



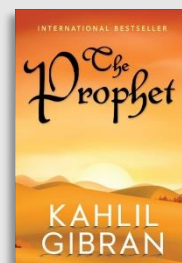
Dear all,

Welcome back to school!

I hope you had a great half term break and were able to spend some quality time together. This week we have enjoyed the first day of meteorological spring. The days are getting longer and dawn comes a little earlier each day. I love this time of year. When I go for a run in the very early mornings, I especially enjoy the moment when the sun comes up and the day gets going. It's a moment when I make a mental list of the things that I am grateful for and think of the things I am looking forward to that day. Practising mindfulness, a growth mindset and a positive attitude is great for our mental health and wellbeing and makes a difference to all of those around us too. All ships rise with the tide and starting off the day with the intention of it being a good one makes a huge difference to each of us and to our children.

Family life is such an important part of who and what we are. Our families are the soil that our children grow in and most often where we develop our beliefs, values, behaviours and attitudes. I have always been a fan of the book 'The Prophet' published in 1923 by Kahlil Gibran. I particularly like the passage that speaks about children and parenting:

*'Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.'*



I think that in a rapidly changing world with so many amazing opportunities, exciting adventures but also some significant challenges, we can sometimes fear for our children's future of yet this piece of writing, now 100 years old, fills me with so much optimism and hope because it tells me that when children grow in a loving and caring environment with positive role models and influences they learn to be the best version of themselves and to thrive, be fulfilled and happy. It tells us what kind of adults our children need us to be. I think it's humbling and inspiring all at the same time.

In this newsletter, there are a lot of aspects of our school to read about and enjoy. For example, you will read all about our year 7 trip to Menai at the end of the last half term and also the Ski trip to Italy. Enriching and regarding experiences for our children delivered by caring and dedicated staff. You will read about sport, about our library and our 'My Curriculum' programme. There are a couple of articles that I'd like to signpost for you. The first regarding the significant improvements we've made to our toilets and the second, some extra information for you to digest about vaping. You will also read about how our school plays a lead role in training and developing the teachers and leaders of the future and our success in these aspects of our profession.

I'm so proud of our school and community and especially our children. Thank you for the support you offer, for your trust in us and thank you for the positive, kind and respectful relationships that so many of you have helped grow.

Warm regards

Nigel Bielby
Executive Headteacher



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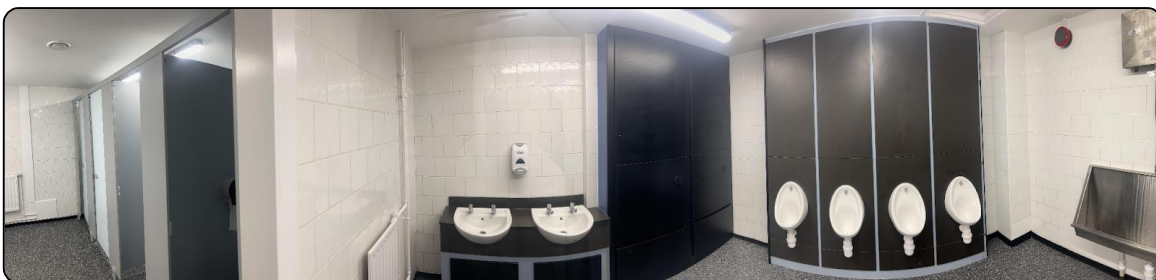


Toilets

Keeping children safe is one of the regular mantras that we use when considering how to act and how to give our children access to a positive day at school. Toilets have been a key feature of the feedback that we have received from our staff, children and their families and improving our toilets has been a key focus for us.

You have provided some very clear messages about toilet access and our children have been great in telling us about the kinds of things that would make them feel safer and more secure when going to the loo. In response to this we are now in the final part of the first phase of improving the situation regarding toilets.

