



NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School & 6th Form College

Issue: 161 Date: 3rd February 2023



Dear all,

Here at HCCS and Sixth Form College, we have just completed week 19 and are exactly halfway through the school year. It's astonishing to think back to the summer and to see how far our children have come in the last few months and also to look forward to the next half year.

Our children in years 11 and 13 are now entering the final phase of the run into the external examination season. Some have already started with modular assessments in some of our vocational and technical qualifications. We had the first trial exam season back in November and the final trials start in just two weeks' time. These trial examinations are incredibly meaningful and thorough detailed preparation is needed by every student.

Students who make the effort to engage in their own independent, additional learning focused on areas of weakness and who consistently deliver at least two hours of revision each day will always reap the rewards of their personal commitment. It's important to be clear that in every year there is not time in the curriculum for all revision to be done in lessons and at school. Our children need their families fully behind them and giving the right level of support and encouragement to put in these crucial hours of exam practice and independent learning.



The planning and preparation for the move to year 9 and into Upper School for our year 8 children will start in the coming weeks and months. You will be hearing more about this in the second half of the spring term from the Director of Lower School, Ms Collison and her team. Upper School, (years 9 to 11), led by Ms Warren as Director of Upper School, is a key point of transition for our children with an increased focus on progress and attainment and being 'examination ready'. There is also an increased emphasis on embedding the very best learning behaviours and personal attitudes that reflect their age. Your support and encouragement will be very much needed as our children grow into their early and mid teenage years. Exciting times!

In the Upper School, our year 9 children have now made their choices in terms of examination courses that they will study up to the end of year 11. How proud we are of this achievement! For many children this could well be the first 'life' decision that they have made and although these are ultimately independent choices, I'd like to thank families and staff for helping and guiding our children over the last couple of months. As we progress through year 9, many children will have their first taste of the kinds of subject content and tasks that they will face in years 10 and 11. Early preparation is everything and ensuring we talk to our children about the expectations we have around working hard, being on time and behaving well is critical to their success. Establishing these expectations and setting clear boundaries gives the children clear messages and a clear structure so that they thrive, grow and learn to be the best version of themselves.

Very soon, we will start our transition programme for year 6 children. A new intake of children from across our community to be welcomed into our growing family. The Lower School team who lead on transition will be reaching out to our primary schools and ensuring that all of the children who come to us have the best possible start in September. It is always exciting to see these new faces in school and to see them settling into their lives here. The transition team as well as the Lower School Hub are experts in their field and provide the right balance of nurture and challenge so that our children can make this adjustment.

Please enjoy this newsletter and take some time to reflect on the successes of your own children as well as reflect on the challenges of growing up and how we can all work together as adults to create a safe, inclusive and welcoming community where everyone is valued and fulfilled.

Warm regards

Nigel Bielby
Executive Headteacher



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Preparing Learners for a Changing World



Bullying

Two weeks ago I met with a group of about 15 students from years 10 and 11. The topic of conversation was around a number of things but we soon focused on bullying and associated behaviours. The students in the meeting were not being accused of being involved in bullying but during the conversation, we talked a lot about this topic. They were aware of bullying being increasingly talked about in the news, workplaces, schools, the community, homes and families. They all collectively agreed that bullying was hurtful, harmful and fundamentally wrong but when I asked about what bullying actually was, they couldn't give a definite or consistent answer. One of them went on to say that bullying 'could be almost anything... it depends who you are talking to and it means different things to different people'. The group also said that what some people thought of as bullying, they saw as 'banter' between individuals and groups. 'Banter', they said, could be 'anything that people and mates say or do in a way that's just for a laugh'. They didn't link banter to behaviours that are negative or harmful, although they did say that this depended on the situation and who's involved.



I am very concerned by this view. Banter is a phrase that we increasingly hear being used to describe a range of inappropriate behaviours. Worryingly it is often seen by the children as a way of excusing their own potentially harmful or hurtful behaviour. Unfortunately, it saddens me to say that a very small part of our parent body feels the same way.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance define bullying as 'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online'.

