

## **WEEK 2 - Friday 16 September 2022**

Firstly, I would like to welcome back all my Year 10 students who have hopefully had a fantastic summer break. The summer really was a time for us to relax and recharge the batteries after a jam-packed year 9 that created so many amazing memories for both students and staff.

The start of the year is always a time of great promise and hope. A chance for students to set their stall out, push themselves that bit more in all that they do, and for everyone in the school to give their best at all times. This was my key message in today's assembly. To see my year group looking fantastic in their uniforms, behaving in a mature and responsible manner fills me with confidence as we embark on this important year. For those in Year 10, who are of course nearer to the 'business end' of their school careers, this is the time for them to hit the ground running and make a positive start in every subject, especially those option subjects that they have had the opportunity to choose. I am really proud to say that students have already shown a fantastic attitude in the first week back!

Starting the new year has also been refreshing due to the lack of a need for Covid restrictions. The memory fades fast, but just 12 months ago we were still at a stage of masks on the move, doors wide open and nothing 'extra' on top of the curriculum. I cannot express how good it is to have the school running 100% normally again. Over the next few weeks, I expect to see many of the year 10 students taking advantage of our superb extra-curricular offerings. I will be sharing the calendar of extra-curricular opportunities with students and parents via the school website, through our social media platforms and through our tutor program. If you have any queries regarding any of these activities, please contact me via email.

Turning to the world outside of school, I'm writing this blog after following the news coverage of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I'm aware that not everyone reading this blog will be a supporter of the royal family, and not everyone will share the same level of sadness regarding The Queen's death. However, you don't have to be a royalist to appreciate that the Queen's death is a monumental day in the history of this country. The Queen has indeed been a constant presence over such a long time and her loss will no doubt be felt deeply by many, many people. We spend a lot of time in school promoting in students a sense of responsibility, kindness and respect, three qualities that The Queen showed in abundance. Please spend time with your families on Monday as the country pays their respects to our Queen of the last 70 years.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact me or Miss Wilkin at [hoyyear10@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyyear10@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 10

Miss Wilkin

Assistant Head of Year 10

## **WEEK 4 - Friday 30 September 2022**

Monday 3 October is an important date for the families of students in year 10 at Hessle High School. I am really excited to be involved in our Year 10 Parent Information evening where I get the chance to meet face to face with as many parents as possible. As I have mentioned many times before in my blog, positive relationships in a school between all stakeholders is so important. Monday night gives

me a fantastic opportunity to further develop those positive relationships with parents as we move into a really important and significant stage of our student's education journey.

During the evening you will also meet other members of our teaching team and support team who all play a crucial role in providing a platform to allow your children to succeed in everything they do both academically and creatively in school. This will include information about:

- Summer Exams 2023
- The School Year
- Hessle Sixth Form College
- Careers Advice
- Student Support and Wellbeing
- Importance of Attendance

It's now been four weeks since we returned to from the summer break. I continue to highlight just how important it for every student to "hit the ground running" and make positive starts in all their subjects. I am proud to say that I have seen a real improvement in the maturity and

Attitudes towards learning from my year group. I also really appreciate and value the support that I get from parents and guardians as it really is a team effort to help our young people navigate through this challenging period in their lives. Working together, supporting each other and celebrating our successes will ensure that our students really do achieve extraordinary outcomes across all subjects and extra-curricular activities.

Miss Wilkin and I really look forward to meeting with you on Monday and hope to support you with any issues or questions you may have as we progress through the year.

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## **WEEK 8 - Friday 4 November 2022**

Extracurricular activities are essential for students because they allow them to learn about themselves and to develop their own individual interests. They also help them develop skills that will help them in their future careers and life. They are also crucial for students because they allow students to make friends, improve their social skills, and get involved in new activities that might not otherwise be accessible to them. They can also help students find their passion in life.

Taking part in extracurricular activities at school teaches life skills that aren't always taught at home or in school, like how to accept failure even when you think you don't deserve it. Students have an opportunity through extracurricular activities at school to learn about teamwork, develop strong communication skills, experience what it feels like to stand on stage in front of an audience, time management, and many more. They are also taught to cooperate without bullying or being disrespectful to others. These personal attributes link in perfectly with our core values at Hessle High.

