

## **WEEK 38 - Friday 15 July 2022**

Challenges are an inevitable part of life. Chances are you're facing an obstacle right now. From academic struggles to business issues and even personal expectations, everyone encounters roadblocks. What is vital to one's growth as an individual, however, is learning to navigate and ultimately overcome those moments of adversity. In fact, it is often said that success is measured by the obstacles you work through. The students at Hessle High have to deal with adversity in many different forms every single day. I am always massively impressed with how our young people manage and cope with the different adversities that they face.

I link this into the recent decision that the school has made regarding sports day. Who would have ever thought that the weather in England would be too hot and therefore would put our students at risk if they were to be outside for the whole day? To postpone the sports day is a decision I completely support. The safety of all our students is always the most important factor in any decision process we complete. I know this has been really disappointing news for the majority of students. This links back to the adversities the students deal with so well on a day to day basis. This resilient attitude will ensure that the students continue to behave in a mature and positive manner as we head into our last week of term.

That's right...we are at the end of another school year. Thankfully a more normal school year in comparison with the previous covid-affected years. And I cannot express enough how proud of my year group I am for completing this year with such a fantastic attitude and with such energy and enthusiasm. It's not always been easy, no school year ever passes without the odd bump in the road for some. But with the continued support from parents, carers and all stakeholders we really have had a fantastic year which has seen the students really shine throughout.

We have celebrated Rugby final wins, Duke of Edinburgh successes, drama performances, picking your option choices, weekly assemblies, extra curricular activities, London trips, Geography trips, open evenings, celebration seminars and we even achieved a record year of house points for positive behaviour. The year really has been a success in so many ways I could go on and on!

However... As we end year 9 I am already looking forward to, and planning for, a positive start for our young people's next chapter in their learning journey....KS4! We need to care for them, we need to help them structure their school week, to ensure they are organised and prepared to start every single day ready to succeed as they embark on their GCSEs. This is a collective responsibility that we as educators and you as parents/carers need to work together on. And going by the support I have received from you this year I am confident we can achieve even more success next year.

I wish you all a peaceful, relaxing summer break, that you can spend as much quality time together with family and friends and enjoy what will hopefully be a warm and hazy summer holiday.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact me at [hoyy9@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyy9@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year

## WEEK 36 - Friday 1 July 2022

"Failure is a stepping stone to success"

Why do some of the most successful people like to boast about their past failures? How were they able to pull it off and emerge victorious? Some believe that what separates successful from mediocre people is the way they treat failure. Everyone may have work ethics and attitude but not everyone has the tenacity to face failure head on.

I don't think you will be surprised to hear that I myself have failed many times in either a professional capacity or a personal capacity. I have had to learn to accept these failings and the critical feedback that often accompanies such events. This can be a painful experience in itself. I've failed on the sports field many times, and had to take these defeats with as much grace as I can muster at that time....which hasn't always been something I found easy. But I truly believe that each of these experiences have led to a positive future outcome.

Last night had me really thinking about the importance of experiencing failure during our learning journey. As I watched Wimbledon on the TV, I witnessed a 19 year old British player lose her second round match live in front of millions of watching fans. During the match she displayed every attribute that we as educators look for in our students. Hard work, integrity, responsibility, resilience. But she lost. She failed to win a match! Now, in today's society not only does she have to deal with the actual defeat, she also has to deal with the impact of social media, the mainstream media, and how she is portrayed in a medium that she has no control over! All this at 19 years of age. Having excelled in her field, having sacrificed so much to be a professional tennis player she is still faced with failure and questioned by others on her ability and performance.

Her interview after her defeat was the epitome of "failure is a stepping stone to success". She very maturely and eloquently explained that the experience was a positive one. That she would learn many things from the experience. That she was proud of her efforts but that on the day she came up short. She made sure to compliment her opponent. She made no excuses and accepted that she must look at the performance and make improvements moving forward. She literally told the listening audience that she was proud of her performance and would not let the failure in this one match define her.

This is a message I give to my year 9 students as often as possible. We all fail at certain times. We should never be frightened to fail....we need to look at failure as a stepping stone to future success. Learn from it, improve on it, and let it lead to future successes in school and in your personal lives.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year

## **WEEK 34 - Friday 17 June 2022**

Sports day is something of a 'Marmite' event; students and parents love it or loathe it, in equal measure. For those who look forward to it, their children might be particularly athletic; bursting with sporting potential. Understandably, for these children, it's an important day to add to their sporting CVs. For others, it can simply be a day out to have fun, support their friends or 'House', and try their best, when they do compete.

