



## End of Term Letter to Parents and Carers

Dear parents and carers,

As we look back on a busy and productive autumn term, I would like to share with you some key messages and highlights.

As part of our focus on making our school the best it can be, we recently requested a visit from a National Leader of Education (an experienced school and multi-academy Trust leader) to review our progress since our last Ofsted inspection. He confirmed that we have made significant progress since November 2018 and noted that 'The Headteacher and leadership team are clearly determined to move the school forward and their comprehensive improvement plan is entirely fit for purpose.' We are pleased with his affirmation of our progress to date.

As you know, our school embodies the ethos of '**being the best we can be**' which is something shared by all Areté Learning Trust schools. Having a strong, clear ethos is important to establish what our school is all about, and we have taken this a step further: we have set ourselves a clear vision for Stokesley set around our three core attributes: **ready**, **respectful** and **ambitious**.

These words are a benchmark for all of the work we do in school: *ready* and *respectful* underpin all of our behaviour policies, with *ready* also linking to our careers provision and *respectful* being a huge part of our 'learning for life' curriculum. *Ambitious* underpins our curriculum, marking and feedback, independent learning policies and attitude to learning scales. More than this though, these three words are a vision for our future: a way we want all of our students and staff to be. I will write to you in the New Year with some more information about this so you can be clear on our future aims and continue to support us in achieving them.

Our GCSE results improved in the summer which was a strong step forward for us as a school. Our A-level results were above the national average with students at our college performing significantly better than other students at different colleges with similar starting points. Our first data collection of the 2019/2020 academic year suggests we are on-track to continue this trend of improvement. For more on our equally important non-academic achievements, please read on in this letter.

The run up to Christmas is always full of activity. A highlight for me is serving Christmas dinner to the students; this will be taking place on **Wednesday 18th December** and **Thursday 19th December** and I have my festive apron at the ready! Also, don't forget that school closes early on **Friday 20th December** at **12.40pm**.

I know not all parents engage with social media. If you do, please follow us on Facebook - we regularly post updates and good news to give a snapshot of what is going on in school. We will also be sharing revision tips and other useful information for Y11 and Y13 through this platform over the coming months.

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Finally, it is this time of year when we review our adverse weather plans. Linked to this, I would like to remind parents of the following:

For school closures during the day or the evening/morning before, parents will be notified via text message and pop-ups on our website. We will also inform local radio stations. Please make sure we have up to date contact details for all key adults.

Please make sure your child knows what the family arrangements are should they be sent home early - especially if you are likely to be at work. Do they have a key in a safe place? Do they have a relative whose house they should go to? Please help us by making sure your son/daughter knows the plan and can put it in action should they need to.

Students and staff return to school after the Christmas holidays on **Monday 6th January 2020**. In the meantime, have a wonderful festive break and thank you for all of your support.

Mrs H L Millett,  
Headteacher

## Attendance Matters

Attendance at Stokesley School has continued to be above the national average throughout this half term. However, there has been significant illness recently in our wider area and you may have seen some of the news reports on the issues faced by other local schools. We hope our families have not been affected by this too much and look forward to a healthy start to the New Year!

We have been running our attendance leagues over the last 4 weeks; they continue to be popular and create a sense of competition. In addition, we have launched a further competition to run over the last 3 weeks of term, with the winning tutor group being treated to an early lunch in one of our local restaurants.

As a final focus on recognising good attendance for the year, we will be having a prize draw on the last day of term for all students with 100% attendance. At the time of writing, 349 students will be in the draw! We have had some fabulous prizes kindly donated by local businesses. They include, restaurant vouchers to Stokesley Diner, The Mill, Il Mulino and The Dudley Arms. Other donations have come from Julia's Salon, Petch's Butchers, Ayton's Traditional Fish and Chip Shop, Stokesley Motors and Stokesley Golf Range. We are grateful to our business links for their immense generosity.

We hope that with such great prizes on offer, there will be many more than 349 students in the Easter prize draw. Please remind your child though that they have to be 'in it to win it' so we need them all here on the last day!





