

It feels great to be back and writing to parents once again, especially after such a positive start to the new academic year. We had a wonderful GCSE Results Day in August and this has given everyone a huge lift for the year ahead. On an individual level, so many of our students did exceptionally well - thanks to the students for picking up on all our advice and guidance but thanks also to the dedication and hard work of the staff here at Bedale! The success of our teachers is coming through very strongly now. In the core subjects of Maths, English and Science, we saw a solid set of results and in Geography and Art they were outstanding overall. Almost all subjects saw an improvement on the previous year and this should give confidence not only to the next cohort of Y11s but also to Y10s and Y9s who are just embarking on their GCSE courses. The one proviso is, of course that students MUST put in the high levels of commitment if they want to achieve highly - GCSEs have become harder, without any shadow of doubt, but the vast majority of our outgoing Y11s have shown that, with effort and support from staff and home, they are achievable so to all our GCSE students and their parents, I wish you well and promise that we'll try to ensure that every successive cohort is even better prepared than the last one!

I'd like to welcome our Y7 parents. Miss Bradbury informs me that the Year 7 pupils are settling in well and the team of tutors are "delighted" with their form groups. Students have impressed us with the way that they have adapted to their new surroundings and are arriving at school ready to learn. Over the coming week, they will have the opportunity to take part in lots of new activities, including our lunchtime clubs. Parents should note that, on Thursday, 27th September there will be an opportunity to meet with the tutor team and senior staff at the "settling in" evening. This is an opportunity to talk to the tutor about any issues that may have been thrown up by transition and to ask any questions that you may have. However, in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch if there are concerns as it's always better to "nip things in the bud". One of the concerns for some students last year was getting used to the rigours of secondary school homework. Whilst we expect students to be completing all Home Learning activities from the start, staff have been briefed to set tasks initially that are relatively short and then build up over the next few weeks but if parents feel that a particular task is taking too long, please record a brief note in the book and/or make contact with the tutor.

In general, it is fair to say that almost all students have made a pleasing start to the term and settled quickly. Having made the successful change last year from the old "vertical" tutor group system, it has been wonderful to see how, this year, tutors are seeking to improve and develop the role that they play in everyday student support. Led by Mr Chapman and Miss Bradbury, there is an increased focus on ensuring that each day, every student is "ready to learn". This means being in full uniform and with the right equipment (thank you for the vast majority of parents who have ensured that students have well-stocked pencil cases!) and having completed Home Learning tasks to the best of their ability and we appreciate your support in ensuring that this is the case. However, beyond that, we ask our tutors to check first thing each day whether students are mentally focused so they can demonstrate the positive attitude to learning that is at the heart of our school ethos. If there are issues that need to be addressed, we aim to respond swiftly so, if there are any minor concerns, we would ask that, in the first instance, these are shared with your child's form tutor.

One of the big improvements that we have seen over the past year has been the way that Home Learning has helped students to accelerate the progress that they have been making by developing independence, reinforcing skills and particularly in terms of revising and preparing for tests/exams. Our use of Show my Homework is central to our policy and all parents are urged to view this regularly. Mr Gill assures me that all students have received user names, passwords and the updated home learning timetable but please let him know if you or your child has any problems logging onto Show my Homework.

Finally, I will leave you with a brief outline of my welcome back assembly to students. Essentially, I tasked them with being "the best that you can be" and talked about the importance of resilience. We looked at a time-lapse animation of a baby learning to walk and saw how many times she fell over but then picked herself up with a beaming smile on her face before she finally mastered the skill. If students are pushing themselves to learn, they should expect the occasional "fall" and if things are too easy then it's likely that students are in their "comfort zone" instead of being stretched. As adults, we usually find that we learn more from our mistakes so we want

to develop that same positive mindset in all students so we asked the question, "what do JK Rowling, Thomas Edison and Colonel Sanders have in common?" Please ask your son/daughter for their answer!

Have a lovely weekend.

Dates for Your Diary

20.9.18 – Y9 & 10 Information Evening for parents/students.

27.9.18 – Y7 Settling In Tutor Evening.

Post-16 Open Evening Dates for Y11's

<u>COLLEGE</u>	<u>OPEN EVENING DATES</u>
QE Darlington	17.10.18 and 23.10.18 and 24.11.18 - 10.30am-1pm
York College	18.10.18 - 6pm
Northern School of Art	24.10.18 - time tbc
Richmond School	11.10.18 and 21.3.19 - time tbc
Darlington Technology College	24.10.18 and 27.11.18 - 5.30-7.30pm
Askham Bryan College	Information Evening - 9.10.18 - 5-6.30pm; Open Morning - 10.11.18 - 10.30am-1.30pm
Barnard Castle	7.11.18 - 7-9pm; 23.11.18 - 5-7pm
Ripon Grammar	21.1.19 - 6.30pm