

15 November 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to all parents and carers for such a positive start to the term. We have had a number of events already that show students in their best light, giving cause for celebration. This letter provides some of the key points of interest.

Visit to Downing Street: Students and staff were recently invited to an engagement opportunity alongside Save the Children with the Child Poverty Ministerial Task Force, meeting the Secretary of State for Education and visiting Downing Street. This is important work we are keen to continue and our students were well respected for their contribution.

Apple Education Engagement: On Monday we hosted a visit from Apple Education to see how the use of technology works well at secondary level. Their feedback included *“It was brilliant to see how embedded the iPad is and how it has seamlessly become a part of what you do at Heathfield”*. As part of work going forward they want to use the expertise at College to work with other secondaries more widely, sharing best practice and exploring issues. This, and representation at the Apple Distinguished Schools Conference shows we remain at the cutting edge of how technology is used effectively to support learning.

Digital Health: Equally we all know there are important tools that protect young people online and ensure engagement with technology in all aspects of their lives is healthy. A focus for College this year is to support both students and families to be aware of risks and how positive use can enhance well-being. Some simple strategies include:

- Check the age limits of Apps and platforms, they are there for a reason. Monitoring your child’s use of social media use: https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page_id=2377545
- Filtering internet use using parental controls: <https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Parental-Controls-booklet-2022.pdf>
- Checking screen and device pick-up time: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/108806>
- Remember not everything you see or hear on the internet is true. Talk with young people about questioning what they view and how to look at other sources to validate.
- Do they know how to report negative things online? How can they make their online space positive? How to use block and mute to curate their own space.

Year13 Interview Day: This week we welcomed employers and visitors from a wide field of working backgrounds into College. They took time from busy working lives to interview all Year 13 students, providing a professional interview experience and feedback. More details will follow next week but we are very grateful to all local partners involved.



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Headteacher: Ms Caroline Barlow B.A. (Hons)

Outcomes following critical incident:

I can now share the outcomes that followed events of 4 October 2024 as they currently stand. That morning an adult, a juvenile and two students of the school forced entry to the school site with aggressive intent, resulting in the school being placed into lockdown. The procedures and systems at that time were followed professionally, students and staff followed instructions impeccably and all remained safe and secure at all times, whilst understandably anxious. I have nothing but praise and gratitude for all involved.

Myself and other external agencies have been working closely to secure the necessary outcome. The two young people who were members of the school, have both been provided with education elsewhere and will not return to College. The juvenile involved has appeared before police panel and we have been informed has received a criminal conviction. The police and ESCC central safeguarding teams have been excellent in their support and understood our need to ensure against any future risks.

Student and Staff Support: We maximised access to educational psychologists and all available advice to provide care and support that staff and students required; this is ongoing. As a result, the community has shown emotional resilience that is a testament to the quality of all involved and the support from families. It is appreciated.

College Site: We are reviewing site security and access. The feedback so far has been that we have all reasonable measures in place but I have requested a site inspection to be sure, which will take place in the next two weeks.

The College Site Opening Times: Gates will open at 8:00am for student access to the site. The gates at the rear of the College will close at 8:30am and the front of the College at 8:35am. All arrivals after that time need to be via the pedestrian gate at the front of the College, only accessible parking is available on the school grounds.

Access to the school during the daytime is by appointment or arrangement **only**. Please email or telephone your pastoral manager or the person you want to speak to in the first instance. It is not guaranteed that they will be able to get back to you immediately as they may be dealing with other situations. Arriving at school to see staff without an appointment or prior discussion is likely to result in disappointment.

Evening Events and Lettings: Evening events at the College will be organised on a case-by-case basis depending on numbers attending and scale of event, details will be made clear in the letter for any particular event. We continue to work alongside Playsport to manage the risk in opening to lettings and how we manage this access to the site in the most pragmatic but secure way. We are also looking at how we can adapt the site and access to maximise opportunities for the community. This is part of an ongoing discussion.

Thank you as always, to all, for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher

DIARY DATES

Thursday 21 November 2024	Year 11 Subject Feedback Evening	On-site
Friday 22 November 2024	Heathfield Christmas Lights (HCC students involved)	Heathfield Fire Station
Tuesday 26 November 2024	Broadbridges Uniform Sale	Link Hall
Wednesday 27 November 2024	Spanish Wider Curriculum Day (Spanish students only)	
Friday 29 November & Monday 2 December 2024	INSET Days	
Thursday 5 November & Friday 6 November	A Christmas Carol College Production	