Extracurricular activities are an essential part of a child's development. They increase a child's self-confidence, help them learn how to be more social, and help them develop their talents. Many parents are concerned about the amount of time and money they spend on extracurricular activities. However, there is evidence that extracurricular activities can positively impact [children's academic performance](#) as well as their mental health and well-being.

Parents play an essential role in their children's extracurricular activities. They can help their children set up a schedule, plan for extracurricular events and stay organised. The extracurricular activities, such as joining a sports team, learning an instrument, joining a theatre group, require regular time commitment and initiative. Providing your children with a variety of pastimes will help keep them from engaging in the harmful behaviours that some students end up participating in. Extracurricular activities in schools are also of utmost importance to a student's growth. There are countless opportunities to pick up new skills and spark new passions outside the confines of any academic curriculum at Hessle High.

From Monday, all of the available extra-curricular clubs will be displayed in tutor time. This will highlight to all students the wide array of activities that they can get involved in. I will also be promoting these activities on our social media platforms so that parents can be involved in helping students engage with these opportunities.

Lastly, I just want to make a big deal of our Year 10 boys football team. Yesterday they played in the 3rd round of the National Cup competition, travelling to Joseph Rowntree School to compete. I am delighted and proud to let you know that they came out victorious and have moved into the 4th round draw. They displayed resilience, respect and integrity at all times and were extremely gracious in victory. The boys were absolutely buzzing with excitement on the coach journey home. Mr Griffith could not speak highly enough of all 14 boys involved. This is further evidence of the positive impact being involved in extracurricular activities can have on the confidence and wellbeing of our children. Well done boys...4th round here we come!

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## **WEEK 10 - Friday 18 November 2022**

Football has played a huge part in my life. From the age of 6 I have been involved in football either as a player, a supporter or a parent. I have made many lifelong friendships over the years because of my love of the game. I have developed my own personal attributes and skills through my experiences on a football pitch or within a team environment. I truly believe that my involvement in sport, and in particular football has shaped my future and allowed me to succeed in other parts of my life.

In any normal World Cup year, I would be really excited at this time. I have unbelievable memories of watching Mexico 86 - yes...I am that old - with my family and also watching Italia 90 with my friends. These are memories I cherish. As we approach the start of the Qatar World Cup, I find

myself not having that usual excited feeling of getting ready to watch a festival of football. I think it's fair to say that people's opinion on where the World Cup is being played are divided. I personally have had to think long and hard what my thoughts are. I sympathise and support the LGBTQ+ community. I am also fully aware of the human rights concerns surrounding the building of the stadiums. I have many friends and colleagues who have made the decision to boycott watching the World Cup this year because of these issues. I absolutely respect their decision. I sat down with my teenage boys and discussed as a family what we felt was the right thing to do. Having that open conversation was really interesting. Teenagers are more aware of societal issues than I think I give credit for. We did come to a decision as a family to support the England team but to also continue to raise awareness of all the issues that I mentioned earlier. We are patriotic as a family and hope that the England players and staff represent our nation with integrity and pride.

As highlighted in previous blogs there are many exciting extra-curricular opportunities available for all students at Hessle High. Please encourage your children to take advantage of these opportunities. Most sessions are held between 3-4pm. I can assure you that they will have a fantastic experience at all these clubs.

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## **WEEK 12 - Friday 2 December 2022**

This Christmas, many people will be sitting down to a lovely dinner with wide varieties of food and drink whilst spending quality time with their families and loved ones. Whilst much of the country will be sitting down to enjoy their meal, up to 2% of UK households are relying on food banks and therefore not so privileged. There is an enormous number of people going hungry in this country, and the figures are only getting worse. At Hessle High we are very aware of our place and impact on our local community. We pride ourselves on being a major stakeholder in the community and working closely with all partners to ensure positive outcomes where possible. We are also acutely aware that we have families who will be struggling this year in our community. Unfortunately, these issues directly affect some of our students and their families.

I am proud to tell people that our student body, across all year groups, are very aware of this access to food issue in their community and they want to help.

