



NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School & 6th Form College

Special Edition

Behaviour & Culture

20/05/2022



Hello everyone,

I hope you are all well and are enjoying the start of what feels like summer weather. In this newsletter I want to focus down a little and shine a light on some key points for us all to work on with our children. Next Friday, just before the half term break, I will publish all of the information and news that I don't share today. There's a lot to celebrate, a huge amount to feel good about and it'll be a real bumper edition for you to enjoy with something for everyone at the end of a busy half term.

This week I want to open up the conversation about the way in which we encourage our children to grow and learn as part of a safe, inclusive and welcoming community. I want to bring to the front of our minds the question of behaviour. How we nurture a positive approach to it, how we pull together and support our children, how we work with them so that they are able to be the very best version of themselves.



We all share a common view that our children deserve to grow up happy, fulfilled and cared for as well as being safe. Living in an environment free from intimidation, prejudice, fear and abuse is a right we all share. However, no single person can deliver on this. If we want to realise this ambition, we need to work towards them collaboratively, consistently and with commitment and positivity so that we create a better now as well as a better future for our children.

The fact is that our children don't inhabit the world that we grew up in. The influences on children, the pressures, expectations, access to the internet and social media and even the context of childhood are very different and navigating this complex landscape is challenging. We know that culture and subculture dramatically influence how children develop and grow. We know that all children and teenagers learn by observing, listening, exploring, experimenting. They test edges and push boundaries. We know that children model and then engage in the behaviours, attitudes and actions of influencers such as adults and older peers around them. Some of these influencers are now web based, some are remote, some we know about, others we don't. If these influencers are not positive and supportive, then I would argue that our children are at risk.

Whilst this might sound like a bleak outlook, I have a view, deeply rooted in my own experience, that every one of our children has the capacity and potential to be everything we want for them and for themselves. I've been in the profession for 27 years and my career has remained local to this area so I've seen a lot of children grow into adults. The children I taught in my first year of teaching are now nearly 40! Each year, I have seen around 200 year 11 students finish their compulsory education and go into the wide world. That's 5400 children from a small area so I often hear about what people are up to. The great news is that the vast majority of children who have had positive, caring, influences and who are challenged as well as supported as they grow up, taught to make good, safe decisions and have well established boundaries throughout childhood turn out to be happy and fulfilled adults.

In today's newsletter, I want to respectfully reach out to everyone to recommit to the privilege of nurturing our children so that they understand what it means to be a full part of an inclusive, safe, welcoming community and to be well behaved, kind, and considerate. I know it's not always easy to establish boundaries, encourage safe behaviours and have clear expectations about what's acceptable and not, especially through the challenges of the teenage years. However, it's important that as we gently release our children along their journey, we are confident that we have paved the way with positive influences and influencers, the best support and guidance and the wisdom to recognise right from wrong.

Warm regards and thanks for reading

Nigel Bielby
Executive Headteacher



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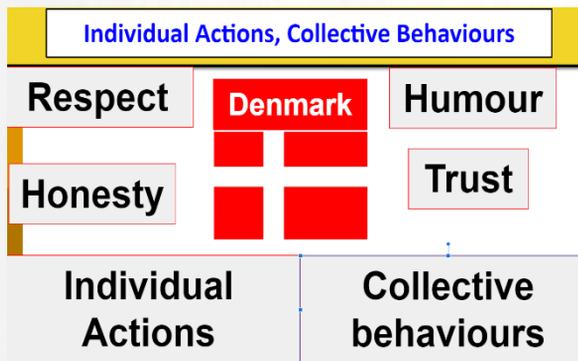
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Individual Actions, Collective Behaviours - Being More Danish

During the course of the year in assemblies, we have tried to focus on getting our students to think more about how their individual actions reflect our collective culture at HCCS. This has been partly driven by some challenges with how our students have managed the school environment as we have emerged from Covid, but also as a way of trying to establish a culture of collective responsibility.

In these assemblies, we have focused on the idea of collective responsibility by asking the question 'What kind of school do you want to go to?'. This leads on to looking at Danish culture and how it is underpinned by certain values and attitudes. Below is one of the slides that we have used repeatedly in these assemblies with follow up work in tutor time.



