



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

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Headteacher:
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18th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am delighted to be writing to you from a Highdown buzzing with students back on site. The attendance has been fantastic and, as before, we are delighted that we have the confidence of our community in the measures we are taking to ensure the safety of our students and staff. It has been a pleasure to speak to students when I am on duty around the site. Their positivity at being back is evident and their mature conversations with me are invigorating.

In my learning walks about the school, the atmosphere is very positive and students are being very helpfully compliant with the restrictions and with wearing face coverings in class. The guidance about face coverings is being reviewed at the Easter break by the Department for Education, so we will confirm our actions as soon as this is published.

We complete the three cycles of onsite testing this week and thereafter students will be given tests to use at home as staff are now doing. We obviously cannot monitor the usage of these tests but would urge all families to support the regular twice weekly testing. Reassurance for our whole community is secured partly through these tests, as well as limiting further disruption to education through transmission of the virus. Thank you for the support of our team of volunteer testers who made the process so efficient.

Highdown is really thrilled to be part of the anti-body testing programme to inform the science of covid. There has been a positive response from families and staff. Thank you for taking part.

At the time of writing, we have not had confirmation from the exam boards of their materials to be used by schools to support our Assessed Grades for year 11 and 13. However, we do have our process clearly worked out to ensure that we reflect our students' achievement levels. Students will be briefed by their teachers as [Assessed Grades](#) explains. Please do take time to watch this.

There is much talk in the media about lost learning and the need to catch up. Whilst learning has been very different over the last year, it is important that we recognise that alternative skills and qualities will have been developed. This was recently spoken about by the Association of School and College Leaders as the 'dignity of achievement'. Positive language is being used in school to celebrate these skills and attributes and given accreditation through our participation in the national PiXL Edge programme. Please can this be replicated at home; it is vital that we celebrate the positives. If we focus on what students can do and have learnt, as teachers, this informs our planning for future lessons to ensure all make progress.



House Community Week has been a super success with great fundraising and fun scavenger activities. Thank you to Miss Mathews for coordinating this with our fantastic Student Leaders. We say goodbye to Miss Mathews at the end of this term as she moves to take up promotion to Deputy Headship at the Kennet School, we wish her well. We also wish Mrs Bates well as she retires at the end of April after eight years of service to Highdown.

Understandably, students are pleased to see each other and be able to have more of a sense of normality. However, please can families discuss at home that students should be returning straight home after school and not lingering by local shops or in the streets. Additionally, some members of society are more anxious than previously and it would help if students can disperse quietly and give a wide berth to members of the public as they encounter them on streets and pavements. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachael Cave". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Ms R E Cave
Headteacher