Firstly, we have invested a considerable sum of money in creating newly refurbished and bigger toilet facilities for Upper School Girls and Upper School Boys. Previously, girls and boys toilets were next door to each other separated by walls. By knocking these walls through we have created one larger main toilet space for Upper School Girls and one for Upper School Boys. The boys and girls facilities are in different parts of the school which some of the students have said makes them feel more comfortable when they need to use the toilet. At the request of some of the girls, the Upper School Girls toilet will soon have some mirrors fixed to the walls and we are in the process of ordering dispenser units for free sanitary items. The following photos give you something of an idea of what the toilet facilities look like.



The investment in toilets is not confined to the Upper School. Lower school children now have their own toilet spaces that are separate from the older children. This was a key concern raised by many of you and also the younger children. The refurbishment of the toilets for the Lower School Girls is almost complete and we will be adding in dispenser units for free sanitary items very soon. They already have mirrors! The refurbishment of the Lower School Boys toilet, the last part of this phase, will very soon be underway. This final piece of work involves removing walls and a considerable amount of replanning but we plan to have this completed as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience and apologies for the slight disruption whilst we complete this important work.

Children often feel safer when there is an adult present so in addition to building work, we also have a tighter duty rota for toilet supervision. This is in place to help children feel safe in going to the loo and to ensure that we do not have large groups of children using the toilets as social spaces. Managing the safe access to toilets at break and lunch as well as between lessons is a fine balance and our intention is that by deploying volunteer staff to supervise safe access to the toilet, our children will no longer feel that they should avoid going to the loo which is not good for their health and wellbeing.

I would like all families to be reminded that during lesson time, children are allowed to request that they can go to the loo. However, we do our very best to encourage children to go to the toilet between lessons and at break and lunch rather than during lessons. We ask staff to make a sensitive and objective judgement about allowing access to the toilet and when children do go, staff are required to log the time a child left the lesson, when they returned and which toilets they used. This is so we can keep the children safe, we know where they are and also helps us to check on which children are making very regular requests. It perhaps comes as no surprise to learn that some students take advantage of this and in the fairly recent past there have been incidents of vandalism, graffiti and vaping in toilets during lessons.



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Keeping a record of who goes to the loo during lessons therefore helps us manage behaviour and to ensure that groups of children are not meeting up in the toilets or using them as social spaces. Finally, sometimes there are occasions when we have to lock a toilet but we always ensure that there are enough toilets open for children to use and that these toilets are safely and appropriately monitored and supervised.



Safe access to the toilet is a very important part of a day at school. We have developed all of these strategies and actions to protect our children's dignity with regard to this very basic need. I know that the toilets have been the topic of much discussion on the various social media groups so I hope that this extended article helps to give you a clear picture of how we are addressing this concern.

Thank you for your support
Nigel

Mobile Phone Use

The effects of mobiles phones and other technology at school is a hotly debated topic in many countries. Some advocate for a complete ban to limit distractions, while others suggest using technology as a teaching tool.



There is a growing body of evidence to show that mobile phone use is linked with lower academic achievement, a decrease in wellbeing and can often facilitate bullying in schools. At HCCS we are keeping a close eye on the research evidence, and what we experience here in school, as we review our approach to helping our young people avoid distractions and concentrate on their learning.

The psychological literature might shed light on the potential mechanisms as to why mobile phones and other technology in school might affect student performance. This literature finds multitasking is detrimental to learning and task execution. Many recent experimental papers present evidence that mobile phone use while executing another task decreases learning and task completion.

An academic journal article recently summarised that screen time is associated with lower psychological well-being, including less curiosity, lower self-control, more distractibility, more difficulty making friends, less emotional stability, being more difficult to care for, and inability to finish tasks.

A recent comparative study conducted in two regions in Spain looked at the impact of banning mobile phones in schools. The researchers found that students' academic performance improved, and there was a decrease in incidences of bullying.

In Norway, phones in schools were identified as reducing academic achievement and increasing bullying.

As a school we are taking this into account as we look for ways to reduce anxiety, improve mental health, improve outcomes, and focus on learning. We are currently considering the practical implications of unplugging our young people from social media whilst in school.



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Vaping

Across our community, in our families and in our school, we have a shared duty to keep our children as safe as possible. This is a responsibility we take seriously here as I am sure you do at home. Across the country, teen vaping has become a major point of concern. I have written about this issue before and I know that we are all concerned about the unknown health impacts of this habit and the addictive nature of nicotine. We have also been made aware that some vapes may contain THC, the psychoactive substance found in cannabis, illegal in the UK



Cheshire East have begun working on a plan to help support schools with this issue.

