



Friday 24th April 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome to the first weekly update of the summer term. As always, I hope you are keeping well and managing to enjoy some quality time with your family despite the current change in circumstances.

Thank you to the 359 parents who completed our survey before the Easter break regarding our efforts to provide work remotely. We really appreciated the number of positive comments we received. We were also delighted that many parents recognise the current situation for what it is: a national crisis. Our working remotely strategy has been generated very quickly and will never be a perfect replacement for what we would normally do in school - it is an emergency response. As with many things, it is nigh-on impossible to get the balance of too much work and too little work absolutely spot-on for everyone; so we urge you to get in touch personally if you think things are not working for you and we can support you with that on a case by case basis. We have made slight adjustments following the survey, outlined by Mr McGreal in his letter earlier this week, but don't want to be too dramatic with this as the majority of parents were happy. If you feel your child is getting too much work, let the Heads of Year know and they will ensure the relevant teachers lower their expectations a little. It is equally important at this time for families to get out for exercise, spend quality time together, and have fun. Furthermore, we know many parents still have important work to do themselves. Please be assured, we are a committed group of staff who will fill any gaps in learning when your sons and daughters return.

If you are a parent of a Y11 or a Y13, you have also received lengthy correspondence from Mrs Darbyshire about our meticulous approach to producing centre-assessed grades in lieu of exams. If any other parents wish to read this out of interest, it is available on our website. Also, for our Y11s, Mr Weedy, our new Assistant Headteacher in charge of Sixth Form and Progression (formerly Head of Physics and Lead Practitioner here at Stokesley School) has been busy working with Heads of Faculty and Subject to create A-Level Bridging Google classrooms to get students started on their future subjects. This is a really exciting development for us and should ensure we have an excellent Y12 cohort in 2020/21! Rest assured, we have not forgotten those Y11s who are not going on to study A-Levels and will be in touch with them next week with suggested next steps and activities.

Another important letter you received this week was written by students in year 8. These students are our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. As a result of the parent survey conducted last academic year, we have been working to improve our strategy for dealing with bullying even further. Part of this has been identifying a group of dedicated students to receive training in this important area and work towards the Diana Award for our school. As the letter explained, the students have rewritten our anti-bullying policy and have a whole series of other initiatives planned for when school returns.



We would like to acknowledge that we postponed Y10 parents' evening just before the school closures took effect. We are aware that parents in this year group have not had any coordinated updates about their son or daughter's progress this academic year. Once we have completed the centre-assessed grade collection for Y11 and Y13 this half term, we will be in touch with our plans to provide you with information about your son or daughter's strengths and areas for development in their subjects.

As many parents know, one of our key recognition strategies in school is Hot Chocolate with the Headteacher which takes place every Friday afternoon with 8 students - one from each form in the year group whose turn it is that week. I love this event - it is a great opportunity to give attention to the best conduct and recognise our students who work really hard and exemplify our vision of every student being the best they can be and being ambitious, ready and respectful. To maintain this recognition during closure, I have asked staff to nominate students for recognition from the Headteacher due to their efforts with remote learning. I will be in touch with several families soon to spread some good news and tell you what you already undoubtedly know: your son or daughter is a star!

Mrs Wilkinson, Head of Pastoral Intervention, has asked me to remind you about wellbeing support that is available for our students and our parents/carers. If you would like advice on how to support your son/daughter's health and wellbeing during lockdown, please email Mrs Wilkinson directly on j.wilkinson@stokesleyschool.org - we have a number of useful resources that we can send out to you. Also, your son or daughter can self-refer through the 'Concerned/Worried' button on the virtual student dashboard they have access to, or email wellbeing@stokesleyschool.org which is being monitored by Mrs Brosnan, Head of Year. In addition to this and as sad as it is to even consider, we can support students who are coping with a bereavement; again, contact Mrs Wilkinson and she can put you in touch with a member of our fantastic Ethos Team of support staff who are trained and experienced in a range of these issues.

Finally, each Friday, Mrs Darbyshire and I are completing a student broadcast which includes information and updates for students, competitions to enter and praise from staff for those students who have submitted exciting, innovative work via our Google classrooms. Students receive an email each week from Mrs Darbyshire to access this broadcast. Please remind your child to tune in and keep in contact with their school.

We are here if you need us.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H L Millett
Headteacher