Many aspects of Danish culture are underpinned by the idea of working together for a better society and with specific focus on respect, trust, humour and honesty. We want all students at HCCS is to buy into these behaviours, but specifically by:

- Understanding the importance of positive relationships with others
- Taking care of and pride in our environment
- Recognising that as individuals, we all represent and reflect the wider school and community
- Being trusting and open in our personal and professional relationships. With students we are asking them to trust in authority and accept rules and decisions taken to make the school community a better place

As parents, we would like you to reinforce and support these ideas by talking to your children at home and getting them to think and talk about the ways in which they demonstrate these behaviours every day, both in and out of school.

Matt Lowe, Deputy Headteacher

The Lower School Hub expectations

The expectations that we constantly and consistently share with and promote within our Lower School community is below. This follows the language that we use for our outcomes of learning:

- **CORE** knowledge and skills - start here as this is the most important; you will likely struggle without this; for some of us, this may be embedded within us already from previous experience
- **EXTENDED** knowledge and skills - this is a bit harder and some may find this challenging
- **ADVANCED** knowledge and skills - this is harder than Core and Extended and, for some, will be a real challenge.

We encourage all students to push as high up as they can.

.....continued.



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Our expectations



START HERE >>
and see how far you
can go



Helping others when they seem to be struggling with any of the below.

Modelling this expected behaviour to everyone else and **persevering** with that - even when others might make that challenging.

Being **safe**. Being **kind**. Trying your best. Showing **respect** to yourself, others and your environment.



Preparing learners for a changing world

It became apparent early in the year that, for many students, what the CORE expectation looked like also needed some work and so we added to our guidance to learners with the following list of expectations around school and in lessons. We return to these regularly through our conversations with students and through our tutor or lower school assemblies:

- **Be on time**
- **Be prepared for your day at school**
- **Try your best**
- **Make sure your mobile phone is turned off and away**
- **Put litter in the bin**
- **Be polite; remember your manners**
- **Don't get involved in horseplay (this may seem like fun but could be dangerous)**
- **Listen**
- **Take turns - wait your turn**
- **Speak to others like you would like to be spoken to**
- **Everyone likes a smile**
- **Be kind and practise kindness**
- **Consider the impact of your words and actions**
- **Remember that staff are here to help you**

A way to help others if they are struggling (our ADVANCED option) is to report it to someone; this could be a nearby member of staff, a tutor, a teacher or the Lower School Hub. This can be done anonymously and will allow for the right steps to be taken to ensure that more people are achieving the CORE expectation and, thereby, making our community a positive and thriving place to be! Although some people may be afraid of being seen as a "snitch", we value this information that is, in fact, helping to call out and challenge behaviours that may make people in our community feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Only by working together, challenging it and calling it out, will we really move forward in our goal of everyone achieving the CORE expectation of safety, kindness, effort and respect.



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The Importance of Parental Support and Engagement

The relationship between the parent body and the school is of utmost importance to the effective running of any school. We are very lucky at HCCS to have such an engaged parent body, and in fact, we believe that one of the positives of the last two years during Covid has been how well engaged you, as parents, have been in your childrens' education.

This year, we have tried to further improve this engagement by running a number of parent forums, giving the chance for parents to help us to identify aspects of school life that can be improved. These forums have also been an extremely positive way for parents to meet and talk and share their own experiences as they navigate the challenges of parenting young people over the last two years.

Whilst we are delighted that a significant majority of our parents support the work we do and the decisions that we make as a school, we have become concerned during the last year about the increasing number of parents that challenge our decisions, especially with regards to behaviour and sanctions. We are keen to ensure that parents feel that they can seek to understand events that have happened in school, but this needs to be done in an appropriate and professional manner.

In the last few months, with increasing regularity, this challenge has taken a number of forms, such as:

- Abusive, insulting and sometimes threatening emails to staff relating to their child's education
- Parents refusing to support the detention system and also wanting to negotiate about the level of sanctions applied
- Abusive and aggressive phone calls
- Reception staff being verbally abused and parents refusing to accept that it is not possible for a member of staff to see them when they arrive without an appointment

We are absolutely sure that all of these situations have arisen as a result of concerns for the welfare of our children, but it is never acceptable for staff to be abused, or for parents to be rude to staff, either via email, face to face or on the phone.

