



July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

I would like to take this opportunity to first of all say how excited I am to have taken over as the Achievement Leader for Year 9 and I look forward to the rollercoaster journey of the next two years as the cohort embark on their GCSE journey. After saying goodbye to my Year 11 group during their leavers assembly on the Monday, Mr Jones gave me a whopping one day to re-energise before starting with the Year 9s on the Wednesday. To be honest, I was raring to get going and set out what I expect of the year group.

I have made it clear to the students that the three things I expect from them are attendance and punctuality, an outstanding attitude to learning and a high level of progress and attainment. My assemblies so far have focused on the fact that the students can control their attendance and attitude and that if those two are outstanding then they will achieve high levels of progress and attainment. I have been pleased with the fact that punctuality has improved over the last month and there has been an improvement in their attitude to learning.

One focus for the first term back will be around attendance. Research shows that students with attendance below 96% are statistically more likely to be a grade lower than their peers who have attendance above that level. Not only this but any student who has attendance below 90% is considered a persistent absentee and this can cause issues when applying to colleges and sixth forms.

The second area of focus will be to move conversations I am having with students and parents to the progress and attainment of students rather than behaviour. During the two years of GCSEs it is crucially important that all students are fully engaged and motivated and that behaviour does not prevent this for any student. I will not shy away from the fact that in some instances this will need to improve dramatically as we start Year 10. May I please remind you of the importance of getting the basics right and wearing the correct uniform, so that I can concentrate on helping your child achieve as best as they possibly can. Expectations around uniform can be found [here](https://heanorgatespencer.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Uniform-Restrictions-September-2024-25-1.pdf)  
<https://heanorgatespencer.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Uniform-Restrictions-September-2024-25-1.pdf>.

To help with the above, and due to staffing changes, we have also put in place new tutor groups for the upcoming year. Whilst the majority of students will remain in their current tutor group, some have been moved due to the fact we now have an extra group and we also welcome Mrs White and Mr Johnson to the team. Both were Year 11 tutors last year and have a wealth of knowledge of supporting tutor groups through their GCSEs. I have also looked at attendance, behaviour and friendship groups to implement the changes. Students will only be in these groups for tutor time, with all subject lessons being in different groupings.

I may only have been with the year group for a matter of weeks, however it has been a busy few weeks and they have given me a lot to be proud of already. Their unity and organisation during sports day and superstars day was fantastic and it was great to see so many students involved. Other staff around the school commented on how Year 9 students were taking part in all that was on offer, whether it be the 100m race, penalty shootout, sponge a teacher, rounders or performing their favourite song on karaoke. The latter may need a fair bit of work for next year.

As an Achievement Leader for a year group, trip day is always a nervous time of the year. As you wave off over 200 students for the day, you sit in anxiety as you fear the worst of receiving any calls or emails about students' conduct. All I can say is thank you to every single one of the students who made the day enjoyable for all staff and their fellow students. I hope they had a brilliant time, wherever they went. Before any of the students bring it up - I now know I am terrible at trampolining.

During the next two years I will be sending out regular year group newsletters to update you on interventions, assessment periods, support groups, extra-curricular events etc. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Mr Bentley**

**Year 9 Achievement Leader**



**Mrs Wainwright**

**Year 9 Assistant Achievement Leader**