



26 April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

As we enter the summer term, I would like to update you on a number of important aspects related to the College.

Firstly, I am pleased to announce that my Deputy, Ms Paula Martin, will take over as acting Headteacher when I leave at the end of May. She will lead the College through to September when Mr Alex Lingard will take up his post. Mr Lingard is familiarising himself with the College through several visits and I know that he is very much looking forward to leading the College in September.

This term we are pleased to announce that the College has appointed a new Assistant Headteacher; Mrs Melany Mugford will take a strategic lead on personal development, which includes PSHE, Careers Education and Student Leadership. Mrs Mugford has an excellent record of accomplishment in this area through her work at St Ives School.

Student behaviour at College and in the community

Sadly, over the course of this academic year, we have seen an increase in antisocial and, sometimes, aggressive behaviour from young people within and around Helston. You may have seen in the media that such problems seem to be on the increase in other Cornish towns, as well as nationally. Such behaviour is predominantly happening outside of the school day and away from the College site. Although the proportion of students involved in such activities is relatively small, these particular students are having a big impact on others within our community.

If Helston Community College students are identified as being responsible for such behaviour, we will work with the students concerned, their parents/carers and where appropriate, other agencies, including the Police. We will use our full range of sanctions, as well as working with students and supporting them to change their behaviour. We have significantly invested in expanding our team of pastoral staff in order to meet the increased needs of our community, which has been compounded by the impact of the pandemic upon students' mental health, as well as the fact that other local support services are increasingly overstretched.

With this in mind, I feel it is important to make you aware that the College has statutory power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of the College premises, even if they are not wearing uniform. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers specific statutory powers to regulate students' behaviour in these circumstances "to such extent as is reasonable."

The College may discipline a student for any misbehaviour when the student is:

- taking part in any College-organised or College-related activity;
- travelling to or from College;
- wearing the College uniform;
- in some other way identifiable as a student at the College;
- misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply that:
 - could have repercussions for the orderly running of the College;
 - poses a threat to another student, staff or member of the public; or
 - could adversely affect the reputation of the College.

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Parent/carer engagement on such matters is very important, so please report to us any such issues which may be affecting your child, or which you are aware of in the community. We also encourage all students to come forward with information surrounding inappropriate behaviour. This can be reported by meeting a member of staff face to face or by completing our online reporting form on the Helston Community College Learning Portal. The more information we have the easier it is to deal with the students involved.

We also encourage criminal offences, such as assaults, to be reported to the Police. The 101 online reporting form is often the easiest way to do this unless of course it is an emergency, when you should call 999. We meet regularly with the Police to discuss school and community issues and cooperate with them in their investigations.

It is important to remind parents/carers that they have a duty to engage with the College if their child is behaving inappropriately. Reintegration meetings following fixed-term exclusions, for example, are an opportunity to discuss targets and support mechanisms for students and parents/carers are required to attend. Poor behaviour needs to be explored and tackled in partnership, and potentially through the involvement of external agencies.

Parent Forum

Our Parent Forum restarted last term, following a pause during the pandemic. It was fantastic to be able to hear parents/carers' views and concerns so that we can work together on delivering the best for our students. At the next meeting scheduled to be held on 17 May 2022 at 4.00pm there will be a discussion on our behaviour and associated policies.

Communication

With regard to communication and the crucial home-school partnership, I would like to take a moment to ask you to consider social media. Social media has revolutionised the way in which we all communicate and can be a great way to share information, however there are also many dangers with it. Some recent posts regarding incidents in the community have been factually incorrect, misguided, or even malicious. Individuals are able to present themselves as parents/carers of our College students, when in fact, they have no connection to the College. We believe that social media is not the way to raise any issues with the College and we ask that you contact us directly, by telephone or email, with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Canteen - Cost of Living

You are undoubtedly aware from a personal perspective that there has been a substantial increase in the cost of living over this academic year, with a significant impact on the cost of food items. In response to this, we have had to increase prices in our canteens for the summer term in order to balance the budget. Typically, this will result in an increase of 5p per item on snacks and 10p for hot food and meals. The 'meal deal' package will increase by 5p to £2.40. The price of drinks will stay the same for the foreseeable future.

Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

I would like to end this communication on a more positive note. The summer term will provide many excellent opportunities for students to get involved in curricular and extracurricular activities. Positive engagement within and beyond the school day is often the key factor which leads to enjoyment and success. Please encourage your child/children to get involved and try out new activities. Many are no cost or low cost and there are subsidies available for students in receipt of free school meals. We are keen to maximise participation, and in order to achieve this we will be gathering the views of students on the range of opportunities currently available and on what new clubs or activities they would like to see added.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours faithfully



Wayne Jenkins
Headteacher