They go on to talk about the importance of distinguishing bullying from other kinds of harmful behaviour. For instance, calling someone a name or pushing someone once, being rude or having an argument or altercation with someone is not bullying. Of course, these behaviours are potentially very harmful and distressing but should have different consequences and interventions to bullying. According to the Anti-Bullying Alliance the distinction is critical. A point of note is that amongst the small group of children that I spoke to, there seems to be a lack of clarity about what 'bullying' means and what it looks like. What seems clear from this reading is that establishing what bullying is as well as what it isn't helps us and our children to identify it, report it, act on it and deal with it.

I asked the students if they thought that bullying, as defined above, was common in our school and they all said that whilst they thought it could happen, they didn't feel it was common or widespread. When I asked them about how adults, (families and school), should respond to bullying and intimidation, the students were equally unclear about what to do about it. All of them said that having a way of dealing with it was a good thing. Interestingly, they also said that they felt our school did deal with bullying 'quite well' and that it was something that was talked about in tutor time, assemblies and PSHE sessions.

Clearly, we all agree that bullying, in all of its forms and whoever it is directed to, is fundamentally wrong and is something that is high on the national agenda at the moment. I am keen to ensure that at HCCS, bullying will never be tolerated, and we will continue to develop our anti-bullying strategies to ensure that all of our children feel happy, safe and valued in school.



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Is it Bullying?

When someone says or does something *unintentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's...

Rude

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's...

Mean

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they *keep doing it* - even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset, that's...

Bullying

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Preparing Learners for a Changing World



Lower & Upper School

This week in our assembly we felt it was important to remind students of sharing their positive character traits and behaviours with others.

During our assembly, we reminded students of the impact that their behaviour can have on others. We have shared examples of behaviours that are not in line with our whole school values. We gave the hard hitting message to students that negative behaviours - in particular unkindness to others, bullying or violence - will not be tolerated and we explained the sanctions that can be (and recently have been) implemented when negative behaviours are known to us as staff of the school.

How are you feeling today? How has your week been?



- We learn together
- We belong to this community
- We are proud of ourselves and each other
- We have consistently high expectations



We belong to this community

[Click to view the presentation](#)



We are part of a community where we want to ensure that everyone makes responsible choices and acts in a manner that makes our community a positive one to be part of. We reminded students of what to do if and when they see evidence of any negative or unkind behaviours or something they believe to be bullying (namely to report it to a member of staff or known adult as soon as possible) and we will follow this up in face to face assemblies with more specific guidance next week.

Finally, we asked tutors to share two videos about choosing kindness. We hope you will also be able to access these so you can support our messages at home.

Please be aware of an organisation called Kidscape that offers further advice and guidance to help families. Kidscape offers the following advice to parents:

1. **Try not to be overly anxious.** This is a tough one but the majority of children have a good time at school; are able to deal with challenges when they arise and go on to be happy young adults
2. **You've got this.** If challenges arise then you have the strength and skills to support your child. If you are unsure what to do, there are lots of people that can help you.
3. **Practise.** Talk to your child about how to make friends (e.g say hello, ask people about themselves, be kind), and what it means to be a good friend (e.g. friends won't hurt you). Role play what you would do if someone made a mean comment or hurt you. Reinforce that they have the power to take action and tell them over and over again that you are there for them.
4. **Teach kindness.** Your child is watching your every move so think about how you talk about other people. Encourage them to be the child that sticks up for others, welcomes everyone into their games, loves who they are and loves other people.



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How can we all build a culture that demonstrates our values?

We are all part of this journey and can all contribute to a better culture. How we communicate, act, respond and behave are all ways in which we can grow a better culture where we can all thrive and be fulfilled. It's a long journey but a worthy one where our children are the main beneficiaries. Our thoughts, words, actions are a window into our true beliefs and values. Here at HCCS, we have four values and we are working hard to build and embed behaviours that reflect them. Your support in this is valued, appreciated and is fundamentally necessary if we are to be successful. Many thanks to Ms Kelman for contributing this to our newsletter. This will be followed up in assemblies, lessons and Tutor Time with the children and I invite and encourage you to do the same at home.

