

6 June 2024

Dear Parents

### Re Mock Election 2024

To raise awareness among students about the forthcoming General Election, the Politics Department is planning to organise a whole-school mock election. The purpose is to educate students about how elections work, to hear constructive political debates and to give them experience of taking part in an election. In line with previous mock elections, we will reflect the political choice of voters in Harrogate. There are currently five parties registered to stand, so we will create the same five parties in school.

Overseeing the process will be an 'Electoral Commission' of the Politics Department. Parties will be created which will be supervised by a teacher but led by students. These parties will put forward policies, based on national manifestos, in assemblies and via hustings. For various reasons school voting will take place on **Thursday 27 June** where every student will be given the chance to cast a vote. The results will be announced on **Thursday 4 July**, so students will be able to compare how they have voted against the actual outcome.

We hope students from all year groups will get involved. There will be opportunities to select candidates, lead assemblies, work out policy priorities and create posters, which may be displayed in designated areas. Some students will also be involved in administering the election.

We want the process to be entirely positive. There will be no negative campaigning. We will therefore have a blanket ban on students using social media for the mock election. Instead, Mrs Caine will provide election coverage to keep everyone informed about how the campaigns are developing. It should be emphasised that the school is entirely apolitical. As stated, our intention is to further political education and teach students about the virtues of active citizenship, but not to promote parties or policies. The outcome will be decided by the students when they vote.

Some key dates in the process:

- **Friday 7 June:** launch of the mock election process to students via a Teams assembly
- **W/c Monday 10 June:** party formation and candidate selection
- **W/c Monday 17 June:** candidates will present in assemblies to each year group
- **W/c Monday 24 June:** hustings event chaired by a member of staff
- **Thursday 27 June:** whole-school voting during Period 1
- **Thursday 4 July:** announcement of school results

In the past our mock elections have always been successful. We hope this year will be no different. Our aim is to make sure students have a greater understanding and experience of the electoral process.

Yours faithfully

Dr F Murray