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**THE HART
SCHOOL**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

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Dear Parent/Carer

I write in order to provide you with an update on areas of school life at The Hart School as we enter the Spring Term.

Firstly, can I wish everyone a Happy New Year and, as ever, thank you for your continued support of the school, which continues to go from strength to strength.

During last term our academic performance in relation to student progress was validated. I'm delighted to inform you that we were the 2nd most improved school in Staffordshire and 194th nationally. We are proud of such an achievement, but not complacent and we will continue to strive forwards, with a determination to do the very best for every child who is in the school.

Student numbers also continue to grow; we have a programme of continuing to refurbish classrooms; preparations for our Sports Dome are now well underway and as we continue to evolve, the future is bright.

Attendance

At the end of last term, we made the decision to close the school due to the high numbers of young people and staff who were ill. This decision was not taken lightly, but it was the right decision. We have subsequently had the school 'deep cleaned' and all areas sanitised.

It was great to see many of our students back on 7 January! We know the importance of 'good attendance' (at least 96%) and its positive impact on learning. We would, therefore, ask you to make sure your child, unless in an emergency situation, attends school every day. We are setting a challenge of at least 200 students in every year group, attending every day for the remainder of this half term, so that we can ensure all have caught up with their learning.

Staffing

We will soon be welcoming back Mrs D'Arcy-Barron and would like, therefore, to take this opportunity of thanking Mrs Howarth who ably stepped in to ensure our language students continued to have quality learning experiences.

At the beginning of term Mrs Wooldridge began her maternity leave. We have managed to use our own staff, including maths teachers, to deputise for her. Mr Thompson, Vice Principal for Data and Assessment will take over her timetable in the next few weeks.



Mrs Cleland, Director of the English Faculty, will also shortly be beginning her maternity leave. We have contracted two experienced teachers of English, Ms Harding and Ms Redford, both of whom are now currently working well in the school and will be taking over Mrs Cleland's classes. We have done everything possible to make sure that we have smooth and seamless transitions in advance of Mrs Cleland leaving us.

In Mrs Cleland's absence, we have appointed Mr Brennan, Assistant Principal, to lead the English team. He will continue to lead the 6th Form as normal.

So far this academic year, we have had 'zero' day to day external cover. Where staff have been absent, all lessons have been covered by our staff and members of the leadership team. External supply staff has been an issue in the predecessor schools for a number of years; this, therefore, is a real achievement and we will be determined to, wherever we can, sustain it.

Consistent high quality teaching and strong leadership has been key to many of our improvements, including many school days last term where whole year groups achieved 100% positive behaviour points.

As we would all expect now, our students are responding well to clear expectations, quality teaching and responsive pastoral care.

Reporting

Last term, we introduced a new reporting system for parents. We hope that it was an improvement on the previous system. We will be writing to you to ask for feedback, so that we can review and refine any aspects to make it even cleaner and more meaningful to parents.

We continue to provide extra-curricular opportunities for our students and currently we are well underway in rehearsals for 'Little Shop of Horrors' which will be performed in the Summer Term. A number of students are also currently preparing for our annual ski trip later this term.

Last term we were also involved in a Shakespeare festival where we performed 'Hamlet', whilst in the 6th Form our students performed exceptionally well in the Trust's public speaking competitions, gaining praise from the panel of judges.

The Hart School is well and truly evolving into the school we all want it to be; a school which develops ambitious learners today, for tomorrow.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Mr Chris Keen
Principal