



Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we prepare to enter our second May bank holiday weekend, I hope you are all keeping well. In this week's letter, you can find updates on the weekly bulletin, 'thank a teacher' day, school competitions, accelerated reader, Y6 transition, Y11 destinations, staff leavers, and our Y11/Y13 video.

I trust you received Mrs Fox's weekly bulletin earlier this week. It is an extra-long edition this time around, designed to span across the half term break (when staff won't be setting work). The focus is a little bit different than previous bulletins: it's all about trying something new! With suggestions such as turning your hand to amigurumi (the art of crocheting tiny animals), learning a musical instrument, taking part in a national fitness challenge, and learning how to become a cyber security agent from home, we are sure there's something there for everyone!

This week was 'National Thank a Teacher Day'. I did not want to make too big a fuss of it beyond the school gates, as there are many people out there who deserve thanks for their actions at this current time. However, the culture of our school is built upon gratitude and the positive impact it can have when you recognise a person's worth or contribution, and offer them a quiet 'well done' or 'thank you' in return. We also often talk to our students about random acts of kindness and the tremendous sense of wellbeing they can create for both the recipient and the instigator. To this end, students were asked to send staff emails throughout the day on Wednesday if they felt they had something special to thank them for. As always, our students' response to this was overwhelming, with heartfelt messages flying from inbox to inbox! We were also delighted as a staff to receive a special recorded message from members of our local governing body. Now we need a 'thank a parent' day to praise you for all your support of the school and skilful juggling acts at home over the last couple of months!

During lockdown, we have been running all sorts of competitions to engage our students and ensure they still feel part of our wider school life. Last week, I informed you about the competition launched by Assistant Headteacher, Mr Burns, to name our tutor groups; we have already had 15 brilliant nominations! We would like as many students to participate as possible, so please encourage them to send their ideas to the Head of Year. In addition to this, we also have two subject-specific competitions running at the moment: one in English which has been shared on Facebook and through Google classrooms, and a languages one which will be launched in today's student broadcast. If you don't already know this, Mrs Darbyshire shares a link to access our student broadcast each week. Each installment incorporates praise in the form of 'shout outs' for numerous students across all departments and faculties.

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We also launch competitions like the ones mentioned here, and keep our students up to date with information which is relevant to them. We have been overwhelmed by the positive feedback we have received from our students who have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the range of challenges and, of course, receiving our exciting prizes.

Miss Roberts and our team of Accelerated Reader teachers continue to share key information about how your son/daughter can update his/her books and stay on top of reading records and quizzing. If your son/daughter is in Y7 or Y8 please discuss this with him/her and refer to the Google Classroom to help encourage reading for pleasure and to further develop essential vocabulary skills.

We are aware that some of our incoming parents of Y6 students are now reading our letters and updates so wish to remind them that we are still collating questions for our Y6 Transition FAQ which we will be answering (via the website and a short film) after half term. Please keep sending in your questions to Y6transitions@stokesleyschool.org.

For all of our parents, and those of the incoming Y6, don't forget to follow us on Facebook: we are using it now more than ever to provide quick updates on a variety of matters. We love to see all of the positive comments, likes and shares on there too.

As you will be aware we need to track what our students intend to do after leaving us at the end of Year 11: for those that are not coming back to our successful sixth form, it may be that they have applied to a local college or have secured an apprenticeship opportunity. It is common for students' 'final' destination to change in light of exam results, unexpected opportunities, or changes in circumstances; that is okay, but we still need 'intended' destinations data to be recorded now. Initially, we had been collecting this data via software called Grofar, whereby students submitted the information via an email link and if your son/daughter has already completed this, there is no need to contact us again. If your son/daughter has not submitted his/her intended destination, it would be helpful if you could email our Careers Leader, Mrs Harrison-Henry, via j.harrison-henry@stokesleyschool.org and provide brief details. The information we need to know is: where they have applied; the name of the course; and the level of the course. If your son/daughter is still undecided, we are happy to assist with information and guidance on courses, applications, CVs, apprenticeships or anything else regarding their next steps. Again, contact Mrs Harrison-Henry who is ready and waiting to provide expert support. Y13 students who have any questions should contact Mr Weedy, Assistant Headteacher (Sixth Form & Progression) in the first instance.





The normal movement of teaching staff that occurs in the run-up to May half term every year has been curtailed by the current climate of uncertainty. However, we do say goodbye to two of our valued staff members this week as they head off to pastures new. I am sure you will join our staff in wishing Mr Read, Teacher of Physics, well as he takes on his next great challenge of being Head of Physics at a school in Hartlepool. We are also issuing a fond farewell to Mr Brooks, our exceptionally talented maths teacher, who is looking forward to retirement pursuing a plethora of personal interests.

Finally, despite not being in school, we realised a time-honoured tradition this week for our Y11 and Y13 students which was to complete our fun staff video as part of their farewell package carefully edited by Mrs Brosnan, Head of Year 8. Thanks to the exceptional talents of our Head of Drama, Mrs Kent, a selection of staff also adapted and recorded the accompanying song. If you watch this with your son or daughter, please forgive our 'am-dram' attempts - there is a reason we went into education! All being well, it will be released to the students very soon for a one-off viewing.

Following discussions and planning with the other Trust headteachers and CEO, I wrote to parents of Y10 and Y12 yesterday to outline our intentions regarding the government request to initiate some face-to-face contact with those year groups. Please can parents/carers of students within this year group discuss this with their son/daughter and complete our short accompanying survey. For those of you who have children in other year groups but are interested in the school's response, all of our letters are available on the school website. These are just proposals at this stage as we, along with every other school in the country, still await the release of the secondary school guidance that will support 're-opening' which the Department for Education has still not released almost two weeks on from the Prime Minister's announcement.

We hope our students enjoy a break from the computer screens over the next week, and we look forward to greeting them again on the 1st June.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher

