



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

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8th April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

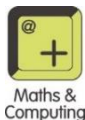
Thank you for the many messages of support we have received this term as schools continue to face challenges to opening with extremely high absence levels. We understand that year group closures impact our families and only take this decision as a last resort. Staff have worked extremely hard and been taking additional duties and classes to keep open.

Schools nationally are reporting that students are finding it harder to vocalise their feelings in uncertain times. This is manifesting itself in behaviours in school, and in homes, which can be challenging. There is an increase in sanctions for aggressive or unpleasant language and actual aggression. School leaders are encouraging families to talk to find out how students are coping, whilst also recognising that economic, geopolitical and health stresses are making this harder for everyone. Please do try to talk things through at home so that young people are able to articulate feelings in as positive way as possible.

We are taking stronger action with students who are not attending all lessons within the school day. Truancy in school is a serious matter and will be treated as such. Senior staff and pastoral time is being taken up responding to a few students out of lessons to ensure their safety. All students know to get to their lessons promptly and are mature enough to do this independently. I am sure we can count on families' support in this matter.

On another safety and behaviour matter, we have had an increase in instances of vaping in school. Students must not bring vapes to school nor use them. No student is old enough to be vaping so this is treated as an illegal material in school, as it is not legal for students to possess vapes. Fixed term suspensions will be given for vaping.

We are continuing to work on our literacy levels as a school. This can be massively supported at home by discussion of reading matter, fiction, non-fiction and in articulating views on current affairs and events. Being able to articulate one's opinion verbally is a step towards being able to do so in written format. Perhaps some reading challenges over the Easter break could stimulate this?



Everyone is ready for an Easter break. We wish all students and families a happy holiday from school. For our exam groups we know that those who use Easter well with their revision programmes, will see increased benefits in outcomes in the summer exams. I recommend the Elevate resources to families to help to support. See our newsletters for links.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Cave". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Ms Cave
Headteacher