

WEEK 38 - Friday 16 July 2021

Hello to all of our Year 9 families.

Another big 'Thank You!' to start the blog today. Once more, and having escaped too much disruption recently, we are currently seeing a large amount of the year group having to self-isolate and work from home. The support you are giving your child and the school at this time is greatly appreciated.

Mrs Green and I are in the throes of preparing for September, and the start of Year 10, hoping that when we return after the summer life may be a bit brighter; the sun will have shone plenty, and still be here with us; and our year group are ready for the two years journey towards their GCSE exams. With this in our minds I want to go through a few items with you, giving you the chance to ask for any further clarity.

A few weeks ago you will have received notification about the Uniform Policy. Whilst nothing has actually changed we are clarifying more precisely the skirts and shoes that can be worn by students, ensuring they meet the policy that we have. For any new items: Blazers, House ties, and PE tops are available to buy at Rawcliffes in the town centre; black trousers, tailored and straight legged, can be bought from a wide range of suppliers (legging, jeggings, jeans, and chinos are not permitted); Black skirts need to be plain black and knee length and our approved skirts are available from: Rawcliffes, Steady School wear, Audrey Mansells, Marks and Spencers, or Matalan at a range of prices. If you require further clarification on skirts please contact us.

Shoes must be plain black leather/ leather look and polishable (trainers, boots, embellished shoes are not permitted). Should you need to know anything more, or to check suitability of clothing, please contact us to discuss.

Alongside the uniform, we are hoping that all students will return fully prepared to start their GCSE courses. It is strange, having been a lover of stationery and bags back in the 1990s, to see students arrive with no bags or equipment. Please encourage your child to bring a bag and the following equipment: pen x 2, pencil, ruler, rubber, sharpener, and a folder to put any homework in - something that I have seen used by others and it helps prevent loss and damage. If your child wants to, they can bring a drink, but these must not be Energy drinks. We will then supply students with a Planner to always have with them in school; they will come home daily and you will be able to see how your child is getting on with House Points, Consequences, Homework and other notes (there will be a space for you to sign each week).

Each day Mrs Green and I are here to support your child in school. Even when the holidays start there will still be support available. We have a list of external support networks that students can contact if they need to get support or help. Additionally, we will have access to emails and will monitor anything as it comes in through the summer. The external support will be shared with the year group via their school email address and Google Classroom next week.

As I often share information with students, I will also be sharing a list of clubs and organisations that may be of interest to your child beyond school. Some students are already involved in sport, dance, theatre outside school; however, I often hear students telling me they just go home, see friends, watch TV, as there is nothing for them to do. There are many opportunities out there for the students to develop new skills, meet new people, and

experience new things. Again, I will share this list to them via email and post on Google Classroom- the document will have hyperlinks to websites and they can view at their leisure.

I hope that everything shared with you is clear and useful, but if there is anything you need to discuss please don't hesitate to contact us and we will do all we can to help you and your child.

Please have a lovely summer, continue to stay safe, and take care.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 36 - Friday 2 July 2021

Hello to all Year 9 families,

As we enter July and approach the end of an unusual year, I want to start with an enormous 'Thank you' to everyone that works so tirelessly to support our students - both at home and when they are here at school. Working together is certainly making a difference for our students and, even though we have only been in post since January, I am really feeling that the level of collaboration between home and school has made some huge differences to the students' school experiences; 'Alone we can do very little, yet together we can do a lot.'

Having recently had a new telephone system put in place, Mrs Green and I are now getting the calls coming directly to us, so long as we are in the office, and it has been lovely to hear how much difference this has made to some families; one parent said, 'I cannot believe you have answered the phone. I didn't imagine I would get to speak to you straight away.' It made me smile that this was now possible for you all. Please know that both Mrs Green and I are always on the end of the phone or an email; we always endeavour to support you and your child as quickly as possible and we will always strive to find a way to solve a problem. We are aware that, due to busy working patterns, calling us isn't always easy, but please leave us a voicemail out of hours or drop us an email if that is an easier option.

There has been a lot happening for the Year 9s recently and I have been overwhelmed at the attitude of our students. Last week they were sitting their end of year assessments with some catching up this week following an absence. As I wandered around and checked the students were settled in their lesson, it was wonderful to see how focused they were on applying their knowledge to their exams. I have witnessed great levels of maturity, calmness, and independent focus on the tasks given to them. The great attitudes shown now will certainly serve them well in 2 years time.

In tutor time we have continued to complete work on our core value 'Respect'. This week students have been looking at how the language they use matters when it comes to showing respect. One topic was how the words they use can cause upset or harm to others, and then discussing how the messages could be shared in a kinder way, more respectful of feelings.