Our values	Parent (You)	Teacher (We)	Student (They)
We learn together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage regularly with your child's curriculum Support the completion of homework, coursework & revision Read with your child and encourage them to talk about current affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with regular CPD opportunities Plan & deliver creative, investigative lessons Demonstrate a growth mindset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in all lessons Develop a sense of curiosity through an enquiring attitude Practise a growth mindset
We belong to this community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to be involved with and contribute positively our school Work together and alongside us, showing kindness and respect Set up a parent's social media community that is positive and celebrates the success of our children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be involved with curricular & extra curricular events Value contributions to our community Work with parents to grow our support systems Reach out to parents and form positive relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciate and celebrate our shared values Seek opportunities to be involved by representing your tutor group, year group or house
We are proud of ourselves & each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with and attend extra-curricular events to support the school's culture Build positive, valuable relationships valuable with teachers & staff Share & celebrate student achievements with us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build positive relationships with students & home Reward academic progress, emotional strength and perseverance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise your strengths and be proud of your talents Support & encourage your peers Be confident to take on new challenges and be resilient whilst doing so
We have consistently high expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage your child to be respectful and demonstrate excellent manners Remind your child they are accountable for their actions Celebrate and highlight positive behaviours and acts of kindness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model our expectations Set high standards to motivate students Be confident to challenge and sanction students who fail to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be punctual, organised and enthusiastic in all lessons Take pride in your appearance & in your actions Treat others like you would like to be treated



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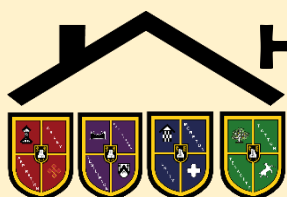
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HOUSE COMPETITION

Take part in our latest house competition by creating a poster or a log representing our 4 Core Values.

To find out more and how you can enter [click here](#).

The deadline for entries is Friday 10th February



Preparing Learners for a Changing World



Sixth Form Kindness Initiative

As part of an initiative aimed at spreading kindness in our Sixth Form College, the students have come up with a wonderful idea to spread kindness across the Sixth Form. Sixth Form students are invited to purchase a chocolate heart and/or a rose and to write a message of kindness on this. This will be delivered, anonymously, to its intended audience, bringing joy and happiness.

Click the image or [click here](#) to read more.



UCAS Launch - Year 12

We are very excited to launch the next cycle of UCAS for our Year 12 students. Letters have gone out this week, inviting students along to attend the UCAS

Discovery Conference which will be held in Manchester at the end of the month.

The UCAS Discovery exhibitions bring together a wide range of experts to help our students shortlist their options.

At this Discovery exhibition our students will be able to:

- meet over 100 unis, colleges, and apprenticeship employers face-to-face
- find out about different options and pathways
- listen to live expert talks
- get the latest advice and information on different career choices.

This is an exciting opportunity for our students to start to focus their minds on their next steps. Following this, students will begin following this up with tutors. Later in the year we will be holding an information evening, to discuss the start of the UCAS or apprenticeship applications

This is an exciting step and we look forward to supporting our students along this journey.



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'Careers Corner'

Latest News

Apprenticeship Fair

On Thursday evening the school was host to an apprenticeship fair organised by the Careers and Enterprise Company. There was a fantastic turnout of students from HCCS. There were over 40 employers with information about their businesses apprenticeship schemes.

Apprenticeships are an increasingly important and popular option for school leavers and was confirmed with an excellent turnout of students. Over 60 of our children explored possible career choices and there was some excellent feedback from the employers.

A fantastic evening, superb organisation and real benefit to our children.