- The plan intends to
1. Develop a local authority wide policy view re. vaping in schools,
 2. Help to develop policies and operation management of vaping,
 3. Provide accurate facts and information about vaping,
 4. Give young people accurate and age-appropriate information
 5. Identify resources which can be used by young people to find out more information,
 6. Identify services who can provide additional support for schools, small groups or individuals

I have joined the group who are looking at this plan and will fully engage with it as it rolls forwards. In the meantime we continue to work very hard to tackle vaping in school. Most of the times that we catch children vaping, we find that they are bringing their own vape into school. The vape units are small and discreet and easily hidden in bags and clothing. Can I again reach out to all families to ask some very hard questions about whether their child is vaping and where they are buying them from.

There is a minimum age of sale for vaping products in the UK. It is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to anyone under 18 or for adults to buy them on behalf of under-18s. If you believe that your child is buying nicotine vapes or tobacco products from a retailer I would encourage you to report this using the following link Reporting to Trading Standards - Citizens Advice

I have taken the liberty of providing you with some links to websites that I have found useful in understanding the vaping issue:

- [🔗 Teen Vaping: What You Need to Know](#)
- [🔗 How to help your child quit vaping.](#)
- [🔗 'I've lost my children to vaping': the tragic stories behind the soaring rates of youth addiction](#)
- [🔗 Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults .](#)

Clearly vaping or smoking is not allowed by staff or students anywhere on our site sanctions are applied if they are caught. Please help us do everything we can to continue to keep our children safe and well.

Thanks
Nigel



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Year 8 parent forum

We held a forum for Year 8 parents at the end of last half term. It was a great opportunity to sit and work together with parents face to face. We asked for feedback in specific areas. Please click the image to see the feedback.

A main suggested way forward to help tackle some of the concerns raised (mostly with a pattern of more effective communication for parents) was for there to be termly or half termly year group specific newsletters so that parents have an idea of upcoming opportunities or commitments for their children (and themselves, e.g. parents' evenings). This is something we are hoping to implement in the near future. We will update you in the next newsletter on some of the other comments above. Thank you so much to all who attended; to those who contributed via email or through passing on their comments to those that attended. If you would like to add any comments to these views from parents, please email any comments to office@hccs.info.

	What is going well	What could be better
The quality of education both inside and outside of the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Classroom SEN support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More info/feedback about how kids are doing (more narrative on reports) Don't assume we know about... (e.g. breakdown of sets - what do they mean?) 6th form relationship
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising need to address issue with toilets (disturbances) Start on mobile phone school plans to meet school lockers to store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer understanding for parents on process of behaviour Clarity re: academic reporting, i.e. what underpins the categories? This would improve parents' ability to understand progress and how we can support our kids, e.g. variable defined as... Structure of classes, sets, etc. More emphasis on peers role modelling. There are more important things.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter (although a long) Teachers really accommodating when contact is established Videos from teachers (via library during lockdown) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More communication about learning including better information on website (more specific, key dates, contact details) Parents invited to specific events (e.g. more than a week before) As replies to emails, multiple times (parents) follow ups - been cut up by the office, not responded to - other than holding Extra support in lessons (especially, some don't run / cancelled) - Tutors Support contact (community/governance council, profile of and involvement support council) More parental involvement (e.g. PTA like at primary school) Better communicate the behaviour/success (true and real)
Ideas for the lower school to upper school transition process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memberbuddy process linked to upper school Career focused guidance - joining the skills between curriculum + future Parents involved in the process, more opportunities a graduation celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate success - exhibition to showcase work, all children submit something Achievements outside of school - important to celebrate basic success



Year 7, 8 and 9 mid year assessments

Next week year 7, 8 and 9 will be assessed in the core subjects (**English, Maths and Science**), as part of our tracking of student progress. Alongside regular reading age assessments, this gives us useful information about how they are developing their reading, literacy and mathematical skills, which are vital for them to access all parts of the curriculum.