During tutor activities the students have decided to collect food items to donate to the local Hessle Foodbank charity. This decision was made by them to have a positive impact on the local people of Hessle and their families. There are several reasons that people find themselves relying on foodbanks this Christmas. Most recently the rises in interest rates and the huge increases in energy bills has had a massive impact on people's financial stability. Also, ill health and job losses have played a part in this major issue. It is important that we educate our children so that they are aware of the problems and difficulties that some families experience at this time of year. We should never let our children take for granted how fortunate they are to have food on the table and a roof over their heads.

As we approach the last two weeks of the term I for one am really looking forward to spending quality time at home with my family and friends. I am also going to take some time to support my local foodbank and hopefully make someone else's Christmas that little bit better. If you are able to donate any food items that can be passed onto the Hessle Foodbank, I know that our student body and staff team would be eternally grateful. I realise that not everybody is able to donate so please do not think you have to if this is the case.

I will let you all know how successful our Christmas Foodbank collection goes in the last blog of this year. Enjoy the next two weeks of festive countdown.

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### **WEEK 16 - Friday 13 January 2023**

Firstly, I wish all year 10 parents, students, and families a happy new year. For your children, 2023 is a massive year in their educational journey. They will complete year 10 in 7 months. They will start year 11 in 9 months! Can you believe that your children are almost in their final school year? As a parent, who has children in year 11, I was totally blindsided with how quickly the time flies from my children starting in foundation stage to being in their final year. Scary is an understatement.

This is why I refer to 2023 being a huge milestone for our young people. GCSEs are well underway; every lesson has a huge significance to their future success. Every day they attend and complete there 5 lessons have a significant impact on their future success. I am extremely lucky to have a year group that strives to achieve the best possible outcomes.

So, what more can our young people do to achieve extraordinary outcomes? We provide the students with fantastic resources, intervention support, quality teaching and learning when they are in our care. But amazingly a high percentage of students want to do more. This leads us to independent learning....HOMEWORK.

Independent learning is work that is set to be done outside the timetabled curriculum. It contains an element of independent study that it is not usually directly supervised by a teacher. It is important in raising student achievement. However, not all independent work is done at home; in fact, for some students who find it hard to work at home, or for some tasks which may require resources (books, software, equipment) more readily available at school, it is necessary or desirable to carry out the task at school. Independent work enhances student learning, improves achievement, and develops students' study skills and as such is an integral part of the curriculum including developing organisational and study skills for life. It requires careful planning and integration into the scheme of work of each curriculum area.

Independent Learning allows:

- Retrieval of key concepts and facts across time.

- Improvement in retention and linking of concepts/information.
- Consolidate and extend work covered in class or prepare for new learning activities.
- Develop research skills.
- Show progress and understanding.
- To enhance their study skills e.g. planning, time management and self-discipline.
- To take ownership and responsibility for learning.
- Engage parental cooperation and support.

The last bullet point is the one that jumps out to me. With your support your children will build on their knowledge, improve their life skills, and go on to achieve the grades they truly deserve at GCSE level. And as I mentioned at the start of this blog, 2023 is a year that every single student has the opportunity to achieve extraordinary outcomes with the support of their teachers and their parents/guardians.

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### **WEEK 18 - Friday 27 January 2023**

One of the highlights of my week is when I get the entire year group together and deliver an assembly. The topics of the assembly's change depending on the tutor group activities that the students complete in their morning tutor period. This week we paid our respects to all those who were affected during the Holocaust. Friday 27 January is Holocaust Memorial Day. The focus was on the ordinary people that were affected during this time. Mums and dads, boys and girls from normal backgrounds affected on both sides in this horrific moment in history. All students were so respectful and mature during this assembly. The main focus was on how we should be accepting of all people from all diverse backgrounds in life. Through acts of kindness, we really can make a difference in people's lives. This all links in perfectly to our school values that are the bedrock of our school community.

As you will all be aware, the extra-curricular offering at Hessle High school is fantastic. Clubs and activities are promoted through the school website, through our social media platforms and communicated to parents via email. I am really excited to inform you that our extra-curricular offering continues to grow. We now have more than 30 different opportunities for students to participate in at the end of the normal school day. Over 400 students across all year groups attended a club in the last week. These range for numerous sporting clubs, to dungeons and dragons club, to arts and performing arts clubs, music and choir clubs to name just a few. As a year leader I visit as many clubs as I can to share these amazing experiences with our students and the adults who give up their time to support our students. Please continue to encourage your children to get involved in

as many activities as possible. If we can support, you in any way to make it possible for your children to access the extra-curricular activities please contact us via the head of year email.

