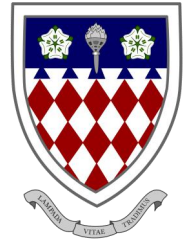


# Spalding High School

## Weekly Bulletin

### 7th September 2023



Welcome to the academic year 2023 -2024! I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable summer holiday and are enjoying the late summer sun.

It was a pleasure to welcome the School back yesterday morning in the first whole school assembly of the year. A special welcome was extended to both our new Year 7 and Year 12 cohorts joining the School for the very first time together with several new colleagues. Although many of Year 11 have returned to take up places in Year 12, they are now members of the Sixth Form, a very different experience to being in the lower school! Year 7 seemed to settle in very quickly and positively yesterday. There were lots of happy faces out and about at break and lunchtime and many trying out the canteen for the first time too.

We welcome a number of new colleagues to the High School this September, and in later editions of the Bulletin and HQ School magazine, we will introduce you to them a little more. We have two new receptionists, Mrs Bowser and Mrs Freeman, together with two new lunch supervisors, Miss Mawford and Mrs Pahal. Mrs Connolly joins us as our new reprographics assistant and School medical officer and Mr Doherty as our new DT and Drama technician. New teachers on the staff are Miss Hammond (Drama and Music) and Mrs Tanner (Head of Art). Welcome one and all.

Although not new to the School, Mrs Huggins (Catering Manager) and Mrs Burton, Miss Mawford and Mrs Payne (Catering Assistants), now officially join the High School staff team as we have brought the catering in-house. Welcome ladies! The new menus have been created in consultation with the School Council and student body and the price structure has been revised and we are hoping that students enjoy the change. Breakfast is back on the menu and you will find more details of menus and pricing both in this week's bulletin and on the School website.

As you have no doubt seen from the local press and the School website, High School students did very well in their summer examinations and we want to congratulate them officially in this first bulletin of the year. This summer, students in England faced marked-down grades after a push by government to return results back to pre-pandemic levels. Despite this national trend of lower grades, the School achieved the highest number of A\* grades and A\*-B grades at A Level compared to pre-pandemic external examinations since 2017 with 9% of all grades awarded A\* and 60% of all grades awarded A\*-B. Most importantly, students achieved destination goals across a wide variety of progression routes including university, apprenticeships, employment and gap years. Please read the Careers Section for more details and I would like to say how proud we are of all of our Year 13 leavers.

At GCSE, over 1500 qualifications were taken by our Year 11 students this summer and of those 45% were graded at Grades 7-9; The High School results compare very favourably with the national Grade 7-9 attainment rate of 21.6% and regional rate of 18.5% Grade 7-9. We continue to be very proud of our students' EBacc results with 88% of students entered for the qualification. In English, 99% of students achieved a Grade 4 (Standard Pass), or higher and 93% achieved a Grade 5+ (Good Pass) or above. In Mathematics, 100% of students achieved a Grade 4 or higher and 89% achieved a Grade 5 or above. Congratulations to our former Year 11.

My themes of the start of year assembly very much focused on being kind, to both others and ourselves and ensuring that we were all brave enough to engage with our learning, even if that runs the risk of making mistakes. I hope everyone listened carefully and takes these messages on board during the coming year.

## Attendance at School

The School has always had very high rates of student attendance, and this continues to be the case. However, we will, in support of the DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance, be continuing to focus on this area of school life this coming year. When parliamentary time allows, the DfE guidance will become law. We are proud of our relationship with students and parents/carers and look forward to working with you to further increase attendance at school. This will also be a theme within our curriculum evenings this year and we will share more information with you at those meetings.

As with the national picture of attendance, the High School has seen changes in attendance since the pandemic. Whilst most students achieve the national annual expected attendance rate of 95% or above, we have, since the pandemic had a growing number of students with annual attendance rates of between 90-95%. Within the new regulations, students with annual attendance rates of between 90-95% are described as "At risk of persistent absence". Not only has the number of students in this group increased since the pandemic, but the pattern of non-attendance has changed. Post-pandemic, we have seen an increase in odd days off here and there across a month or short periods of two-three days across a term. We also noted an increase in regular (monthly) odd days off related to menstruation that was not previously typical. When all of these periods of short absence are added up, they can amount to as much as a full week per term or four to six weeks across the whole year. This will affect social and academic engagement, progress and attainment.

Post pandemic we have also seen a shift in the reasons for absence. Prior to the pandemic illness related absence was very specific and for longer periods such as a week off with flu or tonsillitis. Last year we saw an increase in generic reasons such as "sick" or "ill". We would ask parents/carers to be very specific in the reasons for absence when they write notes/emails into school this year and require a more exact description of the reason for absence. We will be following up on all generic related absences.

We would ask that all parents/carers support us in ensuring their child attends school every single day unless they are truly too unwell to be here.

You will find your child's annual attendance percentage for 2022/23 at the end of their end of year academic report sent home in the summer. Please check this against the following government categories and contact the School (form tutors in the first instance) should you wish to discuss this further.

95% and above Expected  
91-94% At Risk of Persistent Absence  
80-90% Persistent Absence  
51-79% At Risk of Severe Absence  
Less than 50% Severe Absence

The link to the full DfE document can be found below and states:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

"The law requires every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school."