## Highlights of the Term

- At Stokesley Show we won the prize for the best tent at the show!
- Y8 learned how to carry out CPR as part of our 'restart a heart' event.
- The Y11 examinations were a fabulous success. Students were commended on their exceptional conduct and preparation for this important part of the Y11 journey.
- On December 5th we held our Y11 results day for the examinations taken in November. The students could clearly see where their hard work, revision and preparation had paid off. It was also noted by our students that the experience of the examinations and the results day has enabled them to feel much more prepared for the summer examinations.
- Thank you to our parent/carers who came along to our 'new look' Y11 Subject Parental Support Evening on the 12th December. Over 95% of our parent/carers booked appointments to come and discuss their son/daughters exam results, current progress and ensure they have everything they need to support the students through this challenging year.
- On Tuesday 10th December we invited our local residents to join us for our Pensioners' Tea Party. Our guests were treated to a variety of performances from our wonderful students including circus acts. In addition, students prepared catering and gave out fabulous gifts donated by local businesses.
- Earlier this term, over fifty of our Y9 and Y10 drama students performed at our drama presentation. Here, talented youngsters performed their monologues and plays in front of an audience of staff and parent/carers. The performances were outstanding and we were moved by the commitment and high standard of acting throughout.
- Our Y8 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are the first of our student leader groups to be formed this year. This followed our Head Girl and Boy launching our new student body alongside Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Darbyshire. In January, all students will be asked to apply for a position as a potential leader in their field of interest and expertise. Our first meeting will be held at the end of January. This will also coincide with the launch of our first Prefect body for after the February half term.
- A readathon event was held at the end of the first half term. During this, students heard a section of a short story at the beginning of all lessons throughout the day. It was wonderful to see students so engaged and listening to stories being read by the most unexpected of teachers! The Christmas version is already planned and will be happening on the 19th December.
- Accelerated Reader celebrations for Y7 and Y8 have been held throughout this week, celebrating the passion for reading our younger students are demonstrating and the progress they are making.
- 'That Poetry Bloke' attended school on Tues 10th Dec and delivered engaging and hilarious sessions to all Y7 students and some Y8s.



- Drugs Awareness talks were delivered to the whole school and to a small group of parents.
- We raised £385 via a cake sale for Children in Need and we are also supporting 'Save the Children' with our annual Christmas Jumper Day as well as various Christmas appeals.
- In November, the entire school came together to commemorate those who have given their lives for our freedom on Armistice Day.
- Our Year 6 Open Evening was a resounding success and our 'new look' sixth form Open Evening has led to a positive upturn in potential student numbers.
- The under 14 netball team became area champions.

## Stokesley Sixth Form College



There have been a lot of really exciting things going on in sixth form over the last term, in particular the transformation of the Bistro, which has certainly become a more popular place for students to enjoy social time. The area has had a total makeover, having been fully redecorated with new window blinds, comfy leather sofas and stylish dining furniture, kindly donated by the PTA and one of our local businesses, Tanton Industries Ltd. The students really appreciate the new vending machines too, enjoying the lovely hot drinks during the cold winter days. The sixth form "Green Group" are naturally trying to make sure that we are minimising our carbon footprint by persuading students to use their own reusable cups.

There is a real buzz in the air at the moment, as some Year 13 students have already received one or two university offers and a few of our Oxbridge students have been selected for interview. It is both an exciting, but rather intense time, as students eagerly await news from each of their chosen universities.

Year 12 students have settled into sixth form life well, with a significant number of them taking up various volunteering opportunities across the whole school. These include: acting as tour guides for our Open Evenings; taking on the role of learning mentors helping individual students, applying to be prefects, doing a remarkable job as classroom assistants and supporting the accelerated reading programme by listening to younger students read every week. Four Year 12 Sixth Form Ambassadors have also been appointed to help promote our sixth form, not only within our own school, but also at various events within the local area.

Sixth formers have also had a number of opportunities to attend various careers related events and taster days, learning about higher level apprenticeships, careers in medicine, and listening to various guest speakers, including some from our own Alumni with fascinating tales to tell about their career journeys after leaving Stokesley School.

The Head Boy and Head Girl have organised a sixth form Christmas lunch event during the last week of term with all the trimmings, cooked by our excellent catering staff. A fantastic way to end the year!





## Message from the CEO

Dear parents, carers and friends of our schools,

Christmas time is here! The students and the staff in our schools certainly deserve a well-earned break. It is my privilege to visit all three Areté Learning Trust schools on a regular basis and it is so encouraging to see the benefits of collaboration between them. Our vision of “being the best we can be” is reflected in the mutual support, sharing of ideas and acting as critical friends to each other.

I've been able to attend many events in all three schools during the Autumn term and to witness the extraordinary talents and qualities of our young people as well as celebrating their achievements and the hard work of the staff who support them. I should like to thank those of you who have actively supported the schools and sent such encouraging messages – these are really appreciated by our staff. We are always grateful to parents and other members of the community who are prepared and are able to contribute, whether as mentors, professional advisers, volunteers or simply turn up to parents' forum and share your views constructively.

My very best wishes for the festive season. I sincerely hope you all have an opportunity to experience the real meaning of Christmas, and spend quality time with loved ones. 2019 has been a busy year for the trust with much to celebrate and 2020 promises to be even busier!

A very happy, safe and restful Christmas to one and all.

Catherine Brooker  
CEO Areté Learning Trust



## Looking Ahead

- Y13 January Examinations: 13 - 20 January 2020
- Y9 Parents' Evening: 23 January 2020
- Y8 Parents' Evening: 28 January 2020
- **February Half Term 17 - 21 February 2020**
- Y7 Parents' Evening: 27 February 2020
- Y9 Options Evening: 4 March 2020
- Y12 Parents' Evening: 17/03/20
- Y10 Parents' Evening: 31 March 2020
- **Easter Break: 6 - 17 April 2020**





**Stokesley School  
& Sixth Form College**  
Being the best we can be

·:~::~~::~·  
**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**  
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR  
·:~::~~::~·

AMBITIOUS. RESPECTFUL. READY.

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