We have also spent time reminding students of the need to be organised, especially as we end Year 9 and prepare for Year 10 next year. We have had a number of students forgetting equipment, planners, and losing shoes recently. We have listened to cries of, 'My mum moved it.', 'I think I left it at... and they cannot bring it back to me until the weekend.' and 'It's not my fault!'. Both Mrs Green and I are now responding with a reminder of the need for personal responsibility for their possessions and behaviours, and it is nobody else's fault. Hopefully together we can combat this and get them fully prepared for September.

Thinking about September, hopefully normality might resume in our day to day school life. Last week Mr Groak shared a uniform update with students and in a letter to you. As far as the policy stands, there are no changes to the uniform itself; however, we have sourced a range of skirts that are now approved. Recently there has been a surge in stretchy skirts and these are not in line with the policy, hence the need to tighten up on the styles accepted. The skirt styles are on show to students in the centre of the school. I would also like to remind you that shoes should be plain black leather/ leather look polishable, with no embellishments or decoration. If there is anything you are unsure about, when starting to source new items, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Stay safe, have fun, and take care.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 34 - Friday 18 June 2021

Hello to all of our Year 9 families,

It has been a while since I last wrote my blog, and the Whit Week half term break seems like a distant memory; however, the sun certainly shone and gave many the opportunity to get out as families, hold BBQs, and enjoy time at the coast or in the countryside - I hope you were able to make the most of the time together.

Returning from the break, the final half term has had a lovely, positive start for many of our year 9 students. We have moved to a new scheme to run during tutor sessions and there is a huge focus this half term on teaching our students the importance of respect, and exploring the various situations that can arise from having a lack of respect. Students were asked to consider a slogan last week that could be used in their tutor groups; we have had a few different slogans within the year group: 'Give it to get it', "Respect others as you would expect to be respected", to mention a couple.

The conversations have been really engaging as I have wandered around the groups and the ability to demonstrate respect is becoming clearer. Last week, as we returned from lunch, year 9 made us extremely proud. They were all approaching the building, reluctantly as the sun was glorious, and took it upon themselves, on three separate occasions, to stop and give way to 6th Form and year 8 students who had to pass by our entrance to access their own areas. The smile on my face was beaming as I praised them for their great level of respect. One of the key messages I have added during discussions with students has been, *"Show respect even to people who don't deserve it; not as a reflection of their character, but as a reflection of yours."* (Dave Willis). We will continue with this work in the coming weeks and I am hoping to see respect across the year group increase- for themselves and others.

Beyond tutor time, in lessons students have been preparing for their end of year assessments. These take place next week in the majority of their subjects. Teachers have been sharing resources, via Google Classroom, and discussing the importance of revision and preparation. With two years to go until their GCSEs we are trying to develop and instil good habits of how to revise and manage time. It is important to help our students do this to prevent them burning out in the future. Free time is equally important.

During break and lunch it has been lovely to see how students are making the most of the delightful outside space we have. Their free time in the sunshine seems to be maximised - using their time to relax and have fun. Meandering outside with the year group, we have seen great potential for an awesome year 10 Cricket Team next year; watched more students involve themselves with football and other sporting activities; seen the revival of daisy-chain creations; and witnessed a lot of students busting-moves to some great tunes (including some classics from the 90s being played.) This use of time is great for their mental and physical health, and some students are starting to consider joining clubs as Lockdown will hopefully ease for the summer.

Thinking about other ways to spend freetime, some students have asked what clubs are out there beyond school that they can involve themselves in. Through social media research recently I have found a netball team for my daughter to attend and my son has joined the Army cadets. If your child is looking for something different to do, that keeps them away from screens and the confines of their bedrooms, I cannot praise the networking with others to find something for them to do- there is so much available in our local area.

Please remember we are here to help as much as we can, stay safe, and take care.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 32 - Friday 28 May 2021

Hello to all Year 9 families,

I hope everyone is well. Regarding the search for the Sunshine that I mentioned in my previous blog, it has been found and will apparently be joining us all for the bank holiday weekend and half term; thank you for those of you who have searched the skies in the past two weeks.

Students in Year 9 have coped very well with the abundance of rain in the past two weeks. They have shown resilience to the weather in the morning, getting lined up swiftly and entering the building sensibly. With Year 11 sitting their final assessments, the year group have had to relocate zones at break and lunch time, this has been done with maturity and common sense - using the canopies, and in some cases the trees, for shelter. It has also been nice to see students, not deterred by the rain, still enjoying a game of football - although as a mum myself I have cringed at the amount of mud worn by students as they have returned to lessons.