## **Drop Off and Collection**

Parents are politely reminded of the School's Drop Off/Collection Procedures and Transport Plan that can be found on the School website. A few key reminders:

- Parents/carers are **not** to come onto the school site (walking or in vehicles) to drop off and collect students without prior agreement with the Head of Year (for example those on crutches).
- Drop off and collection **must** be arranged at a safe distance **away** from the School grounds and not on the local streets as these become very congested with twenty school buses and hundreds of students walking to and from school.
- There are local traffic restrictions and zones around the School that must be observed, this includes the zigzag hazard lines and bus bays in front of the School.
- Parents/carers are asked to be very considerate of local residents and not block driveways or cause obstructions.

## **RAAC**

There has been a lot of media coverage over this last week about Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). It was a building material widely used in mostly public service buildings for about forty years that is now reaching the end of its life. This message is to reassure all parents and carers that RAAC is not present in any of the buildings at the High School.

## **Staff News**

Congratulations to Ms Pascoe and her partner, who welcome their second child, Owen James, born on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Fantastic news!

**Mrs M K Anderson, Headmistress**

## The Little Princess Trust

This Saturday, I will be chopping my hair off to raise money for The Little Princess Trust.



This will be the third time donating my long hair for wigs. From receiving hair donations, through to the making of the wig and the fitting and styling, it costs the charity £700 to provide each real-hair wig to wig recipients.

The Little Princess Trust provides real hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or to other conditions such as Alopecia.

The charity is also one of the largest funders of childhood cancer research in the UK.

The Little Princess Trust relies solely on the generosity of its wonderful supporters who help the charity give Hair and Hope to so many children and young people with cancer each year.

Please support me if you can!

**[Joanna Nowak is fundraising for Little Princess Trust \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com)**

**Mrs Nowak, Deputy Head of Maths**

## Careers Update

### Year 11 and Year 13 Successes

It was a busy time in August on both A Level and GCSE results days. We are extremely proud of last year's Year 13 students as they leave us to move on to new ventures.

78 of our Year 13 students gained a place at university to study a wide range of degree courses, including Medicine, Civil Engineering, English Literature, Law, Business Management, Psychology, Fine Art, Nursing, Paramedic Science, Architecture, International Relations & Politics, Primary Education, Mathematics, Accountancy & Finance, Textile Design and many more. In addition to a wide range of study disciplines chosen, the range of 43 universities is equally impressive. Our students will be heading off in the next few weeks to universities such as Exeter, Manchester, Bath, Newcastle, Nottingham, Durham, Leeds, Lincoln, Nottingham Trent, Loughborough, Warwick and many others.

One student has secured a degree apprenticeship in Software Engineering and one has a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship. Other students have apprenticeships positions in Accountancy and Teaching. Students not heading to university or taking up apprenticeships have found employment within retail and the leisure industry, whilst others have decided to take a gap year to work or volunteer before applying to university next year.

We are equally proud of last year's Year 11 students, almost all of whom are now undertaking further study, here at the High School or with other providers. We are delighted to welcome back former students and our new transferees from other schools who have enrolled into our sixth form.

Our current Year 13 students are busy this term preparing personal statements for use in university or apprenticeship/employment applications. It is a busy time between now and Christmas and we are pleased with the preparation work students carried out during the last six months.

We wish all our students the best of luck for the future and hope that those who have now left will keep in touch to share their future successes.

### Aspiring Allied Health Careers

Each year we have students who want to pursue healthcare careers. The competition for such roles is high and any opportunities to gain experience and insight are very important if students wish to be successful. The NHS Talent Academy are pleased to announce two Aspiring Allied Health Careers events on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 5.30– 8.30pm at Lincoln Hospital and on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 5.30-8.30pm at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston.

This event is a great opportunity for students to explore a range of allied health professions and participate in hands-on demonstrations led by industry experts who play an important part in the treatment and rehabilitation of patients both within a hospital and community setting. The following allied health professions will be showcased (please check which professions apply to each event) – Diagnostic Radiography, Therapeutic Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Operating Department Practitioner, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy.

Students must be aged 15–18 years and living or educated in Lincolnshire. As part of the application process, students must provide a short statement as to 'Why you would like to participate in the Aspiring Allied Health programme'. The closing date for applications is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September. Please see the attachment with this newsletter for details and the QR code for applications. Could students please let me know if they apply and are successful in gaining a place at either event.

## Careers Update

### Medic Mentor – Get into Medicine Conferences

Every year 'Medic Mentor' runs a varied programme of support for aspiring medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine students. We have been recommending the support offered for several years and many students have benefitted from it. I would recommend that any students in Years 10-12 interested in any of these disciplines look carefully at the website. There is a 'Get into Medicine' online conference scheduled on a choice of three dates: 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September. If students wish to apply, they can use my email address in the teacher contact section. Could students please inform me if they sign up.

### Medicine National Healthcare Weekend – Medic Mentors

### University of Cambridge – Subject Matters Webinar

Christ's College, Cambridge, is hosting a webinar aimed at students in Years 10 and 11 on 13<sup>th</sup> September at 5.00pm. This session will focus on making the right subject choices for post-16 study in preparation for university study, especially at selective universities such as Cambridge. Could students please inform me if they take part in the event. The registration link is below:

### Webinar Registration - Zoom

### Support:

As always, we can be contacted by email if parents or students in any year group have any queries:

[Dawn.bushell@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Dawn.bushell@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk)

[Lucy.obrien@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Lucy.obrien@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk)

Mrs Bushell, Careers Leader