The meaning and significance of sports day is in the eye of the beholder. In large part, the attitude that children bring to the event is determined by parents. As hard as it is, I would encourage you to think about the positives that your family can extract from the day. List out which aspects might be enjoyable. Sitting in the sun? Preparing a lovely picnic? Chatting to other students and teachers in a different environment? How can you influence the extent to which your family makes the most of the day?

I think it is a mistake to remove a child from any school experience because you anticipate failure. It's an important life lesson to realise that there will always be people who are smarter or sportier than us! However, with every life experience, there is something meaningful and educational behind it. One of the most powerful messages that you can bring to sports day is the importance of 'giving things a go'. When children recognise that parents celebrate their effort rather than their performance, it can be a game changer. If they know that we are truly proud of their 'get stuck in' attitude, it gives them the moral courage to compete.

For our children to grow up emotionally and physically resilient, every little school event, whether it is sports day, getting up on the school stage or participating in an assembly, is preparing them for the future. Each experience helps them to navigate a range of thoughts and emotions, and builds their emotional literacy. As counter-intuitive and uncomfortable as it may be, we do have to watch them learn (and sometimes fail) from the side lines. What matters most is reframing each loss as a learning experience and opportunity to grow and do better next time.

Sport is not just confined to football, cricket, rugby, swimming or athletics. There are literally hundreds of activities which children and young people can try. I truly believe that one day, your child will find an activity that they enjoy and where they can truly shine. Our role as parents is to be as imaginative and innovative as we possibly can, valuing challenge, cultivating a 'courage culture' at home and showing our children that we believe in them and in their physical potential.

Our sports day is on Thursday 21 July. Students are signing up to the events in tutor time. It is always a fantastic day, not solely focusing on sporting prowess, but being part of a whole school event supporting each other in a positive environment.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 32 - Friday 27 May 2022**

I am writing this week's blog with a heavy heart. On Wednesday, during our weekly assembly, I broke the sad news that the brilliant and amazing Mrs Newman will be leaving Hessle High to embark on the next part of her career journey. I think it's fair to say that the students were taken aback by this news. Mrs Newman has become their go to adult in the school for every imaginable issue that a student can face on a daily basis in a school environment.

Mrs Newman joined us almost four years ago. Initially she joined me as an Assistant Head of House for team Cassio. When we moved back to a year group structure I was lucky enough as Head of Year 9 to bring Mrs Newman with me as my Assistant Head Of Year. During this time I have benefited hugely from the professionalism, the kindness and the work ethic that she always gives.

More importantly, your children have benefited the most from having a caring, nurturing, fair and consistent assistant head of year who ALWAYS puts the wellbeing of the children at the forefront of any decision she makes. I know that many of you will have met or spoken to Mrs Newman during her time at Hessle High. Sometimes the nature of these meetings or conversations is challenging but I know you will all have appreciated how supportive and understanding Mrs Newman would always be to ensure you felt supported by us as a school. Her ability to smile and laugh at all times (even during the more challenging times), her ability to protect and support all children through tough times, and her ability to support her colleagues at all times is something that as a school community we will miss greatly.

From a personal perspective, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mrs Newman for everything she has done for me and the year 9s in her time at Hessle High. Her organisational skills, her ability to laugh at my silly jokes, to supply me with a constraint stream of diet pepsi, to remind me of where I'm meant to be at any given time during the day will be something that I will miss very much! I know for sure that she will go on to be hugely successful in her new role due to her fantastic work ethic, but more importantly because of her fantastic personality.

Mrs Newman's final day will be Thursday 9 June. It gives everybody the opportunity to drop in and say their goodbyes before she leaves.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 30 - Friday 13 May 2022**

On Tuesday, all of our year 9 students will be taking part in an "Enterprise Day" that is brilliantly organised by Miss Lawes and Mrs Edwards. The day is based on the Dragons Den TV show format where all the students are placed into teams and come up with a business idea that they pitch to a judging panel. As a business studies teacher, I believe that all students benefit greatly by understanding how businesses work, the impact that business owners have on the economy and also how anybody can come up with a business idea and potentially become their own boss. Many year 9 students have chosen Business Studies as one of their GCSE options for next year, so I am fully aware of the interest that my year group has already when it comes to enterprise and business. Hopefully as parents you understand why I am so passionate about students experiencing the enterprise day and why I feel enterprise education is so important. Here are just a few reasons:

- It lets students know that starting and operating a business is a career option. This is particularly important for those that may not plan to go to higher education.
- It reinforces basic skills in Literacy, Maths and ICT and relates these abilities to real applications.
- Personal finance capabilities are developed which will help students in their work and personal lives.
- It provides a bridge between the world of work and the school environment.
- Entrepreneurial individuals are better employees and develop skills that are becoming increasingly in demand by employers.
- It is a motivating approach to learning, developing in the student self-esteem and a sense of purpose.
- It equips students with life skills and makes them more positive contributors to society.