Jobs of the week



Please [click here](#) to access the latest national opportunities



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NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

DEMISTIFYING APPRENTICESHIPS: A TWILIGHT SESSION FOR YOU AND YOUR PARENTS

THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY, 7.00 - 8.00PM
Join Stockport Jobs Match & special guests; SKY, Nexperia & Stockport Homes Group for an evening session to find out:

- What apprenticeship programmes are all about
- The types and levels of apprenticeship roles available
- Entry requirements and career prospects
- The advantages and success stories

Quiz our apprenticeship expert presenters AND two young people who are currently taking part in a Level 4 Associate Project Management Apprenticeship and a Level 3 Construction Supported Apprenticeship.

This twilight session held for free, courtesy of Stockport Job Match is your chance to ask everything you ever wanted to know about apprenticeships. Register to take part now by using the booking form below.

REGISTER BY MONDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

BOOK NOW

SPEAKERS for schools EXPERIENCE

Click to Book

National Apprenticeship Week 2023 launches on Monday next week. Apprenticeships are growing in popularity but remain a bit of a mystery to parents and students alike. We are hosting a twilight session to help answer all of those questions and would love for you to share the attached invite with your parents and students.

Dear parents and carers, We'd like to invite you and your children to a live, virtual panel event on Thursday 9th Feb between 7.00 and 8.00pm. This is your chance to ask anything you like about apprenticeships to both employers and apprentices. Find out all the facts about what an apprenticeship is like, where it can take you and how to find them! You can submit your questions to the panel in advance, and ask as many as you like on the day.

Registering is really easy - just complete this form: [Demystifying Apprenticeships: A Twilight Session for You and Your Parents \(office.com\)](https://office.com)

Join Stockport Jobs Match & special guests; SKY, Nexperia & Stockport Homes Group for an evening session to find out:
What apprenticeship programmes are all about
The types and levels of apprenticeship roles available
Entry requirements and career prospects
The advantages and success stories

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LAW & FINANCE

We are delighted to offer your students opportunities in Law & Finance-related industries at UCL this term. The programmes provide an opportunity for students to learn from top professionals, including barristers, MPs, corporate lawyers, investment bankers and hedge fund managers.

- Participate in a mock murder trial
- Public speaking coaching by barristers
- Plus, Q&A time with all the professionals and guidance on university choices, interviews and applications.

Negotiate in an MSA deal
Learn how to value stocks & shares

View & Register AGES 12-14 **View & Register AGES 15-18**

LAW & FINANCE SUMMER EXPERIENCES

For the ultimate experience in Law & Finance-related careers, students should register now for our Summer Experiences in London:

- Argue a case in the Supreme Court
- Learn about human rights at Amnesty International
- Trade the stock market in a skyscraper
- 'Model UN' alongside Foreign Office staff

Summer Experiences AGES 12-14

Summer Experiences AGES 15-18

We are now more than 50% full for these so interested students should book their places as soon as possible.

Law & Finance Career Opportunities For Ages 12-18

Click the image to expand the document



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Toilets

Fairly recently, we took some feedback from members of our parents body, staff and students. Access to toilets and the ease by which our children can use them whilst feeling safe is something that we are working hard to address.

Over the last two weeks, a significant programme of investment and refurbishment has started to tackle some of the issues around toilets that you have highlighted. Next week, we will complete the first stage of this programme. The new Upper School Boys toilet facility will open by Wednesday and has been created by knocking two toilets into one, rearranging the space to install new cubicles and urinals and putting in a new floor.

This weekend, the construction work to create a large toilet facility for Upper School Girls will begin followed by the installation of plumbing, cubicles and new flooring. The new facilities for Upper School Girls will be ready for when the children come back after the February half term break.

Once this first stage is complete, work will begin early after the half term break to create new toilet facilities for the boys and girls in Lower School. The full refurbishment programme will be completed by the end of the spring term.