In tutor time over the past two weeks we have looked at Sleep, Mindfulness, and issues around Black Lives Matter. The discussions in tutor rooms have been vibrant, engaging, and some really clear understandings and opinions have been shared. The topic of sleep was quite an eye opener, no pun intended, as we discussed the vast range of sleep patterns with our students; some of the year group have fabulous patterns, whilst others appear to be getting less than 5 hours sleep a night; we have discussed the reasons sleep is so necessary and what is keeping them awake, with a lot of reasons being linked to 'too much going through my mind' or 'notifications on my phone' being two of the most common. From this we have made suggestions to turn wifi/data off before sleep, and to keep a notepad by the bed to write down things that are keeping their minds occupied. Hopefully these ideas have been taken onboard and sleep will improve overtime.

This week I have also been looking at the attendance of the year group. In my virtual assembly this week I discussed the need to try and improve attendance during the summer term, as when lessons are missed a number of them start to struggle in lessons and their confidence dwindles. Students with 100% attendance have been recognised today with a little treat, whilst those between 96% and 99% were entered into a draw (if they collected a raffle ticket during tutor) and have also had a treat. In the final summer term Mrs Green and I will be meeting groups of students who have 'lower than hoped for attendance' to discuss ways that we can support them. If your child is having issues preventing them from coming to school please let us know, as we want to do all we can to help them.

I hope you and your families have a lovely weekend and enjoy the sunshine next week. Stay safe, have fun, and take care.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 30 - Friday 14 May 2021

Hello to all Year 9 families,

Somebody has reliably informed us that we are in the throngs of spring, and that summer is close... If you find spring lurking in your area please send it our way, as students are in a complete muddle with their daily attire and are either too warm or too cold.

Beyond the ever changing weather, the year group are doing very well. Having done assemblies that focused on our school values and their futures, students in Year 9 have been discussing extra curricular ideas; exploring the Duke of Edinburgh award; and talking about initial ideas of pathways and careers. With us only being weeks away from the end of term, and the students starting to think about Year 10, Mrs Green and I have been very impressed by their levels of maturity and improving belief in themselves.

Respect, kindness and resilience are values that we are encouraging students to promote daily, reminding them that *'Manners do not cost anything'*, *'One kind act leads to another'*, and *'Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow'*. I have also shared two thought-inspiring videos to groups this week and thought I would share them with you as well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT-HBI2TVtI> Kindness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTsvSAItPqA> Respect

Tutors have told us that watching these videos has led to some great discussions and conversions during their sessions. The kindness video brought a tear to my eyes as I watched the spread of kindness.

As we move forward towards the half term break, and beyond to the end of July, Mrs Green and I are looking forward to further developing the way we support the year group with things to meet their needs, taking onboard thoughts and ideas. To help us do this I gave each tutor group a questionnaire to complete. Students have been discussing: reward ideas, things that are going well, things that they feel are issues to be addressed, topics they wish to know more about, how many use their school email, and anything else they want us to do or be aware of. I will start looking through responses over the weekend and discuss the key areas with tutors and their groups next week.

Please stay safe, take care, and remember we are here to help all students. If there are any concerns or worries at home please remind your child of this and you can also email us to let us know hoyyear9@hessleacademy.com.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 28 - Friday 30 April 2021

Hello to all students, parents, and Year 9 families

It has been another couple of busy weeks with our year group and this week gave me the first opportunity to hold assemblies for the students in Year 9. These have been done in small groups - three tutor groups at a time and key messages shared.

Within the assemblies, I have explained the importance of our students understanding they are unique, everybody is different, and that is absolutely fine; there were some bewildered faces with the first slide which displayed images of Noah's Ark, varied carrots, and wildflowers, but they were quick to establish why they had been chosen. I moved on to discuss the importance of Kindness, Respect, Resilience, and being makers of their own destiny.

I told students to think positively and adapt the following words:

FAIL- First attempt in learning

END- Effort never dies

NO- Next opportunity

Additionally, I have had the chance to present the Duke of Edinburgh award to the year group. We run the scheme as a school and give students a chance to develop new skills and have lots of fun. If your son or daughter is interested in this and you would like to know more, you can find a presentation video on the year group Google Classroom. It is a wonderful opportunity for students and it helps to open doors in the future. I have asked any interested students to let me know next week.

I also used the assembly to discuss how students use Social Media and how we really need to develop a safer use of the internet by updating privacy settings, being aware of how there words can impact others and only having trusted contacts, captured in the message of 'Don't say anything online that you wouldn't want plastered on a billboard with your face on it'.

