



30 August 2022

Dear Parents/Carers of Students in Year 7

I hope you have enjoyed a lovely summer.

Unless you have other children in the College, this is the first direct contact I have made with you, therefore I would like to introduce myself. My name is Alex Lingard and I am joining Helston Community College as the new Headteacher having had eight years' experience of being a Headteacher at another large 11-18 school in Cornwall. I live in West Cornwall with my family and I am passionate about education and the role it plays in shaping the future of young people. Every school in which I have been a senior leader has improved, as acknowledged by students, parents, staff and OFSTED. I am hugely excited about joining Helston and look forward to having a positive impact, building on the successes already achieved.

Over the summer, we have been working hard in preparation for the new academic year. Below are some of the main points I wanted to share with you - I apologise for the length of the letter, but there is lots to tell you!

### **1. Site Improvements**

Over the summer, South Site has been completely secured with new fencing around the perimeter. In addition, we have planned for additional CCTV to be installed to ensure the whole site is covered. This includes additional CCTV along the link path between the two main sites. Our site team have also been working incredibly hard refurbishing various classrooms and buildings.

### **2. Class Charts**

We have purchased some brilliant software called 'Class Charts' that has a variety of uses. It allows us to record positive and negative students' behaviours and report them straight back to you via an app on your phone/tablet. In addition, it allows us to set homework that can be easily accessed by students and parents/carers. In September, we will send you instructions about how to download the app and access your child(ren)'s account.

### **3. Behaviour and Rewards**

Following feedback from students, staff and parents/carers, we have amended our behaviour procedures. We are removing the current ATL system and replacing it with a simple behaviour approach and a new rewards system. In short, we will implement a 'Warn, Move, Remove' approach in lessons for students who choose not to follow instructions. Students not doing as expected will be given a warning, then asked to move to another seat (or given a second warning if moving seats is not the best option), then will be removed from the class to work in another classroom – this will then result in a detention. Staff will also be giving out 'Praise Points' each lesson. You will be automatically notified through Class Charts if your child has been removed from a class or if they have received a praise point. We will send home postcards and certificates for students who achieve lots of praise points and we will be celebrating 'Students of the Week' in each subject. Every month I will ask all staff to nominate students for the 'Student of the Month Award' and there will be additional rewards for students with persistently good behaviour.

#### 4. Progress Reports

Students will receive two Progress Reports each year (Year 12 students will receive three). Within the reports, students will be given an attitude score for each subject and a short comment from the teacher. Students in Years 7 to 11 with the best attitude scores will receive a letter from me recognising their positive contributions. Where possible we have timed the parent/carer-teacher consultation evenings so that they coincide with a Progress Report to enable any areas of success or concern to be discussed. Dates for these will be published soon.

#### 5. Attendance and Punctuality

I cannot stress enough how important good attendance is – its impact on students' learning and exam success is huge. We want every student to be in school every day with 100% attendance. We will be making this a very high priority and have appointed a new Assistant Headteacher, Mr Carpenter, to take the lead on this with our Attendance Manager, Ms Weir. Punctuality is also important. Failure to arrive to school on time (without good reason) will now result in a short lunchtime detention that day.

#### 6. Mental Health and Well-Being

We are very aware of the pressures that face young people and the impact these can have on their mental health. To support those most in need, we have appointed a second Healthcare Champion to work alongside Ms Shannon who recently joined the College last term. In addition, we are looking at training up more support staff over the autumn term in Mental Health First Aid.

#### 7. Anti-bullying

Last term the College launched its new Anti-Bullying Ambassador roles, led by one of our Sixth Form students, Adam, and Mrs Mugford, Assistant Headteacher. As part of this role, students will be working across the College to run well-being groups and to train students to become Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. In addition, the Ambassadors will take part in the hugely respected anti-bullying training from The Diana Award, supported by HRH The Duke of Cambridge. We are very proud to be hosting this training on-site next term for schools across Cornwall. We hope this work helps raise the profile of bullying which will then prevent it happening both within schools and beyond.

#### 8. Jewellery

From September, students will only be allowed to wear one pair of stud earrings and one small discreet nose stud and a watch. **No other jewellery will be allowed.** Rings, bracelets and necklaces are not allowed for health & safety reasons. Sadly, we have had a small number of students injured or nearly injured because they have caught these items whilst doing practical work – so, for the students' safety we have taken the decision to **not allow** them at all. Any of these items seen will be confiscated and returned at the end of that half-term. **Please note that no jewellery at all is allowed during PE lessons or clubs – ear and nose studs must be removed.**

#### 9. Start and End of the School Day

The school day starts at 8.45am – this means we expect students on site by 8.40am at the latest. The end of the school day will now be 3.15pm, (extended from 3.10pm last year). The additional 5 minutes is being added to tutor time to enable us to enhance our morning programme. Every morning, tutors in Years 7 to 11 will complete a uniform and equipment check along with the daily register. This leaves a good chunk of time for other activities such as assemblies. New this year, in Years 7 to 10, we will be spending three mornings each week reading some fantastic books that will not only help improve vocabulary and comprehension, but also broaden students' understanding and background knowledge. The English Department selected the books and class sets have been bought ready for the new term.

#### 10. Homework

As mentioned above, homework will now be set on Class Charts so it is easy to access for students and parents/carers. I do though believe that a deadline is a deadline, so if homework is not completed by the date set by the teacher (without good reason), students will receive a short detention at lunchtime.

I have high expectations in everything we do and will insist on high standards. I am also passionate about making sure we do everything we can to ensure the College is a happy, positive and thriving environment. I am hugely excited about joining the Helston community and hope to meet many of you very soon. We will continue to hold Parent Forums so that we can directly hear your perspective about how things are going. I am also aiming to set up a monthly school magazine so that we can share with you some of the fantastic activities and achievements seen across the College.

As with every year, there have been some staffing changes over the summer. I will write to update you about these next week.

We look forward to welcoming Year 7 students next Wednesday. Please remember to ensure all students have a full set of equipment and the correct uniform items – details of which can be found on the website.

Yours faithfully

*A Lingard*

A Lingard  
Headteacher