



Friday 26th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week's update contains information on: Y10 reports and how we will offer face-to-face contact with Y7, 8 and 9; a plug for the student broadcast; curriculum adaptations for Y9 and Y8; lunch in September; a request for Y12; news about Head Boy and Girl interviews; a chance to share your views; and, a word from Mr Hamer, Head of Y10.

Y10 parents/carers received their son/daughters' report on Wednesday of this week. In addition to this, Y10 and Y12 students have also been offered the opportunity to meet with their tutor to discuss this report (in the case of Y10) and to offer them pastoral support and guidance. Over the next week we will also write to you with details of how students in Y7-9 will also be able to access an appointment with their tutor. This is our response to the government's announcement last week that more students can have face-to-face contact if the school has capacity. The purpose of the meetings will be to have more personalised contact before the summer break, as well as support for our students in understanding what they need to do to best prepare for an effective return to school, and to offer them pastoral support and guidance like their older peers. I would like to confirm to all parents that arrangements that are currently in place for all year groups will continue without further changes, other than those mentioned in this letter, until the end of the summer term. The return of Y10 and Y12 has gone smoothly and we now need to focus our attention on planning a brilliant and safe start in September for everyone. Government guidance has been promised before the end of next week so I hope to update you further soon.

Mrs Darbyshire shares our student broadcast via student email each week. A number of parents/carers and students have fed back how grateful they are to hear the praise and engage in the activities and competitions which are set each week. If you haven't been watching, please discuss this with your son/daughter and share in the excitement later today!

As previously communicated, students in Y9 will stop being set work for all subjects they started at the beginning of the year, and should instead concentrate on preparing for the KS4 subjects they are continuing with next year. A booklet will be sent out electronically, and will also be available to view on our website, by the end of this week. From Monday 29th June, students should use this booklet to find out the work they need to do in each subject they are studying next year. This includes maths, English language and literature, science plus the option subjects they have been allocated to. Many of the subject pages will direct them to either existing google classrooms (for core subjects) or new google classrooms for options subjects to access the activities and assessments they are required to complete ready for September. We hope this will provide some welcome additional motivation and a chance to look ahead for this year group.

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Y8 students have also recently chosen some personalised options, and have all been allocated a place in their top three subjects for next year. We did not need to use reserves which is great news for them all. As with Y9, students may now choose to focus solely on the subjects they are continuing with next year, although work will still continue to be set via google classroom for all subjects until the end of the academic year. As a reminder, the students chose three subjects from DT, FTT, IT, dual languages, music, art, drama and dance. Students doing dance will be invited to a new google classroom to help prepare them for year 9. If you have any questions about Y8 or Y9 options, please contact Mr McGreal on r.mcgregal@stokesleyschool.org.

I mentioned in last week's update that students in Y10 and Y11 will most likely not be going off-site for lunch in September for health and safety reasons. Today, we will also send a message to the students in those year groups directly so they have advance warning of this change. In light of this alteration to custom and practice, we are currently working hard to expand our food offer as well as the dining spaces that are available to students within the school. More information on this will follow before school returns.

Mr Weedy would like to ask Y12 parents to remind their sons/daughters to fill in the incredibly short 'Y12 courses/careers choices' form that can be found in their tutor group Google Classroom. We are sure that you have all had conversations about possible futures already, but would be appreciative if you could spend a moment or two having one further discussion over the weekend. The purpose of this form is to inform teachers of our students' ambitions, and this means we can write each student a tailored reference which will make their university or career application stronger. Should your son/daughter not know what they want to do yet - and this is certainly not uncommon - they can select this option on the form.

Continuing with news from our sixth form: after what seems like an age since they first applied, we are delighted to be hosting the Head Boy/Girl interviews next week via Google meet. The field is ridiculously strong, and we are confident that any of the candidates would be a superb role model for the rest of the students at Stokesley School. Keep your eyes peeled for an announcement soon!

As we start to seriously think about a return to school for all our students, there are some things that we have developed during lockdown that we think we should retain moving forward. In order to crystallise our thinking on this, I would like your views as parents/carers too. I would be very grateful if you could answer a short survey that will follow this letter later today that asks you what you or your son/daughter have benefitted from during lockdown, and what you would like us to keep doing - in some form - when school is fully back in session. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and building them into our plans going forward.





Following on from Mr Weedy's comments in the last update about the return of Y12, I wish to end with a similar message from Mr Hamer, Head of Y10, about the return of a significant number of the students this week.

"Following weeks of remote learning and communication, it has been a privilege to meet with students face to face as they returned to school this week. I had been in contact with a number of students and parents leading up to this and was well aware of some of the anxieties and concerns, which were only natural. If I am being honest, and I'm sure I speak for other teachers and school staff, I was slightly apprehensive about this myself, not having seen so many students for so long. It is evident from the first few days that many of the concerns have been cast aside, and replaced with the joy of seeing friends again, or being able to speak with teachers, albeit in a slightly different environment. I know that you will have read many concerns in the media about young people becoming more anxious due to lock-down, and I am certainly not belittling anyone's mental health, but wish to say how impressed I have been with the resilience shown by our Stokesley students, as they quickly became accustomed to the 'new normal'".

"At the time of writing this, students have worked with specialists from maths and English during their first sessions and the majority have made the most of this opportunity. Although they are still working online at a computer for just over half of the session, students have been able to ask questions about their work and receive a prompt answer, which is more difficult when working remotely from home. The most pleasing aspect for me, when teaching in these sessions, has been the honesty from students about their experience of working at home and some of the difficulties they have faced with motivation and concentration. I was able to discuss plans moving forward with individuals and could also see the benefits for them working in the classroom environment once again".

"The feedback that I have received from colleagues in maths and English departments has been very positive and they have enjoyed the experience of being able to 'teach' again. Classrooms in school have now become more like the classrooms prior to lock-down, not completely, but definitely a (social distancing) step in the right direction."

Keep in touch, and take care of yourselves.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher