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### **WEEK 20 - Friday 10 February 2023**

Rest is important to ensure that your body and mind are able to perform effectively. After another busy term, making time to rest is essential. This can also help to prevent illness and the burnout that can happen when you don't give yourself a break. This applies to all stakeholders in our school community. Parents need time to relax and spend quality time with their children during the school holidays. Teacher and school staff need time away from the school environment to spend with friends and family. And most importantly our students need to unwind and relax and be kids during the school breaks.

Rest looks different for everyone. For some people, it will mean downing tools and putting energy into different things: whether that's doing a hobby, playing sports, reading all those books you've got looking at you on the shelf, spending time with friends or family, doing exercise, completing Netflix – that is all valid. Whatever helps you to relax, make time for yourself and lower your stress levels. Do things that bring you joy, at a pace that suits you. Encourage your children to do the things they enjoy, that puts smiles on their faces.

Unsurprisingly, sleep is an important part of resting, and creating positive and consistent sleep habits is beneficial, especially for students. Healthy habits like sleep, physical exercise and routine are important to have to shape your time as a student. I have many conversations with year 10 students about their sleep patterns. It's no coincidence that students that have a disrupted sleep pattern struggle the most with concentration and behaviour in lessons. Can we help as parents? I believe we can. Help your children create a structured and responsible sleeping pattern...this may mean no phones or devices after a certain time to allow them to switch off!

The last half term has had many challenges for year 10s. They now have more students around at lunchtime which means less outdoor space. It means sharing resources at these times. Overall, we have made these changes with very few issues. The weather has also been very testing. Dealing with wet, cold and horrible days is challenging. But again, overall we continue to be positive and resilient.

Thank you all for your support this term. Please remember to relax and rest and encourage our young people to do the same during the break. With a full recharge they will be ready to hit the ground running on our return.

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### **WEEK 22 - Friday 3 March 2023**

World Book Day really does capture the imagination of the country. I am proud that as a school this fantastic day is embraced by our students and our staff. The English department don their best character outfits, the students engage in their reading, the tutor activities support all year groups to enjoy this day. Year 10 also had the great pleasure of having our weekly assembly being delivered by Miss Hogg.

Miss Hogg is a year 10 tutor and also the reading champion for the school. She delivered an amazing story to the year 10 students in what I can only describe as a performance worthy of an Oscar!! It's amazing to witness how a story, delivered with such passion, can engage and excite a room full of 250 teenagers. I very seldom receive a round of applause at the end of any assembly I deliver to the year group, so it made me a very proud head of year to witness the kindness, respect and gratitude that they gave to Miss Hogg at the end with their rousing applause.

Teaching reading across the curriculum assists students in good vocabulary knowledge development and intelligent sharing among one another. Learners are also able to explore and exploit texts and materials to their own advantage in the varied content areas. It really got me thinking...do I read enough? Have I replaced a good book with an hour on social media? Do I encourage my own children to read books and get off their mobile devices? I think we can all do more to develop our own reading and that of our children.

This week also saw year 10 students take part in a "careers brunch" with local business professionals who support and partner up with Hessle High throughout the school year. Miss Lawes and Mrs Edwards reported back that the students behaved impeccably and impressed all our visitors with their manners, respect and integrity. More careers events are planned over the coming months so please continue to discuss your child's future aspirations and dreams so that we can support them in achieving these.

Finally, another busy week for extra-curricular clubs. Football, rugby and Netball clubs are still very well attended. The PE staff have asked me to remind parents that all students are invited to join the clubs no matter their experience or skill level. We are an inclusive school and want everyone to enjoy and benefit from all enrichment opportunities.

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### **WEEK 24 - Friday 17 March 2023**



This week saw the latest government budget delivered by the chancellor of the exchequer, Jeremy Hunt. If, like me, you were sitting with trepidation at the thought of more costs, higher prices and generally more challenging times ahead financially, then I feel all of your pain.