Many of these situations also point to the need to try to decode what your children say about their experiences in school. We are very lucky to have around 1300 wonderful young people at HCCS, but we also know that teenagers can and sometimes do exaggerate their accounts of certain situations, leave key bits of information out, minimise their part in certain situations and sadly, in some cases the story that you receive at home as parents may not always be a true reflection of the events that unfold in school.

As such, we would urge you to always try to decode and probe a bit more to try to find out the truth of the matter when the accounts that you receive don't match. If you are unsure, we would always ask you to seek clarification from the school, rather than make the automatic assumption that we are wrong about an incident.

As always, we are grateful for the support and understanding that the vast majority of our parents give us, as we all try to ensure that the children attending HCCS get the best possible experience.

Matt Lowe, Deputy Headteacher



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A reflection on behaviour

I had a conversation with a Sixth Form student this week who said “Do you remember what I was like in Year 10?” and my reply came very quickly... “Yes. Absolutely... Look how much you have changed!.”

She has become a remarkable, kind, confident and intelligent young woman who will achieve anything she sets her mind to. This is the end product of a shift in her decision making as she made a conscious choice to make improvements in her own behaviour. She knew what changes were needed and accepted that she could do and achieve more in school.

She now uses her own experiences to advise that “You will regret it,” if others are wasting time in lessons. This passion to help others is inspired by her recognition of how different her future would have been if she hadn’t made a decision to change her behaviour and value her time at school. We spoke about how she now has so many options available to her as she embarks on the journey of leaving our school and how happy she is with her choice to study at university.

I asked her what had helped her to improve her own behaviour and she spoke about all the support she had at both home and school. This helped her to see what changes were needed and why it was important to aim for and achieve more. She also recognised how quickly her time at school had gone and how important it has been to embrace both the experiences and friendships. It is an inspiration to see the impact of positive choices and to see how this raises academic performance.



Laura Warren
Director of Upper School



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Get GCSE Ready Programme

This coming week sees the launch of the ‘Get GCSE Ready’ programme. Over this half-term curriculum leaders, teachers and tutors have been identifying students who are currently not making expected progress in a subject they are taking at GCSE. Their teachers are putting in class support in place and providing resources on the Google Classroom under a ‘Get GCSE Ready’ folder. We have identified a maximum of

5 core tasks or skills year 9 students must be able to do in order to be ready for year 10. The tasks in the folders are also aimed at those students who want to get ahead and tackle some GCSE content, increasing their confidence in their abilities and building upon the foundations they have built in Key Stage 3.

Please could you talk to your child about this programme and use your child’s last interim as a guide in your conversation.

We are also launching a ‘**Get GCSE Ready**’ area on the Year 9 Learning Manager tab of the website – [click here](#), under curriculum and learning - where you will be able to find the answers to any questions you may have about this. **Mr Forsyth**



Introducing Ade Chadwick - our PCSO

Many of you will know Ade Chadwick, our local Police Community Support Officer, and we have a long standing working relationship with Ade here at HCCS.

This week, he came into school to introduce himself to our Year 7 students. At lunchtime, he patrolled the Lower School field with Helena Collison and Helena was able to introduce him to many of the students. Many came up to give Ade some fist bumps and some reported to him some behaviours that were concerning them in school. (Ade was already aware and working with staff in school to help address these; you might not be surprised to know that it was vaping in the toilets). Ade was then delighted to report to Helena the following day that many of the students had come to speak to him while he was out in the community later that afternoon. It is this relationship building that is vital in our development of shared community values and behaviours.

Ade came in this week not only to meet our Year 7s but, also, to discuss dates for his assemblies for Lower School. We decided that, with exams currently taking place in our large spaces, it would have more impact to deliver these assemblies face to face and so he will be back to deliver live assemblies to Lower School on expectations in behaviour both in school and in the community. Our shared goal is to speak to students about knife crime, anti-social behaviours and the dangers of social media. These assemblies will take place before the end of the summer term.

It is important to note that The Police and PCSO's work closely with the school and that it is important that Police Officers and PCSO's - like teachers - are seen as supportive for our community and not just the ones that implement sanctions. Having a close relationship with The Police, we know that they value when parents teach children to go to The Police for help and not to joke: "Ooh! Watch out! They're here to take you away!" as it promotes the idea that The Police are helpful and supportive and not people to be feared or mistrusted; I'd say this is the same as teachers and schools. We appreciate your support with this.

