



Friday 3rd April 2020

Dear parents and carers,

As we enter the Easter break, please find below a number of updates to help keep you informed about developments within your school, as well as another opportunity for us to express our heartfelt thanks for everything you are doing on a daily basis during this difficult time.

Firstly, please accept our apologies again for a few parents receiving 'negatives' on the SIMs parent app for students not completing work. We set this up as an internal tracking mechanism because students not completing work across all of their subjects can indicate a safeguarding concern. We have now turned the alerts off for parents and regret the impact on one or two of our students from receiving these. Our Heads of Year are monitoring students across their subjects, and if we have any concerns, they - or the class teacher - will contact you directly. We know it's challenging for many of you to balance work and home life at the moment: thank you for working with us while we adapt to this new way of supporting our students.

For any student who is struggling to complete their work independently due to finding it hard to read and/or write, then please encourage them to add 'Read&Write for Google Chrome' to their browser. 'Read&Write for Google Chrome' is an extension with a range of features that aid students in their learning: the two main features are that it reads words and sentences for your child, or carries out dictation, where your child talks into the microphone and the computer types what he/she has said. There is more information including useful guides on our website in the 'Studying at Home' section within 'Curriculum'. If anyone has any further questions or needs help setting this up, please email Mr D Borwell, General Teaching Assistant, at d.borwell@stokesleyschool.org

Although during the lockdown, the Easter holidays may not feel that different for many of you, I would like to confirm that the teaching staff will not be setting work during this period. This is to give both staff and families a break from constant online activity. Mrs Fox is, however, issuing a special Easter edition of our bulletin which is packed with ideas for families if you run out of things to do.

For parents of students in Y11 and Y13, I know there has been a lot of disappointment about the cancellation of the proms. As the students in Y13 organise their own event, it is for them to decide as and when it should be rescheduled; if they need our support, we will of course give it to them. In terms of our Y11, the decision was taken across the Trust to cancel rather than postpone at this stage due to the huge uncertainty that surrounds the current national picture. We do not know when mass gatherings will be allowed again, and therefore were loathe to make a promise to the students regarding a postponed prom that we may not be able to keep. However, rest assured, whatever we can do to ensure our students are not



disadvantaged in terms of their 'rites of passage' and leaving events, we will. Watch this space as there will be further updates over the coming weeks.

In the meantime, we have been trying to help our students have some of those special moments and memories from being part of our Stokesley School family. So that Y11 did not miss out on one of their favourite activities, we brought forward 'shirt signing' to the day we were instructed to close. We have also emailed students to ask them to contribute pictures from their time in school and college so we can hopefully get enough to create a memories book. We have also organised for a company to produce our 'Class of 2020' hoodies - the company will also deliver them. Students will receive an email today with all of the details for this. Because of the exceptional circumstances, we polled our Y13 students (who don't normally join in with this hoodie tradition); overwhelmingly, they chose to have hoodies too, so we have included them in this small but important memento of their time with us.

As Y13 parents may be aware, there have been several recent news articles suggesting that the government may cap the number of student admissions to each university in light of the Coronavirus. It is predicted that the number of international students will fall this year leaving more places for UK students; it is therefore possible that some universities might have too few students, whilst other institutions may capitalise on the situation and gain more students with attractive offers. Capping the number of places for each university could help prevent this issue. Having contacted UCAS directly this week, we have been advised that reports about capping university admissions are unconfirmed and merely speculative, and that all university offers will be honoured. They have also extended the deadline to May 20th 2020 for students to accept their offers, allowing a little more time for them to make up their minds. The deadline for universities to send out offers to students is now 19th May 2020. UCAS Extra is now open for those students who have been unsuccessful in securing an offer at any of the universities they applied to, giving them an opportunity to select an extra choice. UCAS Extra also allows any student who did not use all their choices in the first instance to add others to make up the five choices. UCAS Extra closes on 5th July 2020. Please contact UCAS directly on 0371 468 0 468 if you need any further information or email Mr Weedy, Assistant Headteacher, via sixthform@stokesleyschool.org.

We continue to receive positive comments from parents regarding how we are managing work for students in these uncharted waters, thank you for this. However, a few parents have also raised the issue of their son or daughter having too much to do. As a result of this, Mr McGreal, Assistant Headteacher, will be circulating a short survey to parents at the end of these first two weeks so we can establish a broader range of views. Please can you complete this survey by **Thursday 9th April** and then we can review our provision where necessary for the start of the new term. We appreciate your valuable time on this matter.

We are proud to be working with our local community to help provide PPE to frontline NHS staff. This week, a number of our science safety glasses went off to Stokesley GP Surgery and we also had local firm Labman on site, test running our Design Technology laser cutters



for making protective visors for the NHS. We hope to continue supporting our local community throughout this crisis; if you can think of a way we can help, please let us know.

We wrote to all parents this week offering provision for the Easter holidays if they are a key worker. Parents have undoubtedly moved heaven and earth to ensure this provision is not needed and we can shut the school for the two-week period. Once again, I would like to say a massive 'thank you' to our parents for their efforts in this regard. Although the school will be shut, we will monitor office@stokesleyschool.org on a daily basis: if you are a key worker and you suddenly need our help do not hesitate to get in touch and we will reopen the school to look after your child(ren) if you need us to.

Finally, we understand that for some students, this can be a very difficult time and that they may appreciate having someone to talk things through with other than immediate family. On the final page of this letter, you will find some websites and phone numbers that young people may find useful to support positive mental health and wellbeing during the period of school closure.

I know that the Easter break is not the one any of us were expecting a month or so ago, but I hope it is still filled with good health and happiness for you all. As a school community, we send all our thoughts and good wishes to those who are being significantly affected by coronavirus and particularly those who have lost a loved one.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher



YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

- Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.
- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258.
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

No Panic

- www.nopanic.org.uk
- No panic are the people to call if you are suffering from panic attacks, OCD, phobias and other related anxiety disorders.
- Helpline: 0844 967 4848 (Daily 10:00 - 22:00 Charges apply).
- Youth helpline for 13 - 20 yr olds: 0330 606 1174 (Mon - Fri 15:00 - 18:00 charges apply).
- Having a panic attack? Crisis number with recording of a breathing technique: 01952 680835 (24 hr).
- Email: admin@nopanic.org.uk.

Childline

- www.childline.org.uk
- If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small.
Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111.
- [Sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address.
- Chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#).

The Mix

- www.themix.org.uk
- If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.
- Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (13:00-23:00 daily).

Kooth

- www.kooth.com
- Free online, safe advice for young people - available 12 - 10pm Mon - Fri and 6pm - 10pm Saturday and Sunday.