



HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE LETTER

RWJ/jmp/Headteacher's Update
15 October 2019

Dear Parents

Open Evening Thursday 26 September

Preparing my presentation for Open Evening always highlights to me the wonderful successes of so many of our students each year. The evening was a great success and I received a lot of very positive feedback from prospective parents. As ever, our students were our greatest ambassadors.

Hot Chocolate with the Headteacher



I held my first hot chocolate of the year with a mixed group of students who had completed some excellent work on The Big Summer Read, 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' by Onjali Q Rauf. I would like to



congratulate Diya Sharma, Mia Griffiths (Year 7); Bilaal Soddie, Louisa Hawkins, Nyla Ahmed, Lorin Stringfellow, Sienna Deakin, Amelie Cook (Year 8); Isabel Troughton and Eva Amiah (Year 9).

South of England Tennis Tournament Success

On Friday 4 October our boys' tennis teams travelled to the Sutton Tennis Academy in South London for the South East Regional Tennis Finals. Haydon were the only school to have two teams to have qualified and were the only non-selective state school in the final stages of the competition.

The Year 7/8 team had two tough games against Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Dartford and Alleyn's School. Whilst the Year 10/11 boys gave Tiffin Grammar School (Kingston) a real fright in taking them to a 'super set' in the semi-finals before defeating Colfe's School in the third-fourth place play-off.

All boys were a credit to the school and played some fantastic tennis throughout the day.

Year 10/11 Team: Connor Daniel, Luke Searle, Luke Davidson and Jashanveer Birah

Year 7/8 Team: Dwij Shah, Oliver Kirk, Saavan Gudka and Rajan Khumra



School Closure

The site team have been working extremely hard to remedy all of the issues associated with the recent flooding. I will be reviewing the school's response to the incident this week. Communication on these matters is always a priority and with this case we were able to get messages out on Twitter much quicker than through our 'In Touch' school messaging service (due to the urgency of shutting down the electricity). Could I ask all parents to register with the school Twitter account (@HaydonSchool).

Parents who have had children at the school for several years will know that I always do my best to keep the school open on occasions when it snows. I make decisions based on ensuring the staff and students on site will be safe. Unfortunately, on this occasion the closure was unavoidable.

Malicious Fire Alarm Activations

Sadly, for the second time this term we have experienced a malicious activation of the fire alarm in school resulting in a full evacuation of the school site and the fire brigade being in attendance. For both activations, the perpetrators have been identified and regrettably I have made the decision to permanently exclude the students from school. Please remind your child that a malicious activation of the school fire alarm will result in permanent exclusion.

Behaviour on Journey to and From School

Unfortunately, I am receiving an increasing number of phone calls regarding the behaviour of a small number of Haydon School students before and after school. Callers comment on bad language, students congregating in groups, behaving inappropriately on buses and while walking along the road. Callers are asked to identify students and the behaviour is dealt with whenever possible but this reflects very badly on the school and is damaging our reputation. Staff are on duty around the area, but I would be grateful if you could please encourage your children to go straight home at the end of the day and get changed before they meet up with friends again later when they should remember that members of the public are entitled to go about their business without hearing bad language or witnessing inappropriate behaviour.

Communications with the School

From time to time it is necessary to parents to communicate with staff at Haydon School. Due to teaching commitments during the school day, it is preferable that in the first instance you make contact by email. In order for us to manage our high volume of communications and maintain our partnership with you we respectfully request that you support this policy regarding home and school email communication.

1. Haydon staff will acknowledge receipt of an email within two working days during term time (this excludes weekends).
2. You should receive a full response to the email by telephone or by email or letter. This may in some cases inform the parent that more time is required to provide a full response.
3. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the parent that they have done so.
4. In the interest of maintaining a reasonable work life balance staff do not respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays).

Attendance

As we approach the end of the first term, I would like to congratulate 661 students (Years 7-11) who have achieved 100% attendance this half term. There is a great deal of research that highlights the link between attending school and academic achievement. Next half term is the one in which attendance seems to drop. I would appreciate your support in doing all that you can to get your child into school every day. I know from time to time children do get ill but a small number of students are having too much time away from school and this will impact on their learning.

OFSTED Parent View

I would like to thank the large number of parents who have already completed Parent View. As I explained in my last Headteacher Update the feedback is very helpful to the school and we will be using it to help us identify further areas for improvement. It would be great if we could get to over 100 parents having completed it and I would like to request that all parents log on and complete the 14 questions about Haydon School. <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/login?destinaton=give-your-views>

The Forgetting Curve and How to Remember

If you have ever been on a course and forgotten most of the content a week later or walked into a room and wondered why you went there, then firstly you are not alone, and secondly, this issue is a phenomenon recognised by Cognitive Psychologists. You may have heard of a 'learning curve', but did you know that there is also a Forgetting Curve? It describes the decline of your memory after a learning experience. Apparently, as soon as you learn something, you forget nearly 50% of it! And the memory is likely to disappear completely if you never re-visit it.

Happily, it has also been discovered that you can intercept The Forgetting Curve and in fact, your memory is potentially limitless. This year teachers are focusing on learning strategies associated with memory. This term we are concentrating on Spacing, Retrieval Practice and Concrete Examples.

- Spacing: Spreading out your learning over time, instead of last minute cramming
- Retrieval Practice: Putting away your notes and trying to remember without prompting
- Concrete Examples: Using analogies to help remember a difficult idea or process

Parents and carers of younger students can help by getting them to think of something they need to improve at (e.g. times tables or vocabulary) and doing just five minutes extra on it a day. It has been proved that regular short bursts on a topic is a much more effective technique than spending hours on it in one go. GCSE and A Level students can be supported by encouraging them to close their books and try to recall as much as they can, e.g. as a brainstorm, or by answering questions verbally. Even if they do not fully know the answer, the struggle to try will strengthen the pathway to the memory and will pay off long term.

The book "Understanding How We Learn" by Yana Weinstein, Megan Sumeracki and Oliver Caviglioli explains these concepts in depth and their website www.learningscientists.org has advice for parents and students.

Parental Presentation on Knife Crime

This event will take place on Monday 28 October from 7.00 to 8.30pm and is for parents/carers of Haydon School students. We have booked a Keynote Speaker, Ali Cope, for our Haydon Safeguarding Week who will speak to each of our year groups as well as hosting the parental presentation on the dangers and raising awareness of the impacts of Knife Crime. Parents wishing to attend should register using this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/keynote-speaker-for-safeguarding-week-ali-cope-tickets-75135864393?aff=ebapi>

R W Jones
Headteacher

Key Dates

Thursday 17 October

Early Closure (1.20pm)
Sixth Form Open Evening

Friday 18 October

Staff Training Day
School Closed to Students

**Monday 21 October
to Friday 25 October**

HALF TERM HOLIDAY

Thursday 7 November

Year 7 and Year 9 Form Tutor Evening
(Full school day)

Thursday 14 November

Year 13 Parents Evening
(Full school day)