The most important fact to consider is that enterprise education is focussed on the individual and their potential to achieve. By using the language of enterprise, it can be clearly stated that the aspirations of the students can benefit from this aspect of the curriculum.

I am really excited to get around as many groups as possible on Tuesday and look forward to watching all the groups present their business ideas to the judging panel....and you just never know...we might just discover the next Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 28 - Friday 29 April 2022**

Every Wednesday morning I have the privilege of speaking to my whole year group in our regular assembly slot. When covid restrictions were put in place back in 2020 I never really appreciated how much I would miss the opportunity to get the whole year group together in one room and be able to speak to them on a whole range of topics and events. Now we are back to some normality, it really is the highlight of my week. The behaviour when the year 9 students enter the hall is always impeccable, behaviour throughout the assemblies is always impeccable and behaviour as the year group leave the hall is always impeccable. It makes me extremely proud when I have members of the senior leadership team complimenting the Year 9s and I am always delighted to share this with the students as often as possible.

Assemblies will always have a theme. This week I discussed the issues surrounding anti-social behaviour. By definition, anti-social behaviour is "acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to one or more people".

I asked the students 3 simple questions:

Do we accept it?

Do we ignore it?

Are you responsible for it?

Unfortunately at times our students can make poor choices. This can sometimes be on their way to school in the morning or on their way home at the end of the school day. Often it can be peer pressure to get involved in something that they know is unacceptable but in the moment they make a poor choice. I believe it is a collective responsibility to continuously educate our young people on making the right choices. It is a collective responsibility to encourage our young people to learn from their mistakes and to not repeat those mistakes again. I believe it is also extremely important that young people who make poor choices take ownership and responsibility for their actions. As a school, and as a year leader we strive to help our students make better choices that lead to more positive outcomes. By working closely with parents, by supporting the schools behaviour policy and our constant high expectations I truly believe we are creating students who are an asset to the local community. We can always improve further, and will work closely with the local community, with the police and with parents to ensure that our students are positive members of our community.

On Tuesday I was lucky enough to travel to Sirius North School to watch the Year 9 boys rugby team play their semi final match. As with their previous 3 matches the boys were absolutely fantastic, going on to win 44 - 12. They will now play in the final in the coming weeks against a strong Malet Lambert team. The boys epitomised everything I look for in a year 9 student. They played with enthusiasm, great sportsmanship, integrity, they worked hard for each other in every position and were very gracious in their victory. I will 100% be there to support the boys in the final. They have done amazingly well so far...lets hope they can go one step further and win the cup for Hessle High.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## WEEK 26 - Friday 1 April 2022

Sport has always been known for its physical benefits. In recent years, research has also found that sport participation can also positively affect your mental health. Whether you are playing sports, working out at a gym or taking a brisk walk, physical activity triggers brain chemicals that make you feel happier and more relaxed. Team sports in particular provide a chance to unwind and engage in a satisfying challenge that improves your fitness. They also provide social benefits by allowing you to connect with teammates and friends in a fun, safe recreational setting. Building new friendship groups can open the gateways to new experiences and challenges.

### *Sport improves your concentration*

Regular physical activity helps keep your key mental skills sharp as you get older. This includes sharp thinking, learning, and using good judgement. Research has shown that doing a mix of aerobic and muscle strengthening activities is especially helpful. How often do we hear our young people say they struggle to concentrate for 5 lessons a day? I agree with these youngsters that it can be a long day at times, but with the right balance of sport, exercise and nutrition they can naturally develop their concentration capacity whilst doing fun stuff with their friends. As educators, parents and carers we have a responsibility to encourage and provide these opportunities to our young people to ensure they grow as people and develop the personal attributes they require to be successful in their chosen pathway.

### *Sport boosts your self-confidence*

The regular exercise that comes with playing sport can help boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem. As your strength, skills, and stamina increase through playing sports, your self-image will improve as well. Sport and exercise provide you with a sense of mastery and control, which often leads to a feeling of pride and self-confidence. With the renewed vigour and energy that comes from physical activity, our students will be more likely to succeed in tasks off the playing field as well as on it. Their capacity to deal with challenges and obstacles will improve. Their resilience will strengthen allowing them to make rapid and sustained progress across all their subjects at school.

As we approach the end of the term, and we get to spend two weeks at home with our families I will spend some of that time participating in my chosen hobbies and interests. I know that I will benefit massively from this, being out in the open air, swinging a golf club at a little white ball, becoming frustrated at times, excited at times, but overall just happy to be doing something that I enjoy with my friends and family. I encourage you all to get out and enjoy the fresh air, to enjoy the time spent with your families, and to hopefully enjoy some time in the sunshine!

