I would like to thank the staff who are giving up their own time to support these expeditions. Opportunities such as these simply would not happen without their dedication and willingness to go above and beyond for our students.

We have also enjoyed another excellent week of sporting success. Our U13 Girls Football Team secured a convincing victory against Ackworth in the National Cup and progress through to the next round of the competition. The Year 7 Boys Football Team also enjoyed success with an impressive National Cup victory away at Barlby. There were further wins for both our Year 8 and Year 10 teams in friendly fixtures against Beverley Grammar School. Whilst it wasn't the result the Year 9 team wanted, they represented the school with great effort and commitment throughout. We are incredibly proud of all students who represent Howden School and continue to demonstrate our values both on and off the field.

Next Wednesday, we host our annual Careers Fair, one of the highlights of our careers programme. The event will run from 3.00pm until 6.30pm and will include a wide range of colleges, sixth forms, apprenticeship providers, employers and training organisations.

Whilst the event is particularly relevant for students considering their post-16 options, all students are welcome and encouraged to attend. It is never too early to start thinking about future aspirations, pathways and opportunities. Whether students are considering A Levels, T Levels, apprenticeships, vocational qualifications or university in the future, events such as this help them understand the possibilities available and begin planning for success.

The Careers Fair is always extremely well attended, and I would strongly encourage families to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity. The event operates on a drop-in basis, meaning there is no need to book, and families are welcome to attend at any point between 3.00pm and 6.30pm. Whether you can stay for 15 minutes or the full evening, there will be plenty of opportunities to speak with exhibitors, gather information and explore the wide range of pathways available to our young people.

Following the launch assemblies last week, we are also looking forward to our Ecuador Information Evening on Tuesday 6th October at 6.00pm for Year 9 and Year 10 students and their families. The evening will provide further information about what promises to be another exceptional international opportunity. Following the success of our Peru expedition, we are excited to begin planning our next adventure. These experiences broaden horizons, build confidence and create memories that last a lifetime, whilst developing the skills and character that help shape positive futures.

Finally, we have received concerns from local residents regarding parking at the start and end of the school day, particularly on Derwent Road. We ask all parents and carers to park with consideration for our neighbours and local community, avoiding blocking driveways or parking in a manner that makes access difficult for residents. We greatly value our positive relationships with local residents and appreciate your support in helping us maintain them.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of the school. I wish you and your families a wonderful weekend.

Yours faithfully



Mrs L Tester
Headteacher