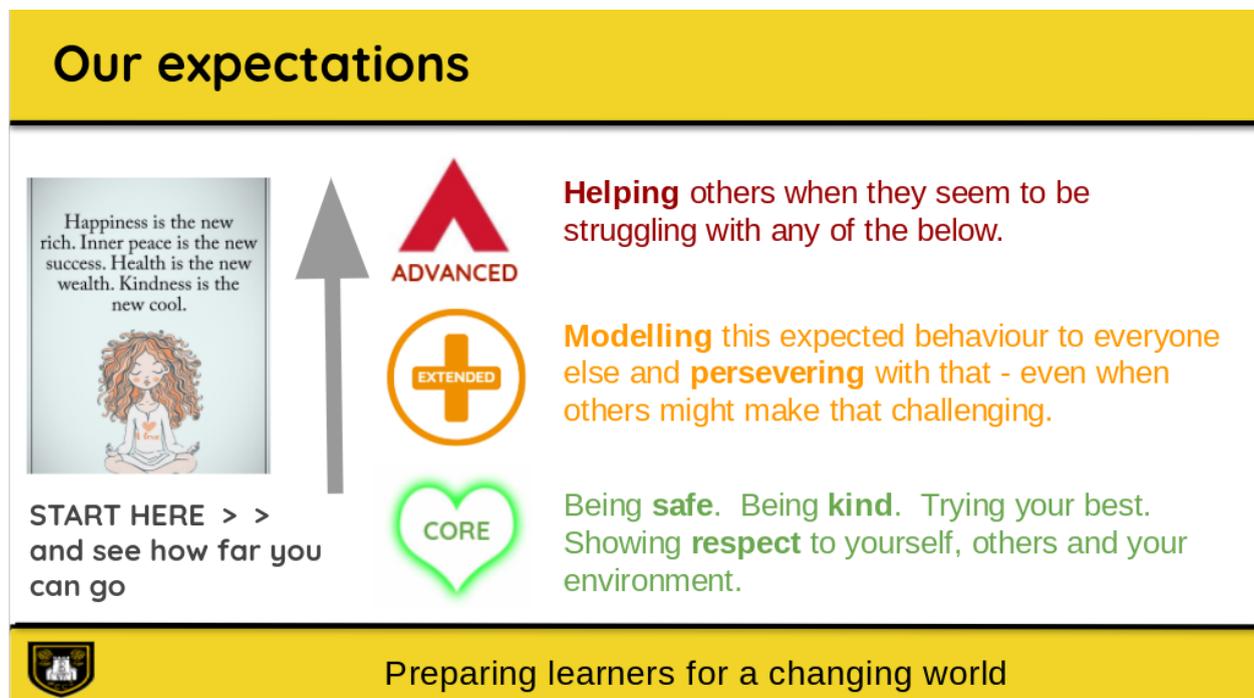


Good afternoon lower school parents/ carers!

I am writing to you today to give you some important updates and to ensure that you are all familiar with how our lower school operates. I do hope you all engage with our fortnightly school newsletter where you will see a regular lower school update. However, I appreciate the busy lives we all lead and so thought you would appreciate a specific email communication.

Lower school ethos and how to get in touch:

Firstly, and as shared with students in our assembly before half term, our priorities for our lower school learners are as follows:



Here, you will also see the language of learning where our symbols, colours and order have been deliberately chosen. It starts at the bottom with CORE - this is the CORE of all we know and do and is then moved up to EXTENDED and, finally, ADVANCED with these extended and advanced options not being possible without the CORE in the first instance.

A big part of this assembly was to explain to our students that, if there are ever any difficulties with these expectations, they should turn to teachers, tutors and the lower school hub. The Lower School Hub door (and window) is always open and there are 5 members of staff there (3 of whom are there for the vast majority of the week). We support all students to ensure they feel safe and secure, happy and welcome.

Helena Collison - Director of lower school
Rachel Cooper - Welfare manager
Heather Hughes - Learning manager
Caroline Morgan - Welfare manager
Holly Priddam - Student support / Administrator

We also encourage students to report any incidents where behaviour of others hasn't been as expected so that we can challenge and repair these behaviour choices as soon as possible. We can all be contacted on the email address lowerschool@hccs.info and endeavour to get back to parents within 48 hours. However, we do ask that you are mindful of our working hours and busy working days.

Recent concerns

Recently, concerns about some incidents on the corridors and at lunchtime have been communicated to us. Thank you to those parents who have raised the concerns so we can put in place actions to help rectify and we will continue to do so as soon as we are made aware of any issue. On corridors, we have increased staff presence on the English corridor and have initiated a review of these areas. Some parents have expressed concerns about Year 7 at lunch and the lack of variety of food for students on days when they are last on our current rota system. We will review this rota and are in discussions with our caterers currently to ensure there is a range of options available through the whole of lunch time. Thank you for raising this matter. In addition, for our year 7 students, we will be opening the small cafe area at the side of the main restaurant so that, if year 7 students would like to, they can access an indoor space outside of their set rota time. Here, they can enjoy their packed lunch although we know many will still choose to eat in their designated outdoor area.

First reports of this year and chances for meetings

Following the students' work on their learning passports over the past fortnight, tutors will begin writing tutor reports next week and these will be published to you, alongside reading ages and average behaviour scores on Wednesday 8th December. On this day, we are also excited to host our first Winter festival - details of which you will find in an upcoming newsletter. On the following Thursday (9th), for Year 8 parents, there will be a virtual parents evening where the tutor reports received on the Wednesday can be followed by more specific subject feedback and some (virtual) face to face time with teachers. For year 7 parents whose parents evening is not until February, we would love to invite some parents to our first parent forum which will take place on Wednesday 12th January 2022. We will communicate more about this nearer the time.

Other exciting - and watch this space - news!

The ground floor of our new Learning Resource Centre (LRC) has opened its doors to students for their LRC lessons. We will announce a grander and more official opening when the mezzanine floor is open and all furnishings in place. For now, we are excited that LRC lessons can commence in this fantastic new space - again, see newsletter tomorrow for more info. We would also like to use this space to provide a lower school homework club on a Thursday after school. The LRC is always open for use after school until 16:15 but, from next week, on a Thursday, there will also be a member of the lower school hub there to help any lower school student with their homework. If anyone would like a smaller space than the new LRC, our lower school hub is just next door and we can make sure there's a member of our team there too!

A team of passionate practitioners are also meeting this week to discuss our lunchtime activity offer in the hope that we can increase lunchtime extra curricular provision for our lower school students. If you have any ideas for lunchtime clubs, either look out for the Google form being sent to all students next week or, if you cannot wait and want a more tangible way to communicate these wishes, pop a suggestion in the suggestion box that we'll have up and running in the lower school hub ASAP.

We appreciate all feedback and can only offer students the best possible opportunities and outcomes if we are honest in our communication with each other and work together to keep making improvements. Therefore, if you are not lucky enough to get a ticket to our winter festival or to join our parent forum, we hope you will get in touch in other ways and, at least, engage with our fortnightly newsletter - published tomorrow!

Thank you for your continued feedback and support.

Helena Collison
Director of Lower School