We will assess them again in the summer term in June, so that we have a mid year and end of year benchmark of how students are progressing.

As well as giving us a good picture of where students need intervention, students will become more familiar with sitting formal assessments as they head towards becoming GCSE ready. These assessments will be covering work they have done so far this year, and students will find additional information on their Google Classroom.

Year 12 UCAS Exhibition

On Tuesday 28th of February our Year 12 students visited the UCAS Exhibition in Manchester. This was held at the Manchester Convention Centre. The exhibition provided students with an opportunity to visit over a hundred universities as well as a wide range of employers and apprenticeship opportunities. The exhibition has developed over recent years to meet the needs of the students in the changing climate with a wider range of choices than ever before. The students behaved themselves impeccably and really made the most of the opportunity taking full advantage of all that was on offer.



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My Curriculum

My Curriculum has just finished its third rotation and lots of different learning has taken place. Y7 have reflected on themselves in Wellbeing. Y8 have been improving on their team working skills by doing presentations and building balloon armchairs in Life Skills. Y9 worked with Future Pathways considering their options and career pathways. Y10 examined the link of spirituality and music and Y11 had a talk from our guest speaker from Altrincham AFC about mental health and well being.

	Parent's Holiday Homework
Year 7	Questions to discuss: What would be your "perfect" day? What would you do in your "perfect" 24 hours & who would you share it with?
Year 8	Questions to discuss: What are 3 main things required for good team work? What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to being a good team-worker?
Year 9	Questions to discuss: What different types of taxes do people have to pay? What do our taxes provide for us?
Year 10	Questions to discuss: What is your favourite song that has links to spirituality? Do you have a favourite song for different moments? (e.g. a song to celebrate, a song for friendship...)
Year 11	News topic to discuss: BBC reporter & her slave owning family history Click on the link and learn about the ties between Britain & Slavery in the 18th century. How should Britain respond to its links with the slave trade? Britain was the first country in the World to abolish slavery but could/ should it be doing more to redress its slave owning history? Mental Welfare: How can you respond and support yourself when life feels pressured?

In the next half term, tutors will take over the teaching in their tutor groups from March to April, year groups will be studying these themes.

	New Themes in March
Year 7	Relationship & Sex Education:
Year 8	Health & Wellbeing
Year 9	Life Skills
Year 10	Future Pathways: Preparing for your Work Experience Week
Year 11	Spirituality



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'Careers Corner'

National Careers Week w/b March 6th 2023

Here's the place to get all your classic Careers Week resources.

NCW One Stop Shop (ncw2020.co.uk)

Find the latest apprenticeship information and advice for parents, supported by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Ideal to put on your websites for Parent Information.

Apprenticeships Parent Packs

The National Literacy Trust has created a series of activities to inspire pupils aged 5 to 18 to explore future career paths and opportunities, and the key skills needed.

National Careers Week 2023 | National Literacy Trust

Career activity handbooks | National Literacy Trust 'Career We Go';

To celebrate, on Monday 6 March, BBC Bitesize will be posting an online, fun and interactive workshop called 'Career We Go' for 13 to 16 year-olds and presented by teacher, Mr P.

National Careers Week 2023 - BBC Bitesize

There are also lots of videos on The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge website that can be used as starters or plenaries.

Resources - The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge

Take a closer look at selected subjects and issues, with a selection of videos, guides and advice from iCould.

Explore careers - icould



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Year 10 Work experience March 20-24th 2023

Thank you to all parents who have arranged placements and completed application forms for Year 10 work experience. Please return any outstanding forms by Wednesday 8th March. Anyone requiring forms can download them from the school website.

Mr Baker
Work experience Co-ordinator



Learning Resource Centre News



Blind Date with a Book

This half term students have had a chance to interact with our 'Blind Date with a Book' display which has proven extremely popular! Various books in the LRC have been wrapped with clues written on the front. Students may pick a book that matches their mood based on the clues, unwrap it, and go on a date with it by reading it. We hope this encourages pupils to read outside of their comfort zone, not to judge a book by its cover or to try a new genre.