As part of Ade's ongoing work with the school, Ade has written this for us which we like to share with you:

"County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns. It could happen anywhere in the UK... including Holmes Chapel.

County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police. Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs. Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines" are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police.

Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Now, to be clear, we are not aware of any county lines activity in the area at the moment and, for obvious reasons, we want to keep it that way.

To this end, we continue to work closely with HCCS to educate students, parents and staff alike. As part of this ongoing work, we invite you to take a look at the following short film about County Lines - <https://youtu.be/auoICT45nac>"



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Supporting your child with our 'Behaviour For Learning' system

As you know, this year we initiated a new 'behaviour for learning' system, aimed at giving staff, students and parents better information about student engagement in lessons. You should be able to see your child's behaviour score on the 'My Child At School' app on a daily basis. Below is a reminder of the descriptors that staff use to award these grades.

In this academic year so far, in Years 7-11, there have been a total of 91,901 '1' grades awarded, which is an amazing achievement and a great representation of the hard work that our students have put into their learning so far this year.

Recently we have been adding more functionality to the system to help our learning and welfare teams get better information when things don't go as well. This includes a comment button, which staff can use when awarding certain grades. For example, if a child has unfortunately been awarded a '4' grade as a result of some disruption in a lesson which has resulted in them being removed to learn elsewhere, this will be clearly recorded as a comment against that lesson. Although this is not visible on the MCAS app yet, we are working with Bromcom to improve functionality so that parents can see this in the future.

BFL descriptors

Score	House Points	Descriptor
1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make exceptional progress during the lesson. Students are highly motivated, fully engaged and positive throughout the lesson. Students demonstrate ambition and take pride in their work. Students actively support their peers.
2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make expected progress. Students arrive on time. Students respond enthusiastically to all aspects of the lesson. Students meet the objectives for the lesson demonstrating cooperation throughout. Students are respectful to others. Students are reliable and demonstrate a consistent approach throughout the lesson. Students reflect on their progress and seek ways to progress.
3	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student behaviour results in lost learning time. Students are lacking in focus. Students disrupt learning. Students have not completed classwork or homework to the required standard and have not achieved expected progress.
4	-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student demonstrates repeated defiance Student demonstrates persistently disruptive behaviour.
5	-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student behaviour affects the safety and wellbeing of themselves or others. Serious persistent defiance Behaviour support or SLT. Student has been removed as a result of serious disruption.

If you are unsure about a grade your child has been awarded, you should first consult the descriptors (see image). If you are still unsure, you should contact the member of staff directly for clarification.

As we approach the last half term of the academic year, year group teams will be looking closely at the BFL data to ensure that our end of term rewards reflect the outstanding effort and behaviour that so many of our students have displayed consistently throughout the year. As part of this, please continue to praise and challenge your child as appropriate, when discussing their progress in lessons.



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Building good learning habits

We want our children to have a great day in school. We want them to go into all their lessons with a positive mindset. We want them to grow and be successful in their learning.

The best learning happens in a positive and calm environment. There are some simple ways in which we can work together to support our children. If we get these little things right, it means that every time they enter the classroom, they are ready to learn.

We need you to work with us, in building these small investments. At home, we want you to help them to check their timetable each evening and ensure that they are equipped with what they need for the next day. We want you to ensure that they always pack their bags with pens, pencils, a ruler, highlighters, their exercise books and regularly change their reading book.



We need you to talk to them about their day. As part of this recap of the day, you can support them to plan for the next day, by asking the small questions like do they need their PE kit? Do they need any ingredients? Are they missing any other pieces of equipment? If they are supported to do this before they go to bed then their next day is already going to start smoothly.

It really helps when at home, students have been encouraged to check if they have completed their homework and checked Google Classroom to see if any important messages have been posted. Importantly, if they have missed part of a lesson for any reason, children should make sure that they use the work posted in the Google Classroom to catch up.

We want you to work with us and make sure they take the time to look back in their books and respond to written feedback with their purple pen in order to move their learning on. If a student comes to the lesson with parts of their learning missing, for whatever reason, it makes it more difficult for them to continue onto the next step and can sometimes knock their confidence right from the start.