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 22 - Friday 4 March 2022**

One of the biggest privileges of being the Head of Year 9 is that I get to attend and share so many extra-curricular activities with the students at Hessle High. Most recently I have had the delight in speaking to Miss Moore who is leading the Duke of Edinburgh Award. When I was informed that year 9 had over 40 students enrolled on this year's award I was absolutely blown away. These students are going to have an amazing experience with their peers and the many staff involved who give up their time to support these activities. Experiences that will last a lifetime!

This again had me reminiscing to my days in school. When I think back to my most memorable and most treasured memories in school they are more often linked to the extra-curricular activities that I was lucky enough to be a part of. These included skiing trips to Italy, trips to the theatre and many many sporting events. I now fully appreciate just how important these experiences were in relation to how I performed in other areas of my academic school life. As we get back into a new normal, post covid19, I want to highlight just how important it is for our students to engage in as many extra-curricular activities as possible.

Some students worry that participating in extracurriculars may take away too much time from their schoolwork, thus affecting their grades. However, extracurricular activities can actually improve your grades and your outlook on school in general. When you participate in multiple different activities, you'll get the opportunity to explore a range of interests and unlock passions you never knew you had. Plus, diversifying your interests subsequently broadens your world view.

The more you achieve success through activities you're passionate about, the more your self confidence will improve. For example, let's say you enjoy badminton and your teacher encourages you to get involved in the Monday night badminton club. You may end up joining the school team and start representing the school in tournaments and competitions across the East Riding. During the process you realise how fun PE clubs can be and how talented you actually are, which gives your confidence a massive boost.

Friendship groups are often a major cause of worry and anxiety for some students. One of the easiest ways to make friends is through extracurricular activities. Each extracurricular activity you engage in provides you with another opportunity to expand your social network. You will meet new people with similar interests and make friendships that in my own experience can last many years after you leave school. Plus, if you make friends in your extracurricular activities, you'll be more likely to get more deeply involved.

Hessle High School provides a huge array of extra-curricular opportunities across all subjects. I think it is very important that you speak to your child and encourage them to join as many clubs and activities as possible to broaden their horizons and experience as many different things as possible. I know for a fact it benefited me in so many ways as I moved on in my learning journey.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 20 - Friday 11 February 2022**

Education is a team effort! You and your child's teachers can work together to support your child's learning success. Students are better capable of flourishing in school when they have the support and encouragement of their parents. There are many ways that parents can be involved to help their children be engaged and positive with their learning.

Children are like sponges! Learning is a constant process for them. They are always watching and listening, so there are plenty of opportunities to teach them new things. Even simple tasks may give you a chance to introduce new concepts. For example, your child may see you paying a household bill, and wonder what you are doing. That everyday chore is a chance to provide an early lesson in how paying for goods and services works. Paying attention to the lessons your child is learning at school can help you to connect to your child's life at home. My own children are in year 10 and have begun their option choice subjects this year. I make it a family non-negotiable to discuss what topics they are currently studying in their option subjects. This is now something the boys expect to happen each night at the dinner table. It's amazing how they adapt to this routine so quickly, and are now both trying to outdo each other with their knowledge and understanding of these new subject concepts that they are striving to excel in. I see it as my own parental responsibility to play an active part in their learning and how they cope with the day to day challenges they face at school.

Parents should also feel empowered to reach out and regularly communicate with their child's teachers and heads of year. I hopefully have made this clear in previous blogs. Certainly teachers are very busy. But that doesn't mean they don't want to hear from you. In fact, the opposite is true. Teachers appreciate parents who want to be involved in making the school year a successful one. I have the privilege of speaking to many of you as the head of year 9. This communication can have a huge impact on the progress that your child can make in our school. As we embark on a return to some normality after the whole Covid19 situation, I really hope that I can develop these relationships even further and have the opportunity to meet with more parents face to face to support you and your families throughout your child's time at Hesse High.

Another great way to connect home learning with school learning is to be an active participant during homework time. This does not mean doing the child's homework for them! Instead, review the homework to get a better idea of the concepts your child is learning. See how your child approaches the homework. This is a great time to notice where your child thrives, where they might need help, or other learning difficulties they might be facing. You can take note of these tendencies, and share them with us which will provide us with the opportunity to implement further support and early intervention strategies.