Recommended Romantic Reads for March



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What's going on in the training centre?

CHESHIRE EAST SCITT



Since we first began our teacher training programme with School Direct in 2014 and then moved on to pioneer the SCITT programme we have trained a total of 247 new teachers. Many of these have now gone on to promoted roles and some are now mentoring trainees themselves. Last year, we achieved 100% employment for our 32 SCITT trainees and this year half of our cohort have already secured jobs for September.

If you are interested in training to teach or know someone who is interested, please have a look at our website <https://www.cheshireeastscitt.org/> and contact us to find out more at getintoteaching@hccs.info You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram as Cheshire East SCITT. We run virtual information evenings and "Back to School" experiences for anyone who is interested.

In addition to this have the privilege of continuing to work with many of our trainees during their first two years as Early Career Teachers (ECTs) alongside other ECTs in Cheshire East as we deliver the Early Career Framework training programme for Best Practice through the Cheshire Teaching School Hub.

This golden thread of training continues as we deliver National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) in Leading Teacher Development and Senior Leadership. We have also started to offer training for Teaching Assistants and our first course took place this month. Watch this space for more training courses coming soon. **Lorraine Mellish (SCITT Director)**

Catering Food Service



In the past few weeks we have been delighted to welcome Claudia Webb back to the Sodexo team as our catering manager. Claudia is very keen to improve all aspects of our food provision at HCCS and to work with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that we have a healthy, cost effective and time efficient food service at all of our catering outlets. Over the past few weeks we have been made aware of concerns raised on parent social media groups about the range and volume of food that is available for pupils and students at school. We also had the opportunity to discuss this at our recent Year 8 parent forum.

As a way of moving forward and ensuring that we can listen to and respond to your feedback about catering provision, we would like to ensure that the following two things happen.

- Firstly, please use school based communication channels to raise your concerns or feedback about food provision. The only way we can fully respond to your feedback is if you tell us directly. Wide ranging debates and comment threads on social media
- are often full of misinformation, which causes unnecessary confusion, and does not actually help us to improve things.
- Secondly, as a useful way of helping you to see what is actually on sale in the restaurant every day, rather than hearing it through a range of sources, Claudia and her team will be regularly taking 'before and after' pictures of the food counters to show you the range of options available and the true picture of the food that is left towards the end of the lunch service.

In addition to this, we will be moving to a fully plated food service in the restaurant from 20th March. This will mean a significant reduction in hand held disposable packaging, which will both reduce litter around the school site and also represent a more environmentally friendly way of feeding the students. Over the next two weeks, we will be running some training sessions with our students to ensure they all understand how this system will work and how they have a key part to play in ensuring that it works well by clearing their tables after eating.

We hope that you will see a significant change in the range and quality of the food service over the next few weeks and appreciate your support in communicating your views in the right way.



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Menai

Before the half term break, our Year 7 students had an exciting five day trip to the Conwy Centre Anglesey. Accompanied by an experienced staff team, the 195 students showed great enthusiasm for the range of activities and challenges that they encountered. Teamwork was a key theme with many examples of students supporting each other and showing great resilience. They have taken part in many activities such as: mountain biking, high/low ropes, canoeing, via ferrata and bushcraft. They also visited Beaumaris where they carried out a mock trial in the courthouse; explored the rooms of the old jail; discovered the history of the church and galloped over the drawbridge at the castle. The Beaumaris residents were quick to commend the students for their great behaviour and politeness. If this wasn't enough, the students showed off their dance moves at the Halloween disco on Thursday evening which was great fun. Dancing with enthusiasm, many students and staff came dressed up as their favourite scary and ghoulish characters. Check out Twitter for the latest pictures and videos.



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Ski Trip 2023

During the half term holidays 40 students across Year 8-10 enjoyed a wonderful week in Sestriere. It is clear our HCCS ski community is a fun, diverse and determined cohort. It felt amazing to see our HCCS students being kind, showing team work and demonstrating a willingness to improve.