This year's budget release did however create a conversation in my household with my own teenage boys. Both are now at an age where they are looking at their next educational pathway. It may be A Levels, maybe an apprenticeship or maybe a more vocational route. No matter what they choose they now associate their choices with their potential future earnings. Discussing the cost of living crisis, the impact on tax, the minimum wage and many other financial implications really opened their mind as to just how difficult it is to run a household.

Talking to your children about money is an important step in their understanding of the world, especially when it comes to why and how people use it. Money is a tool, one used to exchange goods or services, make purchases, pay bills, save for future goals, pay off expenses, and treat yourselves to the occasional luxury item. Teaching your children how to handle money responsibly will help them develop skills that will benefit them financially throughout their lives. Explain that money isn't simply something to be spent freely, but rather a resource that requires wise choices for us to achieve our goals. Introducing these concepts early gives kids the information they need to become informed consumers as adults. It really was a valuable learning curve for both me and my children when we took the time to talk about the current financial situation.

Finally, another busy week for extra-curricular clubs. Football, rugby and Netball clubs are still very well attended. The year 10 Rugby boys play their re-arranged fixture next week. We also have Dungeons and Dragons club on Friday so please encourage your children to take advantage of all the enrichment activities that we provide.

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### **WEEK 26 - Friday 31 March 2023**

Changing the way you think can change the way you learn. Because of this, having a growth mindset might be one of the most important parts of education or our young people.

Imagine if you could do anything, just because you believe you can. That's essentially a growth mindset – knowing your talents can be developed can help you achieve more in life. Recently I delivered an assembly around the importance of a positive growth mindset. My aim was for students to discover why it's important to have a growth mindset, how a growth mindset begins in the classroom and how to develop theirs. The growth mindset is based on the idea that intelligence is malleable and that when you change your mindset to a growth perspective, you can achieve more. Far too often I hear year 10 students tell me they can't achieve something, that they aren't able to attain the high expectations of their teachers. People with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, enjoy putting in the effort, learn from criticism,

and find inspiration in others' successes. Students who embrace a growth mindset understand the value of effort and persistence in reaching for their goals.

Over the summer term I will consistently remind students of the importance of having a positive growth mindset, and of having a can-do attitude, and linking it to achieving extraordinary outcomes at the end of year 10. Within a few weeks of the summer term my year group will become the senior role models in the school. This comes with great responsibility and a high expectation on their maturity and integrity. Working collaboratively with parents can ensure that the summer term is successful and productive for everyone.

Finally, the year 10 boys football had a magnificent result in the quarter final of the East Riding Cup. Playing against a strong, physical Headlands team the boys worked tirelessly to come out with a 3-0 victory. Mr Griffith was extremely proud of the boys performance and attitude throughout the whole match.

Have a wonderful easter break

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### **WEEK 28 - Friday 28 April 2023**

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### **WEEK 30 - Friday 12 May 2023**

When I look back and reminisce about my own school days, one of my overriding memories is the opportunity I was given to gain real life work experience with an actual business. For those old enough to remember I spent 2 weeks at Arco Intersport in Hull City Centre. The reasoning behind the decision to send me to this business was my passion for sport. Not a passion for the retail industry but the fact my real passion as a teenager was being involved in any sports. Although not overly excited at the prospect of working in a retail environment I committed to the task and turned up on time that first morning. I experienced feelings of nerves, worry, trepidation and excitement all rolled up into one.

What I did not realise on that first day was just how important this experience was going to have on me. The whole experience had such a positive impact on how I was able to develop my employability skills. It helped me improve my interpersonal skills and gave me confidence in dealing with my co-workers and meeting strangers. Working within a team helped my communication skills and taught me to be organised and disciplined. Other employability skills that I became aware of and was able to develop included:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Organising and planning
- Problem-solving
- Professionalism
- Working on your own initiative

All these skills helped me enormously when I returned to school and continued with my studies on the run up to my GCSE exams. I genuinely believe that this had a significant impact on the success I was able to achieve in my exams.

As parents, and educators we are all very aware of the economic challenges that we face as a country. We also know that in a very short space of time our students in year 10, your children, will be embarking on their next chosen pathway. I believe that students who are given the opportunity to

embrace and engage in a work experience placements' can really set themselves apart when they start to apply for the next stage of their career path.

