



# HOPE VALLEY COLLEGE

NURTURE - ENRICH - ACHIEVE

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Dear Parent/Carer

A lot has happened in College this term and I will try and briefly take you through the key developments. I will send an email version of this letter too, so that you can access the links more easily.

## **Website/Uniform/Weather**

The College website has changed in look/feel and content. See [www.hvcollege.com](http://www.hvcollege.com)

Many parents had commented that the website did not give the information you wanted, so we have started the process of improving its functionality. You should now be able to find the information you need more easily, including the uniform policy and calendar dates (a copy of key dates for parents is also in with this letter). Further feedback is always welcome. Our thanks to the parents who have been directly involved in helping make this change.

On uniform, we have had an incident where a student's fingernail was damaged while wearing acrylic nails. We have amended the College uniform policy to explicitly state that students must not wear acrylic nails, as a potential health and safety concern, as a result. See the following link for more details:

<https://hvcollege.com/parents/uniform-equipment/>

As we get into the New Year we will use the website to publicise any closure due to winter weather. We will make a decision whether to close or not by about 7.00am each day there is the prospect of snow, so please check the website if you are concerned.

## **Ofsted and College development plans**

We recently had a monitoring visit from Ofsted, checking on progress since the inspection a year ago. These visits are not graded, but give us an indication of whether we are going in the right direction.

We have put a range of documents together under the Ofsted heading on the website:

<https://hvcollege.com/ofsted/>

The recent monitoring visit in November acknowledges the positive changes made and gives clear advice on areas we still need to improve (a copy of the letter is on the website)..

One area that we were criticised for in December 2017 and which has not improved since is students' attendance. The reality is that overall attendance here has not changed much over the 15 years I have been here, but what used to be above the national average is now below it. That is one reason why a number of parents have had letters recently about attendance: we have to demonstrate that we are determined to improve attendance. We have included a leaflet on attendance in with this mailing. Linked to that, please ring the College before 9.30 each day if your child is off sick. You could alternatively email [attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk) (please make sure you include your child's name in the subject line). This will save us trying to chase every absence.

A priority for us this year has been to improve behaviour, and it was encouraging to see the Ofsted team recognised that behaviour was generally good. We have done a great deal of work on bullying with students over the last half-term, and the Ofsted team asked students about this at length. We have also included the results of recent surveys of students and parents about bullying, along with the College development plan which has a focus on behaviour. A booklet on behaviour is also included in this mailing.

Connecting both attendance and behaviour is the role of the pastoral support staff in College. Students need to understand that pastoral staff are not available to see them during lessons UNLESS an appointment has been made. Too often recently we have had students turn up to see pastoral staff at the start of a lesson: that can't happen. We need students to be in lessons except where there are prior arrangements made. Assemblies at the start of next term will cover these changes with students.



We have undertaken work samples both as part of standard College procedure, and alongside inspectors during the recent monitoring visit. In both of these we saw some excellent examples of marking and feedback, and students spoke to inspectors about how useful feedback was in the majority of lessons, including the positive impact that the recent developments to our marking policy have had. However, there are still some inconsistencies across the College and we are continuing to work hard to address these.

### **Show My Homework/ClassCharts**

Linked to the improvement of behaviour, from January we will *no longer be using Show My Homework* to share homework with parents and students. We are replacing it with a piece of software called 'ClassCharts' which not only enables us to set homework electronically in much the same way as Show My Homework, but which also allows us to share behaviour events quickly and easily, both positive and negative, with parents and students. This will include notifications for detentions.

All new behaviour entries including positives and detentions will show in ClassCharts, not in ParentPortal. Within school we will also be using it to help teachers better understand students' starting points, another area for improvement identified by Ofsted.

In this pack is a letter which has individual parent login details and instructions about how to access the programme via a computer or an app. Please take a few minutes over the holiday to get set up with this, and look back over things from the last few weeks where we have been using it as a trial. In this period about 85% of entries made by teachers were for positive behaviours, reinforcing the message that most students are getting it right most or even all of the time. We will give students their access codes in the new term.

### **Mobile phones**

We have seen an increase in the number of arguments we are having with students about them using phones against the College rules. Students and parents should know that there has been discussion about banning phones altogether from College, and this is more likely to happen if students do not follow the rules which have worked well for some time now. Students should not use their phones – or wear their earphones – in the building unless they have explicit permission to do so. Misuse will result in confiscation.

### **Budget/Multi-Academy Trust developments**

We continue to be on track to have a balanced budget this year, although parents will realise that this is because there are less staff in College and so not everything works as well as it would ideally. We are currently looking at the curriculum for next year which will also be based on a balanced budget.

Discussions continue with Chorus trust <https://www.chorustrust.org/> and it looks like we will be in a position to say something more concrete in the second half of next term.

### **Reminders:**

Year 11 – College and Sixth Form applications (Sheffield deadline is end of January).

Year 10 – Work Experience – forms need to be returned by the end of January.

Year 9 – Please could I remind parents of students in Year 9 that this Friday (21 December) is the deadline for the submission of *preferences* for KS4 courses. All information, and the online form, can be found on our website here <https://hvcollege.com/students/options/>

Please don't forget to inform us of any changes to address, email address or mobile number. You can do this directly in ParentPortal or by emailing Mrs Hickinson at [dhickinson@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:dhickinson@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk)

Many thanks for your support over this long term, and I hope you and your family have a good break. Best wishes for the New Year!



Paul Dearden  
Acting Principal