As I stated at the start of this blog...education really is a team effort! By working together, supporting each other, we really can have a positive impact on every student's educational journey.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact me at [hoyyear9@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyyear9@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 18 - Friday 28 January 2022**

A lot of hurt and upset is caused in school by students who can't imagine that they have any power to hurt anyone with their words. It's their sense that nothing is at stake in their behaviour towards others that leads them to ignore the rules of respect, kindness and integrity, and instead to insult others as if they were plated in armour. I ask myself where does this behaviour start? Think of the situation of a young child, who has fun mocking a parent's bald head or pot belly. To every child, their parents will always be the greatest humans to walk this planet. How could someone of such stature be hurt by a comment about their less than perfect physique by a tiny person who can't spell properly? But the child is missing the point. Their words do hurt. They can make their parents very aware and conscious about their imperfections. A child never lies, right? The child simply can't grasp how desperate and anxious their parents might be, how every morning they might stare in dismay into the bathroom mirror at the visible signs of ageing that speak to them relentlessly of a bad diet and lack of exercise (I could be talking from experience right now!).

The parent, out of misguided protection and support, has shielded their child from their own fragility and misgiving. But we have now modelled behaviour that makes the child believe that the parents are so amazingly strong that these words have no impact on them whatsoever. How can this be related to school matters?

Something related may happen when children get together in the playground to chat about another student in their peer groups. It is their misguided belief that their words couldn't possibly hurt or worry the other students as it is after all "only words". It's only when they themselves are on the receiving end of some hurtful or misinterpreted words that they start to realise how vulnerable the person on the receiving end of these words might feel. This idea casts a useful light on the activity of particularly dangerous people online. Their hurtful words are often sent with absolutely no idea of the hurt and damage they may cause because of this misguided lesson they were taught from a very early age by their heroes...mum and dad!. After all, how could their words hurt somebody who may be popular, academic, good at sport, attractive, confident? ... words surely won't hurt these successful students! But we know they do. And we continue to educate our young people on the power of words and the impact they have on others

True kindness may require us to take on board a very unfamiliar idea: however young we are, however ignored we feel we might be, we all have the power to cause other people serious damage through the misguided use of words. We become better citizens, better students, better people when we truly understand that we can ruin somebody's day, somebody's week and, in some circumstances, somebody's school life through the use of a few misplaced words. We will always promote our school values to ALL Hessle High School students. I strongly believe that, through the support of you as parents, alongside the commitment and integrity of the staff at Hessle High, we will ensure we continue to provide our learners with a safe and healthy environment to be successful.

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Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

## **WEEK 16 - Friday 14 January 2022**

Option choices - why are they so important?

I remember it like yesterday. I was 13 years old and enjoying most of my school experiences. In particular, PE and all extra curricular sports activities. I attended everything possible including football, tennis, cricket, badminton, table tennis, athletics and many more. On this particular day I turned up to school and was informed that I would be speaking to a careers advisor to discuss what I wanted to do in the future. I no doubt would have been informed about this career's meeting at an earlier time but had not prioritised it as other school activities were clearly more important to me at that time. I was wrong! This first meeting with a careers advisor should have been my main priority on this day as it was the first opportunity I had to discuss my future once I had left school. I cringe when I remember my response to the question "what do you want to do as a career when you leave school?" My 13 year old response was very quick, and delivered with a misplaced confidence....."I'm going to be a professional footballer, Sir". Now... looking back I can now fully appreciate the professionalism of the careers advisor's response. He didn't laugh and spit out his coffee. He discussed the likelihood of this happening in the first instance. But more importantly he discussed what my back up plan was if my budding football career didn't quite happen. I didn't have any real ideas of careers that I was passionate about at that time, which is absolutely understandable. But what I did receive was some amazing advice that I pass on to my students when we talk about option choices.

I was told to make subject choices that I enjoy doing. To choose subjects that I am interested in and to choose subjects that I will perform well in. I was advised to NOT choose subjects based on my friendship groups. Choose subjects that give me the platform to succeed in, which will then open more doors of opportunity when you get to the end of year 11 and will be at a more mature level to decide on your future educational or professional pathway. I absolutely believe this advice all those years ago have allowed me to make the decisions that have led me to my chosen career pathway. I genuinely did not know that my working life would be in education when I was 13 years old... but, because of the option choices I made in year 9, it provided me with the range of options at the end of year 11 that allowed me to join the sixth form and continue my education in the environment of my choice.

As I write this blog, I am preparing for the year 9 Options fair that all students will attend. This is an opportunity for students to speak to subject staff and 6th Form students who have studied different subjects. It's an amazing opportunity for year 9 students to ask questions which will allow them to make better choices to ensure they are successful at KS4. This is just the beginning of their options journey. Students will receive their Options booklet the week commencing 24 Jan 2022. Please take the time to discuss this with your child and to help and guide them in their choices. After the half term holidays, each student will speak to Mrs Price and her team about their option choices. We will always try to ensure that students are on the right courses for them to achieve outstanding outcomes and will work closely with parents to discuss any potential issues or concerns.