Completion of these renovations means that very soon, children in Lower School will have access to their own toilets, separate to the toilet facilities for children in Upper School. In addition, there will be enhanced security measures including additional staff duties to monitor the toilets, to help manage behaviour and to help students feel safe. These actions will enable us to better control behaviour in and around in toilets and will help all children feel safer.



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Year 8 Parent Forum on Thursday 9th February - 5:00- 6:00 pm.

We are holding a focus group for parents who wish to contribute to a parent discussion about various topics relating to our school. Parents will have the opportunity to voice their opinions on topics such as: Teaching and Learning; Behaviour and Welfare; Communication and Transition. The forum is on Thursday 9th February in the Sixth Form College. If you would like to attend this session please email office@hccs.info by Tuesday 7th February.



Dates for the Diary! Online Parents' Consultation Evenings

Our online parents' consultation evenings provide a key opportunity for you to speak to our teachers and ensure your child is fulfilling their potential.

The dates for these evenings are set at the beginning of the academic year but we absolutely want to ensure you have enough notice so you can plan ahead and attend.

The dates for the remaining academic year's evenings are below:

- Year 10:** Thursday 9th March, 3.45-6.15pm
- Year 11:** Thursday 23rd March, 3.45-6.15pm
- Year 13:** Thursday 30th March, 3.45-6.15pm
- Year 7:** Thursday 4th May, 3.45-6.15pm
- Year 10 Intervention Evening:** Thursday 15th June, 3.45-6.15pm
- Year 12:** Wednesday 19th July, 3.45-6.15pm

You will receive an email with a letter attached in advance of the evening, inviting you to make bookings.

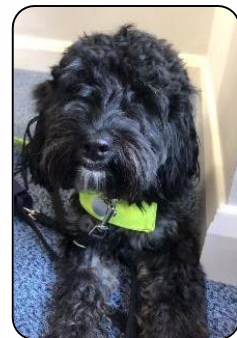


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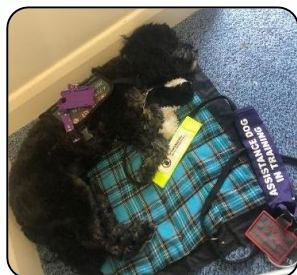
A Dog In School?!

Many of our students will have seen an unusual member of the sixth form moving around school. In September, we welcomed an assistance dog into HC6F supporting one of our Year 12 students. This is a first for our sixth form and has been a great success, allowing a student with a disability to access her learning safely. She spends most of her time in school curled up on her mat asleep, while her handler is busy studying.



So, what is an assistance dog?

Assistance dogs are dogs specially trained to help people with a range of disabilities. We are all likely to be familiar with Guide Dogs (a type of assistance dog), but did you know that assistance dogs also support people with hearing impairments, epilepsy, autism, psychiatric disorders and much more? Each assistance dog is specifically trained to support their handler with their needs – this is referred to as ‘task training’. While they are working, they are usually easily identified by their vest or harness.



What can you do to help?

It's very tempting to want to stroke or engage with a cute dog walking round school, however, a working assistance dog should not be distracted from their work. Distracting a working dog puts both the dog, and the handler, at risk. If you are really keen to say hello, then check with the handler when a good time to approach the dog would be.

Even assistance dogs need a break sometimes!

Year 12 PDC - First Aid

The Year 12 students have taken part in ‘Emergency First Aid’ training as part of the ‘Personal Development Curriculum. Thank you to Helen Cliff and our Year 12 First Aid trained tutors for leading these sessions. They were very informative.



Why is First Aid Important?

First Aid knowledge is invaluable for us as individuals and for our community. First Aid skills can be applied in the home, the workplace or in public locations, therefore the more people with First Aid knowledge and confidence there are in a community the safer that community becomes.



Primary Volleyball Tournament

On Monday 23rd January 75 primary students from our local schools came into school to take part in a Volleyball workshop! Thank you to our leaders for helping to run this session.

“Everyone enjoyed the session and the feedback from students and parents was very positive”. Thanks for organising. - A positive message from one of our primary teachers.



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