We must work together because the sum of these marginal gains will have a significant impact on outcomes and give them the best experience of school.



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Holmes Chapel Sixth Form

If you are in Year 7 and reading this, 6th Form may feel a long, long away from your first year of high school. Talk about options, pathways and life beyond school/ college will feel strange to someone who has only just begun their journey but it is important to realise that the habits and qualities that will make you successful begin in Lower School, develop in Upper School and become cemented at 6th Form.

From the 6th Form, you can see the students who developed the right habits and those who still need to work on those characteristics. Some of the key habits are:

Learning from mistakes

I don't mean being silly and making bad choices. I mean trying something, getting it wrong and learning from your mistakes. Making mistakes is just one step closer to making progress. If you are making mistakes and learning from them, you are testing and challenging yourself. The challenges of 6th Form A-levels will make anyone scream in frustration at some point but learning to cope with challenges and working through your problems will set you ready for bigger issues in the real world.

Being positive

Being positive is not about jumping around and smiling at everything- it is about looking for the positive in a tough situation. Positive people will look for a solution rather than dwelling on the problem. Positive people will try something new rather than just repeat the same mistakes over and over again. Positive people consider and make the right choice that helps them or others.

Becoming a leader

Not all leaders shout loud or grab the attention. The best leaders will set an example. Do the right thing, but not necessarily the easy thing. Our current Year 12s have been sending in application letters to be the future head boy or girl of the school and are looking to provide ways to support you and the school. Leadership opportunities grow the unseen, unqualified skills that stand out in interviews or events outside of school. The 6th Form College here provides you with those chances to enhance your leadership. Before then you could develop those skills by becoming a sports ambassador, a reading mentor or a house captain. There are plenty of opportunities to become a leader of this school.



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Upper School: Positive Behaviour and Mindset

We have started our final phases of Year 11 provision and it is a real privilege to support students as they progress through their final GCSE examinations. Securing our personal best at this time of year is all about building confidence and a positive mindset.



I keep reminding our Year 11 students to believe in themselves. We know how hard they have worked and also how talented they are. I find it fascinating to be surrounded by so many amazing, ambitious and altruistic students who, despite all of these wonderful qualities, let self doubt consume them. As we progress through the next few weeks, let's celebrate what we have achieved so far, celebrate what we can do to move forward and be a champion for others.

I firmly believe that a positive mindset helps build positive behaviours which can have a massive impact on our mental wellbeing. As we know, mindset can impact on outcomes and, as a result, it's important that we focus on what we can control and invest our efforts on making steady improvements. It is important for our Year 11 students to take time over the weekend to rest and recuperate whilst also carefully balancing the demands of revision.

I would like all of our students to focus on building a positive mindset through the following positive behaviours:
Proactively work on knowledge gaps: recognise and address them; it will make you feel more confident and reassured.
Seek help where it is needed: everyone is here to help you achieve your personal best.
Make responsible behaviour choices: let them shape your daily interactions within and outside of school.

Laura Warren
Director of Upper School



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Character education

Character education is a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, empathy, integrity and taking responsibility for self and others. Children who learn character traits have better success in relationships both at school and outside of school. They learn to be more forgiving, responsible, caring, and compassionate. They also learn how to cooperate with others, to tolerate different viewpoints, and to respect the needs of others. Many conversations exist in promoting such values in lessons. Character building is based on six pillars -- trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship and all of these can be filled in a child only through adequate education. Producing students with good grades is not enough for helping them lead a fruitful life. This is why more focus needs to be given on preparing students with morals, ethics, and soft skills. These values automatically make them self-sufficient in all respects to face the challenges of life and contribute to society in some positive way.

The PE dept over the last 2 years have been embedding a curriculum in which such traits are fostered. Conversations and opportunities in lessons both explicit and implicit, are created for students to demonstrate and develop character. In years 7&8 students are introduced to a variety of such traits and then in year 9 they are invited to complete a Life Skills Award for demonstrating these consistently in lessons. This year we have over a 100 students successfully completing this award. We are one of the few schools nationally who signed up for this award, in recognition of the vast majority of our students who demonstrate such behaviours on a daily basis. Next year we are hoping for even more.

