

1st April 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

It is with great pleasure that I can write to you at the end of another busy, long and very different term, with, I am delighted to say, students in the building learning! It has been wonderful to welcome them back and we are, as I know you will be, very proud of how they are managing the various challenges they face in these circumstances with great courage and resolve.

Students have returned to in-class teaching in a settled, focused and positive manner. Working with them throughout this term has been fantastic; time and time again I have been amazed by the maturity and level headedness that our students demonstrate. This is an opportune moment also to recognise all our parents, and say a HUGE thank you for the support you given your children throughout lockdown. Many teachers also had to support their children through home learning and so it is with understanding that we recognise the great part you have all played in your children's learning this term. Thank you.

I would also like to thank all the parents and students at Beacon Hill that have welcomed me so warmly this term. I have been working with the staff and students to establish what my high expectations are; I am pleased to report these have been well received and everyone is working hard to meet them. I hope students have had a chance at home to talk about some of the positive changes we have implemented. Staff have been clear that the students are calmer, focused and working well in lessons and as a result the quality of learning is high. I would have expected nothing less.

I must also share with you some staff changes. Mrs Saunders and Mrs Pearce will be moving on after Easter. They have both championed the needs of some of our most vulnerable students, as well as those who have found themselves in difficult situations. They have affected the lives of so many, in such a positive way and for such a long time. I know you will join us in wishing them a very happy next step, into a county SEN role and retirement respectively. We wish them well. As a result of this you will see Mrs Thorp taking on the DSL role at Solway and Mr Young the DSL role at Beacon Hill. In support of them will be Mr Sunter, who will oversee behaviour and pastoral issues in both schools. Mr Wigginton is pleased to now take on the role of SENCo at both Beacon Hill and Solway.

This has also been a term in which we have seen the introduction of COVID testing to a much greater degree. We have been at the forefront of this in the County, from being one of the few schools involved in the pilot testing in January, weekend community testing, student LFT testing on our re-opening, to the recent introduction to home testing. We have embraced this challenge and have recognised the importance of our position in the community to support this key process. We have very much appreciated working with the wider community and in particular the Fire Service in all of this.

I hope you have an opportunity to rest over the Easter break, but not too much! For those that don't yet know, Jackson Slack, one of our Solway students, has initiated a fund raising drive for Carlisle Eden MIND; a local mental health charity. Anyone can participate and donate by running/walking or cycling 100km over Easter. We would love to see as many people as possible, parents and students, getting involved and supporting this worthy cause - visit our Facebook pages for details on how to sign up. It is this, school at the centre of our communities, which inspires me most.

At Solway many students are now wearing the new blazers and across the school we have seen an increased pride in the students' uniform. We are particularly pleased to have been contacted by members of the community with comments on how smart our students are looking. For students who have over lockdown outgrown old uniform or lost it, please can parents reflect over the Easter break what is needed and replace it, along with any other equipment needed, for our return on 19th April.

We don't know all that the next term will bring, but we do know that given the capacity our staff and students have already shown - we are confident we will manage well with the unfolding of the roadmap to recovery. Have a happy and safe holiday everyone. Next term begins on Monday.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. E. Hailwood', written in a cursive style.

Tom Hailwood
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