As I mentioned at the start of this blog... My first career choice never came true (I blame injury and a poor diet!) but my option choices, made with the support of my teachers and parents, have allowed me to be successful in my chosen career pathway. Please speak to your children and give them the advice that I truly appreciate as I reflect on my time as a 13 year old student.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact me at [hoyy9@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyy9@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 14 - Friday 17 December 2021**

As Christmas fast approaches, it has been a time for me to reflect on the first four months as Head of Year 9. After such a disrupted year 8 for our young people it has been a wonderful time getting to know all the pupils and families on a more personal and professional level and despite the pandemic we have achieved so much in a short space of time. After such a positive and successful start to year 9, we can now focus our attention on driving forward with our improvement priorities.

It has been a very busy term for students and staff with loads of exciting learning and teaching, and also lots of preparation for our winter festivities. These included the amazing carol concert performed at All Saints church by our students, KS3 celebration assemblies to reward the hard work and achievements of year 9 students and decorating our Christmas tree with personalised messages from every student at Hessle High. At this special time of year we really do witness first hand the sense of community and togetherness that our school is so incredibly proud of.

Now, we move on to the holidays and I am mindful of the need to take time for ourselves over the Christmas period. We are still faced with the ongoing issues and potentially further restrictions that this pandemic brings. Therefore, it is important that we look after our health and wellbeing as we need to be reinvigorated for the year ahead. We want to be able to welcome our whole school community back in January. Please ensure that you spend quality time with family and friends whilst also keeping as safe as possible by following all the government advice and guidelines. As mentioned in previous blogs, the next term is a huge educational milestone for our students as they will be choosing their option subjects which will further shape their future education pathway. This really is an exciting period for our students to look forward to.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all, pupils, parents, friends and staff of year 9 for your continued support and wish you and your loved ones a restful Christmas and a New Year that brings health and happiness.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact me at [hoyyear8@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyyear8@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## **WEEK 12 - Friday 3 December 2021**

### **What makes a great team player?**

Teamwork is involved in many aspects of the school day. When partaking in group tasks are your children aware of what makes you a good team player?

### **How can you help your child develop their team work skills?**

First, highlight the reasons why you enjoy doing teamwork, and the benefits you see as a result of it. This is a great way to showcase your passion and enthusiasm for being collaborative. Working together can help teams complete tasks faster and with more efficiency, while also having fun! Working with others can be an enjoyable and social aspect of the work environment. New friendships can be made when you work collaboratively with new people. Forming positive relationships with other students can help the day go by faster and their school work seems more fun.

### **Leadership Skills**

Every team needs a good leader. Think about a time when you encountered a good leader in your life. Take into consideration what they did that made them so good at managing a team. I have been fortunate enough to work closely with many excellent leaders in my personal and private life. I remember vividly my football coaches, my tennis coaches and my teachers who had amazing communication skills that created an environment where I could flourish and grow. I've also been fortunate to have been mentored by many magnificent leaders in my professional life. This has allowed me to become better equipped to lead others in my year group during such difficult times.

While being a team leader is an admirable goal to work towards, it is equally important to be able to work under the direction of someone else. This can involve collaborating with other students who think differently than them. Speak to your child about developing their ability to listen to other perspectives and apply them to the task at hand. Talk to them about their ability to combine the ideas of other students to create an even better solution. Compromising with other students is a great way to be a good team player. By developing all of these personal attributes it will help our students deal with the many challenges that they face in their educational journey.

As Christmas draws closer, we have some great activities taking place over the next two weeks. These include supporting the 999 Cenotaph fundraiser to support our NHS heroes. We will also be supporting the Teachers versus Year 11 students charity football event on the final day of term. This is always a fantastic event that is supported by the whole school community. I may even dust the boots down and make another appearance!!!

Have a great week

If you have any concerns or questions please contact me at [hoyyear8@hessleacademy.com](mailto:hoyyear8@hessleacademy.com)

Mr Leckenby

Head of Year 9

Mrs Newman

## **WEEK 10 - Friday 19 November**

### **Choices!**

I have spent many hours over the last two weeks speaking to my year 9 students about choices. We ALL continue to make many choices throughout everyday. Some we are happy with and some we would relish the opportunity to make again with the benefit of hindsight.

We have discussed the importance of making the best options choices as we approach the KS4 stage in our educational journey. We have discussed how important it is that as a family you discuss these choices together, make decisions that have been well thought out and will allow your child to continue to make outstanding progress at The Hessle Academy.