I hope that the messages shared with them this week have given them food for thought and helped them understand that we are here to help and support them.

As always, if you or your child needs our support then please don't hesitate to contact us

hoyyear9@hessleacademy.com

Have a lovely May Bank Holiday, take care and stay safe.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 26 - Friday 16 April 2021

Hello to all our Year 9 students and parents.

It feels a while since I last had a chance to talk about how life in Year 9 is currently going, and it is. In fact the time is flying.

After making a fabulous start following the second lockdown, students are now in full swing and it feels like they have never been away. As a whole, their commitment to being part of the school community and to their education is splendid and they are really engaging in their studies.

The year of Covid restrictions and limitations has, as we are all far too aware, been difficult for everybody. However, one thing that is standing out is the struggles it has caused with friendships and ways of communication amongst young people. In our office we have a poem on display that I seem to be referring to quite often as Mrs Green and I work to support the year group:

The world is filled with people who, no matter what you do, no matter what you try, will simply not like you. But the world is also filled with those who will love you fiercely. The ones who love you: they are your people.

Don't waste your finite time and heart trying to convince people who aren't your people that you have value. They will miss it completely. They won't buy what you are selling. Don't try to convince them to walk your path with you because you will only waste your time and your emotional good health. You are not for them and they are not for you. You are not their cup of tea and they are not yours.

Politely wave them along and you move away as well. Seek to share your path with those who recognize and appreciate your gifts, who you are.

Be who you are. You are not everyone's cup of tea and that is OK.

The poem is such a valuable reminder that sometimes we spend too long worrying about how people view us, rather than appreciating and enjoying time with those we care about.

Our year group is wonderful; they are friendly, funny, and maturing into wonderful young adults, but at times they dwell on negativity. Mrs Green and I will continue to work on their self belief, emotional and mental growth, and their experiences.

Lastly I have a few reminders for our students: Please remember equipment, planners, and masks. Uniform includes Black polishable shoes, and the only jewellery permitted is a watch and single stud in each ear. There have been a few cases of forgetfulness and we would appreciate your support with this.

Have a lovely weekend, stay safe, and I will send further news soon.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

WEEK 24 - Friday 19 March 2021

Hello to all of our year 9 students and their families.

Ten days ago Mrs Green and I were overwhelmed by the positive return made by our year 9 students. It was a day that we had been eagerly waiting for and the start was much smoother than we had potentially expected. The laughs, giggles, and relief in their faces to see friends again was absolutely wonderful (as was hearing some students wishing each other a Happy New Year and discussing Christmas gifts, three months late!)

The new daily routine of lining up was greeted positively, with tutors equally as pleased to see our students back as we were. Each tutor organised their group seamlessly and we were impressed at the organisation of students, both getting lined up in the right place and returning well prepared - thank you for your support in making this happen.

Building the steps on my counter, I am really enjoying getting round the groups during tutor time to say good morning. Moreover, Mrs Green and I are making it a mission to pop into lessons as often as we can to see how students are engaging in their lessons. The positive comments and emails from staff regarding their impressive attitudes are a further example of how our year group are wanting to learn and benefit from the subjects that they are studying. One student pointed out that she had seen me four times in one day, whilst others are somewhat shocked when we appear with their timetables, when they appear to be lost!

Our work with year 9 is really enjoyable, and this is supported by the numerous conversations and emails that we are having with you as their parents and careers. Being able to support your children is such an important part of the roles we hold. As parents to teenagers ourselves, both Mrs Green and I are aware of the many challenges families face in today's climate; I think we all agree that life was simpler when we were at school. However, this doesn't make parenting impossible. We have acknowledged that we are learning to parent, like all generations, with some significant challenges - Social Media and Covid Lockdown are likely the biggest reasons for some of the issues faced. Whatever is happening in your child's life please know that we will continue to support them and help them grow, whilst offering you ways to support them, or places to get advice.

This week my final message regards Covid measures. The majority of students are wearing masks correctly and sanitising often. However a number of students are still wearing their masks incorrectly and moaning about sanitising. All of us are wanting a brighter second half of the year and to do this we must all work together. Please can you encourage your child to always have a mask with them and stress the importance of wearing it, along with observing regular hand hygiene. Soon, students who have been taking part in the Lateral Flow Tests will be getting their home testing kits; there will be clear instructions enclosed and, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask us.

We have one week until the Easter break and I am hoping it will be another great week for our students and year team. Please remember that we are just a call or email away.

For now, take care and stay safe.

Mrs Todd Head of Year 9

Mrs Green Assistant Head of Year 9