Work experience is invaluable in helping you develop your employability skills and make you ready for the world of work. Please support your children in gaining any experiences that are offered through the school or that you may have the opportunity to access through contacts of your own.

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### **WEEK 34 - Friday 16 June 2023**

As we approach the final few weeks of the year, I always take the opportunity to reflect on key issues that have arisen throughout the year. I make no secret of the fact that my year group are entering the most important period of their educational journey. So, for that reason, I am relentless in my quest to nurture a culture and a learning environment that allows every single student to reach their true potential. I want to highlight the areas that we continue to focus on and why they are so important to our school and our core values.

**Learning environment:** School is a place of learning, and maintaining good behaviour helps create a positive and conducive learning environment for everyone. When students behave well, it allows teachers to focus on teaching, and fellow students can concentrate on their studies without distractions or disruptions.

**Respect and consideration:** Behaving at school teaches students about respect and consideration for others. It promotes empathy, understanding, and tolerance amongst students, fostering a sense of community and cooperation. Respectful behaviour helps create a harmonious atmosphere where everyone feels valued and heard.

**Discipline and self-control:** Following rules and behaving appropriately at school instils discipline and self-control in students. These are important life skills that can benefit individuals in various aspects of their lives, both inside and outside of the school environment. Learning to regulate one's behaviour helps develop responsible and accountable individuals.

**Positive relationships:** good behaviour at school contributes to building positive relationships between students, teachers, and other staff members. Respectful and courteous interactions create a supportive and inclusive school culture. Positive relationships can enhance the learning experience, facilitate teamwork, and encourage open communication.

**Personal growth and development:** Behaving well at school can contribute to personal growth and development. It allows students to focus on their studies, participate actively in class, and take advantage of educational opportunities. Good behaviour also fosters a sense of personal pride and accomplishment, which can boost self-esteem and confidence.

Future success: Developing good behaviour habits in school sets a foundation for future success. The ability to work well with others, communicate effectively, and demonstrate professionalism are essential skills for success in higher education, careers, and life in general. Employers and institutions often value individuals who exhibit strong character and interpersonal skills.

Overall, behaving at school is important not only for academic success but also for personal growth, social development, and preparing students for the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood. These are the reasons why I will continue my relentless quest to create the best learning environment for our students.

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### **WEEK 36 - Friday 30 June 2023**

As the head of year 10 I am very fortunate to share some amazing experiences with the students in my year group. These range from enrichment trips to foreign countries to experience different cultures, to attending sporting fixtures and witnessing our students expressing themselves in different sporting arenas.

Last Wednesday I was very privileged to be invited to the Aspirational Dinner that was held at school. This was an event that 90 of our Year 10 students were invited to, based on their preferred pathways and career ambitions post-16. The dinner was also attended by local business representatives who sat with our students to discuss their aspirations and future career dreams. The evening was fantastic. Our students had the experience of a formal dinner, meeting and communicating with adults on a professional level and also engaging with teaching staff on a completely different level. The dinner gave me the chance to really think what employers are looking for when they interview and select school leaver recruits. These include:

1. **Effective Collaboration** - Good communication skills enable employees to collaborate effectively with their colleagues, superiors, and managers. They can clearly express their ideas, actively listen to others, and provide feedback, leading to better teamwork and productivity.
2. **Leadership and Management** - Effective leaders and managers are excellent communicators. They can convey their vision and goals clearly, delegate tasks efficiently, provide constructive feedback, and motivate their team members. Strong communication skills enable leaders to inspire and guide their teams towards success.
3. **Presentation and Public Speaking** - Many job roles require presenting ideas, reports, or projects to both internal and external audiences. Excellent communication skills empower employees to deliver compelling presentations, engage the audience, and convey information in a persuasive and impactful manner. As a school we make a huge effort to develop these skills for when our students enter the world of work.

4. Professionalism and Career Growth - Strong communication skills reflect professionalism and enhance an employee's overall image. They contribute to positive interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and external stakeholders, which can lead to career advancement opportunities and increased job prospects.

The Aspirational Dinner took our students out of their comfort zone. I was able to witness all our students excel in this new environment. This made me an extremely proud head of year. As we move into their final year we will continue to develop and challenge all our students in relation to careers and communication skills.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact me at

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