



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Surley Row • Emmer Green • Reading • RG4 8LR

Tel: 0118 901 5800

Fax: 0118 901 5801

E-mail: office@highdown.reading.sch.uk

Headteacher:

Rachel Cave BSc. NPQH

13th December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

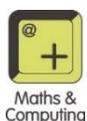
Thank you to all Parents and Carers for the messages of support and good wishes for Highdown Staff to enjoy a rest over the break. Your appreciation of the long hours worked to support the community is welcomed.

This term, we have had some of the least pleasant weather for some time and our estate has suffered with water logged fields and mud travelling into buildings. Our estates team has continued to work hard to maintain our standards through difficult circumstances.

A significant project for the team has been the installation of the new bike rack, positioned near our fitness facilities, to support both students and the wider community using Highdown Sport and Leisure. The new rack is nearly full already on a daily basis. We believe this is due to an increased proportion of students taking the healthy option of cycling to school and not just our increased numbers. This is great. Please can I remind all cyclists that we expect helmets to be worn on the way to and from school. With safety conversations going on at home, please can advice be given about not cycling in the centre of the road or doing 'wheelies' on the road. Concerned local residents have been in touch to let us know of this.

Our Police colleagues have recommended that we remind children and families about the risks in the community. There have been reports of strangers suggesting children get a lift with them locally. Please remind your children never to accept lifts from strangers and report concerning matters to an adult as swiftly as possible.

In the summer our CCTV project came to a halt due to the company going into administration. A new team has been engaged and we expect to be 'live' in the very near future. Some cameras have been stationed on the entrance to toilet rooms but obviously not directed into cubicles/urinals. As stated in my letter in the summer, this will help us maintain the facilities. Any students causing intentional damage can be identified and sanctioned and the vigilance on all areas of the school help to support safety for all. We ask that students report issues with toilet facilities quickly so that we can improve access. Sadly the week after the rack was opened, Highdown had an intruder on site causing vandalism in the form of graffiti to the rack and other areas. Our site safety is paramount and the CCTV will help maintain this more effectively. The estates team restored the site swiftly to a graffiti free zone.



Our Plastic Free School campaign, led by Ms Claridge, has another drive post Christmas. Hot drinks will be sold not in disposable cups but into our own keep cups. Please make sure that you have one to get your beverages from The Gallery and Café6. Thank you to the team for keeping this at the forefront of our agenda.

Our examination years have worked hard through their period of Pre Public Examinations. This is important to learn the exam routines so that summer holds no surprises. Importantly, analysis of performance and work to ensure gaps in knowledge and skills are filled will be the priority in all subjects post Christmas. It is important that the exam groups take time to rest and recover over the break. However, some study planning and review of notes will make the next phase of examination preparation more effective. Student support from the pastoral team has been dedicated and empathetic. Importantly, students have also supported each other and I am sure will continue to do so, this is really what makes Highdowners stand out!

Thank you to Mr Santer and Team Music for getting us all into a festive mood at the Christmas Concert. Such talent and such hard work evident in the event.

Our Presentation evening on Thursday 19th December will celebrate the great achievements in summer examination results for our year 11 students who took Advanced maths in year 10, our Lower 6 with their GCSEs and our upper 6 returning from university. Plus those students testing themselves through the challenge of Duke of Edinburgh will be celebrated. We look forward to hearing from Charlotte Hartley, our Guest of Honour, at that event.

We close for Christmas on Friday 20th December at 12.30pm following our Christmas Assemblies. School starts again for all at 8.40am on Tuesday 7th January 2020 following staff Professional learning day on the Monday.

I wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas holiday, I hope that you are able to enjoy some great experiences with your families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachelf Cave". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'C' at the end.

Ms R E Cave
Headteacher