



12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Headteacher - Patrick Earnshaw  
Deputy Headteacher - Mathew Downs

Parents/Carers, Students and Staff,

The final day of term is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023. As usual, it is a Christmas-themed Mufti Day for students and staff in return for a charitable donation, so Christmas jumpers, festive costumes and colours are strongly encouraged. Monies raised will go towards the **Save the Children** charity. Please give generously on Mufti Day with a minimum donation of £1 collected on arrival at school. Last year we raised £750, which was government matched. It would be great to beat that this year!

If you would rather donate online, you can through our JustGiving page here:

<https://highcliffe.school/1/CJ23>

### End of Term Arrangements

8:35 – 9:00 Tutor  
9:05 – 10:00 Period 1 (Year 7 see Christmas Performance)  
10:05 – 11:00 Period 2 (Year 8 see Christmas Performance)  
Sixth Form finish at end of Period 2  
11:00 – 11:40 Brunch  
11:45 – 12:15 Period 3 (Years 7 to 9)  
11:45 – 12:20 Period 3 (Years 10 to 11)  
12:30 Student School Transport leaves

### Start of Term Arrangements

School will return after the Christmas break on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

### Christmas Concert

Don't forget your tickets for this year's Christmas Concert on 14<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm. Tickets are £7 Adults / £6 under 18s. The price includes hot chocolate and a mince pie. I have seen the running order and it looks like a fun evening with an array of musical talent on show.

### Changes in school from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

Upon our return we will be spending time reminding students in Years 7 to 10 of some basic routines and expectations of them which are required from all students as they help make the school a purposeful and welcoming environment for all students and staff. This will range from simple routines like why we kept the one-way system inside the building during lesson changeovers (and therefore why all students need to use it) to more complex issues like the impact lateness to lessons has on a teacher and other students (and therefore why students need to use the 5 minute movement time to arrive at their lessons on time). A very small group of students, mainly but not exclusively female, have developed the habit of skipping lessons - a behaviour I know from my Head networks that secondary schools are experiencing nationwide. It is counter-productive behaviour. After working with these students and their families, a sub-group of them continue to do it, sadly. They, and some others who seem to find it unreasonable to personally meet the expectations of behaviour in lessons which most

other students easily achieve, will be educated and supervised elsewhere in school for several weeks after January. Families impacted by this will be contacted individually.

Although it is rare at Highcliffe, persistent bullying impacts a student who experiences it. Students who choose to engage in such behaviour, and their parents, should not be surprised at the robust response of the school, which will typically involve suspension/s, perhaps a Managed Move to another school, and has even involved the permanent exclusion of students who continue to bully despite the support and sanctions given to them to change their behaviour. Students are telling us the ban on mobile phones has helped encourage positive face-to-face interactions and that awareness levels and self-restraint about derogatory language have continued to markedly improve. External reviews carried out by HISP MAT over the term confirm this. It is never nice to have to tell a parent their child is bullying another child; changing that behaviour becomes more achievable when parents do not blame others for their child's own choices.

Regarding mobile phones, students deserve hearty congratulation for embracing this change so successfully and adapting their behaviour. This includes our Sixth Form, who have really impressed us with their voluntary self-restraint from using their phones in front of younger students. Going phone-free has proven a welcome and straightforward change. Thank you, parents, for your support of this at home.

You may find the Rewards and Behaviour policies for the school on our website.

### **Uniform**

From summer 2024 male and female students will be able to opt to wear mid-grey school uniform shorts, branded with the school logo, for the final summer half-term i.e. after May half-term. No other type of short is permitted. Shorts will be available to purchase from PMG in New Milton and Stevensons in Southbourne in due course.

### **Parents at Sport Fixtures**

Unfortunately, due to safeguarding and managing visitors on site we cannot permit parents to attend sports fixtures before 3.15pm. We normally have fixtures after school so this really only impacts over the winter months due to the light.

### **Trial Exams**

Thank you to Year 11 and 13 teaching and tutor teams for giving so much attention and support to your Year 11 and 13 students during the run-up to their trial exams and well done to the Year 11 and Year 13 students for all your hard work and revision leading up to your exams.

To my wonderful staff colleagues – you have each helped the school have a fantastic 2023 and your hard work and dedication to students makes possible everything we achieve for our young people. Thank you from your very proud Headteacher.

Warmest wishes to all members of the Highcliffe School community for a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year 2024.

Yours faithfully,



**Patrick Earnshaw**  
Headteacher