



23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Although it already seems a little while ago, I hope that our students and their families had a very enjoyable summer holiday and that our students have enjoyed their return to school this term. Clearly, the start of the term has been overshadowed by national events and I would like to pay tribute to the thoughtfulness and maturity of our students as they have shown their appreciation for the service of Queen Elizabeth and paid their respects in different ways in a very mature manner. We are particularly proud of Grace Wheeler, one of our Sixth Form Student Leadership Team, who spent last week in London supporting the Lying-In-State of the Queen as part of her work for The Scout Association.

#### **Summer Break**

The summer break is always a chance for developments to take place in school which time and space do not allow during term-time. Key developments this summer included the installation of fantastic 'Community' and 'Well-Being' Wall Art displays in the Break-Out Space and outside the Dining Hall, the launch of the new school website ([Welcome to Helsby High School](#)) and the running of a Summer School in conjunction with the Liverpool FC Foundation to support a group of Year 6 students on their transition to us this September.

As we welcome new students who have started at Helsby this term, particularly our new Year 7 cohort who have made such a positive start to their time at school, some of last year's students have now moved on to new chapters in their lives. To find out about their successes in this summer's examinations, please visit our website ([Key Headline Data - Helsby High School](#)) and also the Results Day posts on our Twitter and Facebook pages (which can be accessed via our school website).

#### **Start of Term**

Thank you for your support in ensuring that the new school year has started well for our students, with particular thanks for your support in ensuring that students have had the correct uniform and equipment, and hence the correct mindset, as they begin 2022-23. This is particularly important this year after all the disruption to routines which have been experienced over the last 2+ years during the pandemic.

#### **Attendance**

I'm sure parents will be aware of the government's national campaign to promote school attendance this Autumn. And with good reason: it has been shown that nothing impacts more on students' success at school than the simple act of attending regularly.

Over the last two weeks the school has communicated with around a thousand parents to recognise the 100% school attendance that their son or daughter has achieved at the start of the new school term. This is a pleasure to do, and we look forward to it happening more often as we work towards our whole-school attendance target for the year of 96%. We will be recognising both high and improved attendance throughout the year and wish to thank our parents for their role in supporting this. Our key mantra, as shared with our students, is 'Attend regularly, Attend punctually, Attend ready to learn, Attend to succeed'. Our new, revised Attendance Policy will also shortly be available via our school website.

### **Enrichment Programme**

We have launched a new and exciting enrichment programme for this academic year. Staff have offered their time and skills to provide a wide range of varied activities covering sport, performing arts, language and fantasy games. The Learning Resource Centre (Library) also offers a space where students can go to study, read or take part in literacy and social activities. We would like every student to participate in at least one activity, as we know that enrichment participation can do so much to develop character and to add to students' positive experiences of school life. For these reasons, there is no charge for any activity (apart from the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme for Year 9) and sessions take place either after-school or during the school breaktimes. Please go to the 'enrichment' section of the school website ([Enrichment - Helsby High School](#)) to see the programme of activities available for each year group. There is a poster in every form room and form tutors will match students with an activity and will encourage their participation.

### **Transport Issues**

Some of our parents/carers in Frodsham will be aware of the issues caused by the Local Authority's use of a public service bus, which inevitably has unpredictable capacity when it reaches the school, to transport a large number of students to Frodsham, Sutton Weaver and Runcorn. We continue to await a long-term solution to this issue.

The location of the school, on a busy main road, is unusual and hence thank you to parents for the thoughtfulness which will be necessary in the vicinity of the school at the start and end of the school day. Please note that the car-park of the Netherton Hall in Frodsham is private property and should not be used to drop students off in the morning or to pick them up at the end of the day.

### **Key Dates This Half-Term**

Further details will be provided to parents via letter and/or our website and social media sites regarding the forthcoming future events:

- Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September – Year 11 Information Evening (6-7.30pm)
- Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September – Sixth Form Open Evening (5.30-7.30pm)
- Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September – Year 13 Information Evening (6pm, online)
- Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> & Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October – Year 6 Open Evenings (5.30-7.30pm)
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October – Form Tutor Consultation Evening (4.30-7.30pm, online)

### **2023-24 Term Dates**

Please note that we still await Local Authority confirmation of term dates for the 2023-24 academic year. These will be published on our website as soon as they are available.

## **Tom Bick**

Amongst all the usual excitement in school at the beginning of September, there has also been huge sadness following the tragic passing away of one of our students, Tom Bick, during the summer holiday.

Tom joined the school from Helsby Hillside Primary in September 2019 and his kindness, his care for others and his sense of fun meant that he instantly became popular with his classmates and his teachers. Sadly, the first Covid lockdown came along halfway through his first year at High School, but he continued to enjoy learning at home with his family. Maths was his favourite subject.

Sadly, not long after returning to school at the start of Year 8 in September 2020, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour, which he then fought valiantly for nearly two years. Although inevitably he wasn't always able to come to school or go into lessons, he continued to attend whenever he could. When he did, despite all that he was going through, he continued to care more about other people than he did himself and his wonderful personality and sense of humour lit up whichever room he was in, most often the Learning Support Centre. His dancing, his wise counsel for staff on how should they look after their puppies (Tom loved dogs) and his love of Pringles will all be very fondly remembered.

Very sadly, Tom passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> August and his funeral took place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September. I will be talking to students about Tom in assemblies next week and I know that all parents would want to extend their deepest sympathy to Tom's family and friends as they go through this saddest of times.

Best wishes,

Martin Hill  
Headteacher