We have discussed our friendship choices. This is an area that I am passionate about when discussing with the young people at our school. Recent local reports have highlighted some unsociable behaviour in areas that our young people live in and socialise in. I speak to students about the influences that their friendship group has on them. Are your friends being a good influence? Are you and your friends being a positive member of the community?

I feel that as educators and parents we need to broach this subject with our young people on a regular basis. Are we aware of where our children are playing? Are we fully aware of who our children are socialising with? Are we fully aware of the impact our children and their friendship group are having on the local community?

I will continue to challenge my year 9 students on their friendship choices. Are they surrounding themselves with others that have a positive influence on themselves? I always offer the same simple advice:

1. Choose friends with common goals. I like to call these your purpose partners. When you have friends with common goals you can push each other. You can work on your goals together and encourage each other in reaching them and surpassing them.
2. Choose friends that stretch, motivate and encourage you. No one wants a friend that is negative or down all the time. It's usually the people that are uplifting and positive that we naturally want to be around. Which category do your friends fall into? What do your conversations with them sound like? The best types of friends will be there to offer a listening ear and help you put a positive spin on any situation.
3. Choose friends that share the same interests. Friends with similar interests simply make life more fun. You can enjoy outings and activities together. Whether it's sports, music, performing arts or food, when you share interests, you can get out and do things together. You have someone to visit new places and enjoy new experiences with.

If we can model what a good friend is, and how a good friend should act, I hope that our year 9's will continue to grow into the positive, friendly members of our community that we strive to develop.

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Mrs Newman

Assistant Head of Year 9

## WEEK 8 - Friday 5 November 2021

Hessle High School provides an education for all, acknowledging that the society in which we live in is enriched by diversity. We strive to recognise and celebrate the diversity within our school community where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness.

Community is at the heart of what makes a strong and safe school environment. With this in mind we aim that Hessle is a place where:

- There is a warm, welcoming, happy atmosphere that is secure, stimulating and supportive of learning.
- We encourage students to do their best to make them feel confident, valued and proud to be themselves.
- Positive relationships are adopted between students, staff and parents/carers
- Students can achieve to the highest level possible
- Achievement by others is celebrated
- Different intelligences are recognised and celebrated
- Students can pursue many different interests and achieve a broad knowledge of the world to equip them for life

I have been fortunate enough to have worked at Hessle High for 18 years. During this period I have been privileged to see first hand how diverse our community and school environment has become. It provides us with new challenges that **we** always seek to resolve with our students and families best interests at heart. We are here to listen to your thoughts, your concerns and your suggestions on how we can continuously strive to be the best, most diverse school community there can be. I emphasize the "we"...as it is a massive team effort between all stakeholders to hold each other accountable and deliver the best possible educational experience for our learners. It is not always easy. We don't always get it right the first time. But we as a school, and myself as your child's Head of Year, will always endeavor to resolve situations if they arise, and to embed policies and structure to the school day to ensure every student has the opportunity to achieve outstanding outcomes.

I hope you were all able to spend some quality time with your families over the half term break. As the dark nights close in I would ask that you continue to support your children by providing them with the best platform to succeed in school. Simple, clear, daily routines and structure (as mentioned in previous blogs) will ensure that students are ready and prepared for each school day.

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Mrs Newman

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## **WEEK 6 - Friday 15 October 2021**

Perception is reality. I'm sure the vast majority of people reading this blog will recognise this age-old expression. How we behave and who we become as personalities is shaped by the many different interactions, experiences and dialogue we experience. Or at least our perception of these experiences.

I deal with hundreds of students on a daily basis. My own experiences have a huge impact on who I am, how I interact and how I conduct myself in my professional and personal life. It has got me thinking just how much of an impact my year 9 students' choice of friendship group has on their behaviours, attitudes and conduct when in school and also when out and about in the local community. You quite literally become the people you hang around with. I have daily conversations with students about making better choices. I encourage them to surround themselves with positive influences. If you surround yourself with positivity you will be more positive!

The people you interact with the most on any given day, at any given time, or at any given moment, is YOU. You frame your reality with your perception. In essence, YOUR brain literally creates the environment YOU live in, both internally and externally. Therefore, if our students have positive experiences, positive thoughts, and are able to rewire their mind to frame things in a positive and constructive manner they will be rewarded in many ways. This could be evidenced in a brighter smile, having more energy, more resilience, better outcomes in assessments, or something as insignificant as getting out of bed in a better mood!

How often do you sit down with your child and discuss all the positive things that happen in their daily routines? Are we more programmed to focus on the negative? I challenge you to sit down and ask your child to write down 3 positive experiences they have had that day. Focus on that positive feeling and how that improved their mood for the rest of the day. By training the mind to recognise positivity it will allow young people to chase the positive experiences and allow them to grow as humans.

