

04 December 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At CHS, we want our students to **believe** in themselves, **achieve** their academic potential and **succeed** in life. We aim to **shape a positive future** for all our students.

All students deserve to have positive experiences at school, feel safe, expand their knowledge, build memories, and develop attributes that they can utilise in life beyond school. We want every student to learn to believe in their abilities and build confidence to try new things and be curious about the world around them.

To help our students become flourishing individuals we see the importance of developing character to achieve academic potential. Examples of the qualities we aim to instil include:

- Intellectual qualities - critical thinking, curiosity, judgement, reasoning, reflection, and resourcefulness.
- Moral qualities – compassion, courage, gratitude, honesty, humility, integrity, justice, and respect.
- Civic qualities – citizenship, civility, community, awareness, neighbourliness, service, and volunteering.
- Performance qualities – confidence, determination, motivation, perseverance, resilience, and teamwork.

We need to challenge our students to be committed and motivated at school so that when they leave, they can achieve their dreams and ambitions and succeed in becoming independent, productive, and able members of society.

Our pastoral colleagues focus on helping students improve their behaviour and attendance, we, as a Teaching and Learning team, have set out to tackle the question of passive engagement in lessons wanting our students to be thirsty for knowledge and not just follow the path of least resistance.

We want our students to be excited, brave and inquisitive. We want them to drive their learning forward, ask questions, discuss issues. We want them not to settle for a pass. We want them to grapple with difficult concepts and not be afraid to make mistakes. After all,

learning *is* about making mistakes; it is about trials and errors; it is about those moments of discovery where true magic happens.

At the start of the year, we launched our Aim to Excel programme wherein all the key marked pieces received an Attitude to Learning (ATL) grade with instructions of how effort could be improved. We redesigned the descriptors for the ATL grades to reflect the different levels of effort as: highly motivated (1); engaged (2); passive (3); disengaged (4).

As the progress report makes its way home to you, you might notice that your child has more ATL 3 grades than they previously had. Please do not be alarmed by this and please do not assume that your child's behaviour in lessons has deteriorated. Except for ATL 4, we have completely decoupled behaviour from engagement, and we are focusing on reteaching students what it means to be truly engaged in the aim of developing metacognitive skills and positive learning mindsets. We want to make our learners more aware of when they are being passive and give them the extra motivation to apply themselves more effectively. Therefore, we encouraged our staff to consider more carefully whether the well-behaved students who go throughout their days without any trouble are in fact also fully engaged in their learning.

It is here that we require your help to encourage your child to become a more engaged student rather than a passive one. This will require some positive conversations to take place between you and your child about the meaning of passive engagement and why becoming more engaged will help them succeed in life.

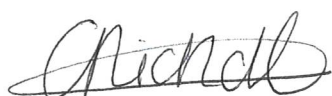
PASSIVE engagement is when a student makes an INSUFFICIENT effort. Insufficient effort means that a student is doing most of what they are supposed to do but is not really pushing themselves or making the most of the opportunities available.

A passive student:

- Often participates in lessons and is generally (though not always) focused and well behaved.
- May not try hard enough to improve their work after feedback.
- Is usually well organised but does the minimum that is asked of them and not much more.
- Requires close supervision to ensure tasks are attempted and day to day instructions followed.
- Might make a good level of effort some of the time but this is not consistent.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Kind regards



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Deputy Headteacher

Quality of Education