Across our group of staff and students, there were a range of ski experience levels. Yet progress for all was clear after 30 hours of ski school. Throughout the week, we were supported by our instructors; Vitoria, Luca, Allesandro and Lorenzo. They remarked on how quick students acted on their feedback and how polite they were. Thank you to all those students involved who ensured that they got the reputation they deserve as phenomenal ambassadors for our school.

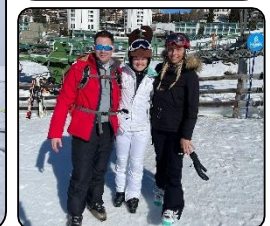
I am so proud of how our students conducted themselves on the tour. They are a beacon of how excellent students at HCCS are. Throughout the week, there had been a clear commitment to setting themselves high expectations. There was a clear focus on developing skills, independence and character.

Everyone involved showed a commitment to learning and improving. This was particularly evident for some of our new skiers who found it really challenging at first but persevered and realised that they can do it! It is an excellent example of seeing the rewards from being resilient and believing that you can do it! It has been a real privilege to spend the week together. I hope that students will continue to be brave, adventurous and confident. It is amazing to see the impact of stepping out of your comfort zone to reach potential.



I hope a love of skiing will continue to grow for everyone involved!

Mrs Anderson, Miss Hughes, Mr Pirie & Ms Warren



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Bootcamp in the Sunshine

In PE over the last few weeks we have been taking part in many different methods of training. Bootcamp in the sunshine was a big hit with many of the classes, working out in the sunshine to music! "It's given us a real lift in energy and made us feel really good".



Rachel in 11AC at Sale Sharks Rugby attending a inclusivity session on Sunday - Rachel had a fabulous time and she even made their Facebook page

"We want everyone to feel like they have the opportunity to play rugby, we're a one team club and want everyone to feel part of this fearless family. The sport has a number of key features such as building

District Cross Country Competition

Congratulations to Jake Wilson winning the district cross country competition at Winsford. Running on a poor track he managed to see off stiff competition and will now represent Cheshire at the inter counties in Nottingham. Jake has also qualified for a scholarship to the United States to pursue his education alongside his dream of running at the Olympics later this year. Well done Jake



Cheshire Schools Cross Country Championships

On Saturday 4th February athletes from HCCS attended the Cheshire Schools Cross Country Champs at Knights Grange Sports Complex in Winsford. The weather was in our favour and Jake Wilson from our year 13, won the Senior boys race and Isobel Ashcroft came 4th. We then also had Sofia in our year 10 who came 7th in the Intermediate girls race. All athletes were supported by Mr Thomas on the day. A Successful day for HCCS cross country athletes. Well done Team.



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Sports Leaders

Our Sports Leaders have started the year off with a fantastic level of commitment and dedication into delivering their sessions. These students not only have to lead their own individual session, they help and lead in after school Primary Events and with our very own Year 7's every Friday. It is such a pleasure to observe the students when leading and see their confidence grow and grow. Very proud of all of their efforts, Well done Sports Leaders.



This term brings on the new challenge of planning and running their own event, which I am sure will exceed all expectations. Here are a few photos of what the students have been up to.

Mrs Mee

Year 7 Football Tournament

Congratulations to the Year 7 football team, who played in a tournament at Alsager competing against Saving to A&B teams and also Alsager A&B teams. The boys showed tremendous spirit, great work ethic and went unbeaten against all teams. Played 4, won 2 and drew 2. This was a brilliant evening, watching players work incredibly hard for one another!! #we-only-do-positive



Sports Captains (Year 7 and 8) and Sports Ambassador (Year 9) application form

We are looking to recruit Active Leaders who will support our school in our sporting activities and events by:

- Understanding the needs of getting people active and attending clubs
- Helping to plan sessions and activities that will appeal to others
- Helping to motivate others to engage in physical activity
- Demonstrate leadership skills through attending meetings and events.

If successful in your application you will join the Leadership pathway, which includes developing your leadership skills, receiving a house badge and having priority for events that the PE department organise.

If you would like to apply to be a Leader/ sports captain please complete the document and hand it in on the Google Classroom. If you have any questions please come to the Girls PE office to see Mrs Mee.



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Thank you, from all of us at HCCS & HC6F