



# HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL

*Care and Excellence for All*

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 1

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you had a good Easter break and were able to make the most of the brief spell of warm weather. Let's hope it returns soon!

Spring was a very successful term for us with pupils working very hard and lots of great things going on. We have had some good news recently with the school securing extra funds to develop the site by replacing old windows and also introducing cashless catering! See later for more details.

It's that time of year when GCSE start again and we wish our year 11 well for these important examinations. I know how hard they have been working and I am expecting them to achieve some fantastic results. Many of them have been interviewed for post 16 college places recently and the interviewers have often told me how impressed they have been. We are really proud of our year 11 and will miss them when they leave!

### Uniform

Just a reminder that pupils in years 8 to 11 can wear any combination of the new and old uniform this year but we expect everyone to be in the new uniform for the start of the next academic year. This includes black shoes and the new grey blazer. We have put in this transition period based on parental feedback to minimise any extra costs.

We would also like to remind parents that fashion items such as short skirts and jeans are not part of our uniform and pupils wearing these will be challenged.

### Bid Success

I am pleased to inform you that the school has secured another £200,000 for site development from the DFE. These funds will enable us to replace virtually all remaining single pane windows with new double glazing. Many of the old windows are the original ones from the 1950s and it will really improve the look of building to replace them. This development will have the added benefit of reducing our heating and maintenance bills to free up more money for teaching and learning.

We have been very successful over the last few years when bidding for capital grants. We have won nearly £2,000,000 of funds for developments such as new classrooms, new boilers, energy efficient lighting, double glazed windows and replacement flat roofing. Whilst our building is quite old, we are proud of its history and character and are pleased that we have been able to upgrade it!

### Rajiv Popat

Hastings were honoured to have Rajiv Popat, Reporter and Journalist for ITV Central join our two groups of Media Studies GCSE students this term as part of the Speakers for Schools. This is a network

of today's most influential figures across business, arts, politics and more, donating their time and expertise, visiting state schools to inspire young people.

Rajiv not only engaged students with his clips of footage of news stories he has covered, he also explained what a typical day was like for a journalist. He allowed the students to ask questions and have a hands-on experience of his very expensive camera! All 45 students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The Media Studies GCSE students are examined on News - both print, online and on social media platforms - for one of the final exam papers, so they also gained valuable knowledge for this.

## **Cashless Catering**

Many parents have requested that we use online payments for food in school and I am pleased to tell you that we will be trialling it later this term with a view to starting it fully in the new academic year.

## **Staffing Changes**

I just wanted to give you an update on some staffing changes we had last term.

We are very pleased to welcome back Mrs Bonser in the maths department who recently returned from maternity leave. We are also pleased that Mr King and Mr Partner have returned to school after extended periods of health related absence. They are both on a phased return and should be back up to full time soon. Virtually all their lessons have been covered by specialist staff whilst they were away.

Unfortunately one of our science teachers, Mr Grzeszczyk, had to retire early through ill health. His classes are being picked up by other science staff wherever possible and we have recruited an experienced and successful teacher to replace him from August.

Mrs Urwin in history is on maternity leave currently and will be returning in the new academic year. Her lessons are being covered by Mrs Limb who is an experienced humanities teacher.

I apologise for any inconvenience that these absences may have had. It is never ideal when staff are absent but in these cases it has been unavoidable. We have worked hard to minimise the impact on pupils, for example by using specialist cover staff wherever possible, and are now expecting a smooth end to the year.

## **Book Fair**

Recently we held an impromptu second hand book sale in the library. Books on sale were either no longer required or those that had been donated but were duplicates of books we already have on our shelves. Books were sold for 20p or 50p for hard backs and we raised £26. This money will now be used to buy new books for next year.

There will be the next Scholastic Book Fair later on this term, towards the end of June. More details will follow closer to the time.

After the Easter Break we will be setting up a Stationery shop just outside of the Library. Everyday stationery essentials will be on sale at low prices.

## **Cyber First Competition**

During January, we ran the Cyberfirst competition organised by 'The National Cyber Security Centre' aimed at Year 8 girls.

Congratulations to the team of four girls who completed challenges in the competition week at school, lunch, in lessons and in the evenings either as part of a team or individually.

Each question was derived from skills used every day by cyber security professionals, which were separated into 4 main categories with three layers of difficulty: beginner, intermediate and expert.

None of the answers were immediately obvious and required the girls to work, discuss and research together to solve as many challenges as they could.

The girls enjoyed this so much, they have now all booked to attend a free four-day residential 'Cyberfirst Girls' Defender course' in Nottingham. The course will provide a valuable introduction to the tools, knowledge and skills required to build and protect small networks and personal devices.

We look forward to having more teams enter for the 2020 competition.

## **Lockdown Strategy**

Schools nationally are being advised to have a lockdown strategy in place to keep pupils safe if there is an intruder on site. Whilst we have not needed one in the past and don't expect to need one in the future, we feel it is prudent to introduce this based on DFE national advice.

We will be launching it later on in the second half of this term in assemblies and are likely to have a practice in June. The procedure will involve staff locking pupils in their classrooms for a short time until the all clear is signalled. When we do the drill we will warn pupils beforehand and make it clear it is only a practice to avoid any undue worry.

## **Charity Events**

We raised over £400 for Comic Relief in March. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously.

## **Nut Allergies**

I would ask that parents exercise care and consideration towards pupils in school with a nut allergy when planning the contents of lunch boxes. We have a number of students who have severe nut allergies and can be seriously affected by someone else who is eating – or may have recently eaten – nuts. We would kindly ask for your support on this important medical issue.

Please note that although we are striving to be a nut-free school, it is impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that no nuts will be brought onto the premises.

## Calendar Dates

- Monday 29 April Start of half term 5
- Tuesday 30 April Personal development day 5
- Monday 6 May Bank holiday
- Monday 13 May Start of GCSE examinations
- Friday 24 May End of half term 5
- Monday 3 June Start of half term 6
- Friday 28 June Personal development day 6
- Friday 12 July End of the school year. Finish at 2pm.

## Thank You

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Nick Goforth, Head of Hastings