



Aspire & Achieve Together

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Executive Principal: Mr G. Bassan BA (Hons) NPQH

9th February 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach half term, I wanted to write to you to update you on developments since Christmas, to introduce myself and my senior team and to outline the vision that will be driven across the school going forwards.

I would like to start by thanking Ms Diaz for successfully running the school over the past few years, and I am sure you will join me in wishing her well for the future. She and I worked very closely before the Christmas holidays to ensure that the school continues to be led effectively over the remainder of the academic year.

As the Director of Secondary Schools for the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, I am currently standing in as Executive Principal of Holcombe Grammar School and overseeing the recruitment of a new Head of School to commence post in September 2018. I am being supported in running the school by Miss Tanti and Mr Lillicrap, two members of the leadership team who have been seconded into Vice Principal roles until the end of the academic year.

By way of an introduction, I have worked in the teaching profession for 23 years in South Wales, Kent and Medway, and most recently as Principal of The Rochester Grammar School. During my time at RGS, I supported two schools in moving out of special measures as an interim Head Teacher. For me, teaching is the most fulfilling of all professions and there is nothing better than making a difference to children's lives and giving them the very best foundation for their future. I assure you, I will commit to upholding our Trust values of Child First, Aspire, Challenge and Achieve in my every day practice. I have communicated this via my assemblies this term and have created a new vision for the school based around Mastery, Endeavour and Thinking, our three stepping stones to a bright and successful future. I have been working with staff and students to create the vision outlined below to define the Holcombe Grammar School community.

- **MASTERY:** *it is our aim for students to fully realise their potential and achieve mastery of their own destiny. We will support them in becoming experts in their subject specialisms so that they have a firm foundation for future study/employment AND we will also help them to realise the importance of being in control of their own destiny.*
- **ENDEAVOUR:** *We want students to be part of a community of enterprising and industrious citizens who challenge themselves to reach their goals; students who are encouraged to be creative, to lead and to innovate.*
- **THINKING:** *We want students to be adept independent thinkers as they are entering a rapidly changing world where employers want to see:*
 - *Flexibility and Problem solving skills*
 - *The ability to analyse information, write accurately and fluently, and present and communicate effectively*
 - *A high level of technological literacy*
 - *Students who possess a wide range of habits – being open minded, balanced, reflective, able to ask questions and to take risks*

It is an exciting time for the school. This term, I have appointed some excellent teachers, including new Heads of Chemistry and Music (who will commence their roles after Easter), to ensure that students continue to be provided with the very best learning experience. I am also currently working with developers to create four brand new classrooms that will be ready for the start of the new school year in September 2018.

After half term, the countdown to exams for Years 11 and 13 will begin. Teachers are running an array of after school revision sessions and I would like Year 11 and 13 students to engage proactively in these. As parents/carers, I would be grateful if you could ensure that your son/daughter attends these important sessions (a timetable will follow). There will be 11 school weeks left before the public examinations so students should view this as a golden opportunity to make every second count. I know that the majority of students who participated in these sessions last year went on to meet and exceed their target grades in their final examinations, thus widening their future opportunities.

Finally, we have reached the time in the year when extreme weather may, on very rare occasions, cause the closure or partial closure of the school. The school understands that closure can cause great inconvenience to students, parents and guardians and, whilst we always err on the side of safety, we do not close the school unless absolutely essential.

If the weather deteriorates during the night and you think that the school may be closed please take the following steps:

- 1 Listen to Radio Kent – if the school is closed Radio Kent will issue regular bulletins throughout the morning listing schools that are closed or partially closed.
- 2 Check the school website – as soon as a decision is made to close the school our website is updated to that effect.

Could I respectfully ask you to refrain from telephoning the school to ask if we are open as this jams the school switch board. All parents/carers should have previously submitted their consent form giving permission for students to be sent home early in the event of severe weather. This information should also be fully completed in each student's school planner. Should you not have completed a consent form, please contact the school office or relevant Head of Year without delay.

I hope you have found this a useful introductory letter and update, and I am very much looking forward to getting to know your son/daughter and you as parents/carers over the coming year.

I thank you in advance for your continued support of the school.

Yours sincerely



Mr G Bassan
Executive Principal