

All Parents/Carers

6 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

We've had a fantastic first week back, so I wanted to take a moment to write to let you know some of the highlights of the week and to signpost some changes and things to expect this year.

I will start with a thank you – to all my colleagues, to our incredible students and to you, the families that support our students and school. Aside from a few technological issues caused by external companies, which we're working hard to fix, we've had a really smooth and calm start to the school year. Students have been really positive and have returned with both energy and enthusiasm, which is a great start.

We had an excellent couple of inset training days at the start of the week where we welcomed to our teaching staff Mr Appleby in Technology, Mr Edmunds as Head of PE, Mrs Leary in Business and Economics, Mrs Merryweather in Science, Mr Scoggins in Maths and Miss McGhee in English. We also welcomed Mr Reid as a Trainee Science Technician. During our training days we explored a number of areas together as a staff which will develop further throughout the year. These include the importance of literacy and reading and how these translate into oracy/talking in a structured way in classrooms. Coupled to this was a focus on active learning opportunities that will be a key feature of our work this year. I have spoken to colleagues about the importance of being ambitious for and with our students and how crucial it is that we focus on learning as opposed to simply teaching, making sure we are getting the most out of our students rather than allowing them to be passive in lessons (which can be a problem on a Friday period 5!). I asked, during these training days, for colleagues to challenge their students daily, with real rigour, on the quality and quantity of their work.

During our Inset days we also undertook external training from an excellent company who spent the day working with key staff on understanding how we can better support young people to de-escalate when they feel heightened emotions. This trauma-informed practice continues to be an area that all schools can improve on, and we are being proactive in trying to keep ourselves well trained and informed to better support our students.

Wednesday saw a return of Year 11 and we welcomed our new Year 7s and 12s to the school, with the whole school returning yesterday. As ever, while it's nice to focus on staff and training during Inset days, the school really comes to life when our fantastic students return and it was great to see the classrooms and corridors buzzing with the energy of our students after a six week break. We recorded excellent results again this year, as a school, putting us among the highest attaining schools in the county, something we are incredibly proud of, but this isn't our sole objective for your children.



Healthy School

This year we have relaunched our rewards system so students now receive house points aligned with our new school values; compassion, opportunity, resilience and discovery. Already students across all years have achieved hundreds of house points for their efforts, demonstrating their excellent attitude to their learning. Please spend time asking your child/ward about their house points and praising them for their efforts, it makes such a difference.

On the topic of praise, each week myself and Miss Ricketts will endeavour to send home a newsletter keeping you informed of what's going on and what's coming up in the school, as well as signposting useful support that you can access as a family. A key part of this is celebrating the incredible successes that many of your children achieve outside of school. When we first trialled this in 2022, we were overwhelmed with amazing stories of achievements in sports, academia, charitable and social enterprise and leadership from parents/carers which allowed us to celebrate our young people through our newsletter. We would like to start this again. I have therefore set up an email address, celebration@taverhamhigh.org, for you to send information of these achievements to. Please only send information that you are happy for us to share through the newsletter. This can include a short description of the achievement (space is limited!) and a photograph if you would like. We will aim to celebrate as many successes as possible, but please don't be disappointed if we cannot accommodate your news on any particular week – it doesn't diminish the achievement, we may have just run out of space! There must have been loads of incredible things happen over the summer break that we're not aware of, so please get in touch.

A couple of quick reminders, please make sure that your child/ward has the equipment they need for school – please refer to the letters received over the summer from Miss Ricketts to guide you on this. Also, a reminder that students are expected to be onsite at 8:25 am – most have been brilliant this week, but a few need a little more urgency in the mornings.

Finally, a little anecdote to finish. We received a phone call on Wednesday after school from a member of the community asking to discuss the behaviour of some of our students on their way home. While for some schools this might turn their blood cold, generally our students are excellent, and this certainly was the case on this occasion. The member of public was simply calling to say that they encountered a group of our new Year 7s walking home as they left work for the day and this group of boys were polite and courteous, moving out of his way to let him through and that he had overheard them talking about what an amazing and brilliant first day at high school they'd had! Thank you to him for calling in and well done to that group of Year 7s who have clearly started their high school adventure with a great attitude.

Have a lovely weekend and thank you again for all your support this week.

Regards



Gareth Yassin – Headteacher



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