

12 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

As we go into half term, I wish to thank all parents and carers for your ongoing support and commitment over the last term. Students and staff alike have worked incredibly hard to stay motivated and ensure learning continues, as well as sustaining a sense of who we are as a College; I am very grateful for your support.

Survey Outcomes

We said last week that we wanted to compare student and parent outcomes of the initial surveys on remote learning, these are attached to this letter. We look to confirm what is going well and where we can continue to drive improvement. These outcomes provide really useful evidence for us to work from. Going forward I aim to collect more regular, shorter feedback to gain a 'pulse' on key or current issues. This would not replace the more formal surveys often attached to Parents' Evenings. I am keen to find ways to have more frequent constructive dialogue with parents, carers and students.

Parents Evenings

We were delighted that Year 8 Parents' Evening went well last week and would remind you that booking is now live for Year 7 Parents' Evening taking place on the 25 February (first week back after half-term). This is another great way for us to see and speak to parents and students about how they and their learning are progressing at this time.

How to Stay Motivated - A Workshop for Parents, Carers and Students (Mr Beezy)

Given that remote learning will continue for all students after half-term for at least two weeks, we have secured the services of [Mr Beezy](#), a motivational speaker and coach that we have worked with for a number of years. He has recorded a session for students on "*How to stay motivated - Equipping students with tools on how to stay motivated and on task*" which we will share with students at the beginning of Term 4.

In addition, we are pleased to be able to offer the opportunity for parents to join a workshop on **Wednesday 24 February**. The session will run from **18:00-19:00** and take place on Zoom. In this workshop, Mr Beezy will aim to reinforce some of the messages that he will share with students as well as strategies that we can all use to stay motivated at this time. If you would like to be emailed the link to this session, please register your details [here](#).



Distinguished School

Subject Based Visiting Speakers

On Thursday evening this week, staff and over 70 students from Year 11 and Year 8 attended a live event with the well-known performer and comedian Joe Lycett. The event was a live read through of an abridged version of Shakespeare's Macbeth, followed by a 60-minute Q&A with the actors.

After half-term we have also secured visiting author, Jenny MacLachlan, to speak to some Key Stage 3 students live and Paul Nova, performance poet, to speak to some Key Stage 4 students. These "visits" are penciled in for 10 March (Years 7 to 9) and 12 March (Years 10 to 11) and details will come out soon after the start of term.

We are also in the process of booking "visiting speakers" in other subjects for students to be able to enjoy an input that is varied and different from the routine of remote learning.

Virtual Clubs

We are delighted that after half-term some of our clubs will look to ensure an online offer to increase the variety and engagement for students together, these include: Duke of Edinburgh, Debating, Choir and Orchestra, The Vine and Maths Club. Of course, for the next two weeks there are also the fabulous opportunities included in Super-Curriculum. Club leaders will be in touch with students to communicate the arrangements.

Exam Consultation

The expected date for the release of the outcomes of the consultation on exams is 'in the week beginning 22 February'. Once that is received we will take time to reassess what it means for Heathfield. I will use the weekly slot I have on my timetable, Monday Period 5, to offer an hour of drop-ins on Microsoft Teams to Year 11 so that they can ask questions directly, hear the information that we have and the thinking behind the actions we will take. The Sixth Form team will also provide support to Year 13 as we map outcomes and destinations.

Planned Intervention

After half-term we will continue to support those students who find it difficult to complete work at home. We also have a schedule of intervention as part of our existing planned "catch-up" which should have started in Term 3 but will now run in Term 4. Information will follow in the first week back to contact those to whom this applies. In addition, we are able to use staffing capacity in English to offer additional support in school time, working on key literacy and grammar skills, particularly for some Key Stage 3 students. Again, information will come directly to you after half-term if this is applicable.

Media Headlines on "Solutions" for Schools

You may have seen a lot of media recently about the suggestions and solutions required to address a "catastrophe" of "lost learning". Without gratifying this with too much attention I would just clarify a few points. This may be the national picture; it is absolutely not the Heathfield picture.

We know and track what students are doing in remote learning. Our students are keeping up with their work, where they are struggling we are already intervening to support.

Our students have followed their normal curriculum and learnt everything they would have learnt in school - it has just been harder to do through remote methods. Every child is different and will require an individual solution to whatever their post-lockdown needs may be. One size fits all approaches suit very few. We know our students and we are assessing and planning to support and prevent students falling behind, both as we go along now and will continue to do on our return.

The government encourages schools to use a national research based Teaching and Learning Toolkit ([EEF](#)) that summarises evidence for a wide range of education interventions. Within this toolkit, summer schools and extended days are ranked as low impact and high cost.

Whilst not ruling anything out, we will be likely to focus our attention on the things that have proven high impact: high quality teaching and effective feedback in the classroom; reading and literacy skills; improving study and learning habits (metacognition). These are also relatively low cost.

Like many schools we already run intervention and “catch-up” in the school day and after-school activities as well as a suite of extra-curricular clubs. Last year we offered intervention in the holidays for those who wanted and needed it. This year we will again take time to understand what individual students need and offer the support to take them where they need to be.

We also know our students need time to be together informally, to have fun and laugh, enjoy sport, music and art, and to be outside. It will be interesting to see what resources are made available for supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in their communities. We hope the government and media headlines result in funded strategies that allow us to be able to plan a Heathfield bespoke approach with local partners that meet the needs of our students.

In the meantime, I hope that as families and as individuals you manage to enjoy some of those much-needed restorative activities over half term. Everyone has worked hard this term and deserves a rest from screens and work. Please do note the message from Sussex Police (attached) and ensure that all planned activities are organised safely.

Thank you to all parents and carers who have supported, encouraged and motivated our young people all term, and to the students who have worked hard and kept their spirits going. Hopefully there will be some good news at the start of the new term.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher