



Monday 29th January 2024

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Although it seems a long time ago, I hope that you all had a good break and that you have had a positive start to 2024.

At this time of year our thoughts are with students in Year's 11 and 13 who have public examinations this summer.

Year 11 pupils collected their pre-public examination results last Tuesday, and on the Wednesday morning enjoyed a motivational talk by Action Jackson about the challenges that lie ahead and how best to deal with them. I hope that parents found the subject evening last week both informative and helpful.

Public examinations seem to start earlier every year. This year, the first full GCSE examination will take place on Thursday 9th May. From Monday 29th January, Year 11 pupils only have **55 school days** before their first examination.

The situation is very similar for Year 13. Students start their pre-public examinations on Monday 29th January. When they return to lessons after half-term, they have **49 school days** before the first A level examination on Tuesday 14th May.

As always, teachers have arranged a wide range of interventions at lunchtime, after school, at weekends and during the Easter holidays to support our students.

There is clearly no time to waste and yet on Wednesday 24th January, there were 22 pupils in Year 11 absent from school, and 24 students absent from Year 13. In the Autumn Term, attendance for Year 11 was 92% and for Year 13 the figure was 91%. Our whole-school figure was 93.3% which is above both local and national averages.

However, numbers and averages mean very little other than to illustrate the problem we face in school. What matters most is your own child's attendance.

Every day that a student misses school means that they have missed 5 hours of learning new things which they will never be taught again but might face questions about in just a few weeks time. They will also struggle to understand the work they do when they return to school because lessons are taught in sequence.

There is clearly a correlation between absence and exam results and I would please urge all parents to do all that you can to encourage your child to attend school every day, on time. Please do not hesitate to ask us for support if we can help.



**Artsmark
Silver Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England



I will now move onto other matters.

Forthcoming Pre-Public Examinations

Year 13: Monday 29th January 2024 to Friday 9th February 2024

Year 11: Monday 18th March to Thursday 28th March 2024

Pupil Interviews with Senior Staff

Every year a member of The Heathland Leadership Team has a 1:1 meeting with every pupil in Years 7-11. This gives us the opportunity to celebrate how well pupils are doing and to ask them questions about aspects of school life which gives us valuable insight and feedback from their perspective.

We are currently meeting pupils in Year 7 and it has been really encouraging to hear from pupils telling us how well they have settled into the school and all the exciting things they have been up to.

Next week we move onto Year 9 interviews, and we will be asking pupils if they have started to think about their GCSE subjects. To help them think a bit more about their futures, Year 9 pupils will attend our annual **World of Work Day** on Wednesday 21st February where they will have the opportunity to hear about a wide range of career opportunities.

Our Year 11 pupils will be completing their Sixth Form applications in the coming weeks and we look forward to meeting them again in early March to provide advice and guidance about their plans for next year and ensure that these are realistic.

Wellbeing

Mrs Benedict hosted a **Wellbeing Workshop** for parents and students on Thursday 25th January. The focus was helping to understand and recognise exam anxiety and stress and giving parents and students methods to help deal with the inevitable anxiety we all face when examinations are on the horizon.

Feedback from parents was extremely positive and I would urge you to attend future events. If you were unable to attend the session, the presentation and other resources from the evening can be found on our website by following [this link](#).

The week beginning 5th February 2024 is **Children's Mental Health Week**. The theme for this year is **'My Voice Matters'**. My Voice Matters is about empowering children and young people by providing them with the tools they need to express themselves. When we feel empowered, there's a positive impact on our wellbeing. Children who feel that their voices are heard and can make a difference have a greater sense of community and self-esteem.

Assemblies and tutorials will focus on the theme during the week. Please take this opportunity to discuss wellbeing with your child(ren).

Dates for the Spring Term 2024

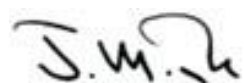
Monday 8 January to Thursday 28 March 2024

Half Term – Monday 12 February to Friday 16 February

Easter holiday – Friday 29 March to Friday 12 April 2024

Monday 15th April 2024 is a staff training day and pupils should not attend school.

Yours faithfully,



J.M Rose
Headteacher