

6 January 2025

Dear parents and carers

I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year. I am writing to inform you of some changes that will take place from tomorrow (Tuesday 7 January). I will hold assemblies with all students tomorrow to explain the changes and there will be some further parent information sessions during January; dates and times can be found at the bottom of this letter.

When I met with families on Wednesday 12 December, some concerns were shared. These were broadly; low level disruption in class, especially with cover teachers, the lack of toilet provision for students, expectations and aspirations are not high enough, lack of belonging to the school, bullying and a lack of clarity with systems and processes that the school implements.

Some of the changes are going to have an immediate impact however some will take longer to embed, especially when linked to our school culture, as in my experience this is where we foster that strong sense of belonging to THS and where negative, cultural issues, such as bullying or vandalism can start to be addressed.

Your child's safety and learning are always the most important aspects of education, and therefore our priorities from January 2025 are:

- exemplary behaviour where we establish a culture of high expectations, positive reinforcement and consistent practices, so that behaviour is conducive to learning and students show respect for themselves and others.
- that we have great teaching which meets the needs of all students, and we connect communities, both in school and with the wider community.
- we will ensure our culture is one of collective optimism whilst being relentless with our routines and expectations and demonstrate visible kindness.

For this to happen I have worked with colleagues today to ensure they understand the only way for us to change the culture at THS is through our consistently applied routines and expectations done in a way we would want all young people to be treated.

I was asked at the parents meeting how can parents help? The answer is for families to support the school expectations and rules, and work with us to support your child. This doesn't mean the school can't be challenged; we welcome that as this is how we work together and improve. As a parent myself all I want is for my children to feel safe in school and for the rules and

Bolham Road, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6SQ

T: 01884 256655

E: admin@tiverton.devon.sch.uk

W: www.tiverton.devon.sch.uk

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boundaries to be clear, consistently applied and proportionate, so they can learn. This is no different for your child.

We have reviewed the behaviour policy ([link here](#)) and made some changes that I hope will give clarity but also ensure consistency. For example, we have reviewed our response to truancy. From now on any sanction for truancy or lateness will take place at break time or after school and not going to reset and missing more learning time. The same applies to a student being reset from a lesson; they will miss the rest of that lesson and then go back to normal lessons afterwards. If a student has had multiple resets in the day, we will review their provision for the remainder of the day to ensure they can be successful.

To ensure clarity we will talk to students about what we expect from them. This is to work hard, be kind and aim high. All adults will model the behaviour we expect to see and must always consistently correct or challenge incorrect behaviours and norms. For example, from tomorrow there will be a greater presence around the school with more staff on duty before school to welcome our students, at break times and after school. You may also begin to hear the phrase 'natural state' from your child. This simply means that students are silent (in their natural state) during key times in the day, for example when entering and leaving a classroom and when in an assembly, to model the behaviour that will result in a calm and orderly learning environment.

In addition to this during every lesson changeover there will be adults in the corridors. Calm corridors will be our expectation, and we will be relentless with our routines and expectations. All students will be expected to walk on the left in a calm and sensible manner and enter their classrooms in their natural state (silence). They can talk in the corridors but will be politely reminded if this is not in keeping with our expectations.

Toilets will now be open during lesson changeovers and breaks. I am very aware that the condition of some of the toilets is not to a standard I would expect. There is money now set aside to refurbish all the toilets in the school during this term.

Please note the schools' gates by the sports hall and Morrisons will be locked at 8:30am every day. All students who arrive after 8:30am will need to pass through the main gates where a team of colleagues will meet them. They will be marked as late and receive a 20-minute reflection at break time.

From February half-term the school will revert to a one-week timetable which will see a reduction of 75% of our split classes (classes with more than one teacher) and give students clarity of where they need to be and when.

There are some other changes to make you aware of. For me, our school uniform is a sign of how strong the sense of belonging to the school the students have. Although the expectation

hasn't changed, from tomorrow (Tuesday 7 January) all students are expected to wear their blazers. This is not optional. When in the main building or the connecting buildings all outdoor coats will need to be removed. Students may wear a coat over their blazers when outside the main building. You have spent hard earned money on your child's blazer and we expect them to be worn. If they are not worn, there will be a sanction for this as per the behaviour policy.

Cover lessons at THS

Many of you have shared concerns about the volume of lessons being covered and as you will know the recruitment crisis in education is a real thing and there isn't a quick fix. To guard against the misuse of routines and the possibility of poor behaviour being exhibited in supply covered lessons and the subsequent loss of learning time I have made the following adjustment. In some instances, multiple classes will now be combined for cover lessons in the main school hall and lessons and lead by the Senior Leadership Team and other senior members of staff.

I hope you appreciate the transparency with which I have written this letter. I will hold a further information and listening event on 14 & 21 January at 6pm in the Theatre, so please feel free to come and hear more about the changes, the impact of them as well as ask any questions you may have.

May I wish you all the best for 2025 and I am looking forward to working with you all. If you have any trouble accessing this letter, there is a link here where a read aloud version will be available by Friday 10th January.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Lamb
Headteacher

Bolham Road, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6SQ

T: 01884 256655

E: admin@tiverton.devon.sch.uk

W: www.tiverton.devon.sch.uk

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