

Ref: JAS/VAR

11 January 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Happy New Year to you all. We welcomed our students back on Tuesday after a two-week vacation. The HTC New Year has started very well. We were delighted to have been informed that we were re-accredited for Investors in Careers. As a College we have always been proud of our Careers advice and guidance which has ensured over the years that the vast majority of students access further education, training or Apprenticeships. In addition, we were notified this week that we have been accredited Gold Standard for our Rights, Respecting ethos, we are equally and particularly proud of this as it is external recognition of our positive, inclusive, safe and respectful College environment here at HTC, one which really does offer all of our young people the opportunities they all deserve in order to develop and flourish as respectful and confident citizens for the future society. Students, staff and Governors were part of the accreditation process and they presented themselves and the College in a very good light. Students were told of their success in the Whole College Assembly. In Hampshire, HTC is one of only two schools to have achieved the award.

### **Student Safety**

We are always proactive in our work to ensure that the students are safe and that they receive instruction through the curriculum, Assemblies and Tutor work about how they can keep themselves safe. Later this term we have themed weeks on safety that include Respect, Living without Harm and E-Safety Awareness. Students and staff have also learnt CPR.

We are still concerned about the impact of social media and gaming on a young person's quality of life and their educational success. It is apparent that some students are spending too much time engaged in such activities at the expense of learning, studying, revising and sleep. As a parent/carers it is easy to allow the use of these mediums to become part of everyday life and in some ways become invisible to us, therefore I encourage you to take a fresh look at how much time your child is spending on social media, Netflix and/or gaming. We have emphasised in our Whole College Assembly this week the importance of respectful communication via social media and highlighted some of the consequences that can arise when conversations get out of hand. We will also emphasise the dangers that can arise when students access websites that could pose dangers to their personal safety.

Whilst we are in the winter months and living at a time of short days with limited daylight it is important that students are vigilant about hazards to and from College whether they are walking, travelling by bus or cycling. Visibility is very restricted at this time and students need to take extra care when crossing roads and look out for the dangers. Hampshire County Council have produced 'Just the Journey' a guide to smarter and safer travel to school, we have made this available to students.

The weather in the future could be inclement and we would encourage all students to wear an outdoor coat and sensible footwear, examples of which are found on the HTC website under the heading About Us and Uniform. If the weather conditions are such that the College would have to be closed on the grounds of Health and Safety all parents/carers will be informed by the In Touch system and via the HTC website. A decision will be made as soon as we are able to in order that parents can make alternative provision for their child's care. We only make this decision when conditions are exceptional. Please ensure Student Support Services have the most up to date contact and personal details for your child so that we can keep you up to date with the latest information.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

We do set high standards and expectations for our students and we work hard to uphold them on a daily basis. We thank you for supporting these, we continue to emphasise the importance of respectful behaviour and language, punctuality, good attendance and hard work.

Attendance should be over 95%. If students are not in College they are not learning and this really affects the progress of your children. 95% and above is an acceptable level for a child's progress not to be adversely affected. A 90% attendance rate results in 18 days of lost education, with 29 days lost at 85% and with 80% equating to a half-term of learning missed. We ask parents/carers to think about the importance of good attendance and encourage their child to attend every day unless they are clearly very unwell. We also ask parents/carers to refrain from taking their children out of College for holidays as these are not authorised.

### **Working with our Stakeholders**

Recently we have worked with the Parent Forum and other schools locally to emphasise how we wish to work with all our stakeholders. Occasionally some stakeholders approach our staff in an aggressive manner and also expect that they can be seen immediately not appreciating that staff may be teaching or have other appointments. We will always accommodate stakeholders when we are able and will aim to acknowledge your correspondence within 24 hours and resolve any issues as soon as we are able. The statement below outlines how we work to support you.

*We believe that working effectively in partnership with parents/carers is essential to ensuring the highest standards of welfare and success of our students. We would therefore like to thank parents/carers for their support and efforts in working closely with us to achieve this aim. We expect our staff to respond in a timely, courteous and professional manner to parent queries or concerns. In return parents are requested to uphold these standards whether communication is by telephone, email or in person. Most issues should be resolved by the member of staff most closely associated with the concern raised. We aim to deal with all complaints seriously and work to resolve them. There should therefore be no need to approach the Headteacher, Governors, LA or Ofsted as a means to fast-forward your complaint. In exceptional circumstances, reference to our General Complaints Procedure is recommended.*

*Resolution of issues is always of high priority and in order to do so effectively communication should be calm, respectful and appreciative of there being more sides to an issue than parents or staff might initially be aware of. It is the case that when issues are complex we do require the time to investigate thoroughly to understand what has happened in order to make informed decisions and conclusions. Thank you again for maintaining positive relationships and enabling us to focus our attentions on educating your child to ensure that they make positive progress.*

### **This Term**

The term ahead presents many opportunities for our young people. In addition to the numerous sporting, artistic and creative events the College will be entering the Rock Challenge event this year at the Portsmouth Guildhall. All of our students should be working hard to make the most of their education. Hard work and effort is very important for students in Year 7 and 8 and in Year 9 when Early Options begin, this work lays the foundation for Key Stage 4 and public examination success. Students in Year 11 and 10 will be approaching the public examination period and they should be working hard in class, at revision and attending revision classes and working at home. Working in class is not enough to achieve the higher grades and students who do not achieve a higher pass in English and Maths will have to re-sit the qualification at College. The extra hard work is definitely worth it and we would ask parents to be monitoring to ensure that the extra work and revision is being completed.

Thank you for reading this letter and supporting our work at the College. If you require support with any issue please contact the Form Tutor, Year Leader or Subject Teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J A Summerfield  
Headteacher