Hopefully many of you have been able to spend family time at Hull Fair this week. It does feel like we are back to some normality after the many covid restrictions we have had to endure. Please support the school's decision to encourage masks over the next few weeks. Safety of all stakeholders at Hessle High is of the most importance.

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## **WEEK 4 - Friday 1 October 2021**

Having a daily routine can be a stress and sanity-saver during a hectic working week, both for parents AND students. Not only can certain repetitive actions benefit your physical health (such as regular exercise), but they can also improve your mental health by reducing your stress levels. Every time you have to make a decision, you are adding some stress to your life. The more decisions you have to make, the less self-control you'll have. While you can't do away with decision-making completely, creating regular routines can take much of the guesswork out of your day:

- Start your day off right. Figure out what time you need to leave the house each morning and set your alarm so you have plenty of time to accomplish your at-home tasks before you hit the road. Rather than jumping from task to task, create a set routine and stick with it. You'll waste less physical energy and brain space.
- Sleep better. A regular bedtime routine is essential to good sleep hygiene. Turn off your electronic devices an hour before bed and avoid stressful conversations in the evenings. Brush your teeth and wash your face well before your set bedtime so you get to sleep on time and wake up feeling refreshed and ready to tackle your day.
- Enjoy quality time with loved ones. Even if your family's schedule is busy, creating a weeknight family dinner routine is a great way to ensure you and your loved ones have time with each other at the end of the day.
- Have more time for activities you love. By creating an efficient, routine schedule, you'll leave room for activities you truly enjoy. Spend more time exercising, watching the latest netflix shows or playing on the latest console games...yes i know...FIFA 22 has landed!!! But always do these activities in moderation and with a structure and a routine in place. Believe me, it has helped me to control my 14 year old boys who love to play Fifa 22!

Routines will shorten the amount of choices we have to make during the day. I constantly speak to year 9 students about choices. We have the opportunity to make good AND bad choices throughout the day. If we can limit these choices by implementing simple routines at key times of the day i.e what time we get up, when and where we eat, what time we put our phones away, preparing uniform and school bag for the next day...we will improve how we attack each day due to the fact that key decisions are already in place. We create a structure that supports our well being and allows us to perform at the best of our ability.

In conclusion, don't be afraid of implementing simple, easy to follow routines and structure to your children's lives. It will free up their minds and allow them to focus on more important decisions they will face throughout their school day. Hopefully they will then see the positive outcomes in their school experience as we move forward in this new school year.

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## **WEEK 2 - Friday 17 September 2021**

At last....we have welcomed our students back into our school building and are almost back to "normality" as we knew it pre-covid. I write with caution as one thing we are now so acutely aware of is things can change very quickly in the current climate. But let's be positive and enjoy the fact that we are back and we are indeed back to some normality within the school community.

I have spoken many times about how hard things have been for our students and their families over the last 18 months. I know first hand that these challenges remain, my own children returned to year 10 with the same worries and anxieties that happen at the start of each school year. Even more so that the "rules" have changed yet again. BUT it never fails to surprise me just how resilient our young people are. They have the strength and determination to succeed no matter what obstacles are put in front of them. This all stems from the unconditional support and guidance from parents and guardians in the first instance for which we are always thankful for.

Having thought about the resilience of our students in these trying times, it led me to think about the amazing teenage tennis player Emma Raducanu. I hope like me, many of you were able to watch and be mesmerised by Emma's talents as she went onto win the US Open Championship last Sunday evening. Her story is amazing. Her resilience is astounding. From practicing everyday in her driveway during lockdown when the tennis facilities were forced to close, to studying diligently for her upcoming A Levels alongside her tennis practice whilst preparing to play at Wimbledon in front of millions of watching spectators. To then having to deal with huge adversity when losing in the Wimbledon semi finals and having her mental strength and resilience questioned by many. What were her choices at this difficult period in her young life? Give up? Hide? Make excuses? NO...she worked harder, made changes in her life to ensure she would improve, and committed to looking after her mental health by looking after herself and her well being. All this at 18 years old and in the public eye. To then go on and win the US Open shows an amazing level of resilience and self belief. It truly was inspiring to watch. And to top it all off...she smashed her A Level exams as well!

I see resilience of this nature everyday within our school community. It is an attribute we all must work on, through the best times and through the most difficult times. We must always remember to ask for help and support in difficult times. And Like Emma Raducanu we will succeed in whatever we set out to do if we can continue to work hard, stay resilient and help each other.

Welcome back to another exciting school year.

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