



Friday 9th October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the third headteacher's update of the new school year. In this edition, you can find information regarding: ventilation in classrooms; Stokesley School green group; Headteacher's star of the week; sixth form open evening for Y11; an update on exams in 2021; a coronavirus case update; information about our PE kit; and, a message from the PTA.

Ventilation in classrooms

We have had a couple of enquiries about parents regarding keeping doors and windows open in classrooms when the weather has been a little colder. This is part of our risk assessment to reduce the dangers of transmission associated with coronavirus and is set out in guidance by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. It is also listed as a control measure in our risk assessment which has been published on our website since before the beginning of term. For information, I have copied the relevant section from the government guidance below.

'Once the school is in operation, it is important to ensure good ventilation and maximising this wherever possible, for example, opening windows and propping open doors, as long as they are not fire doors, where safe to do so (bearing in mind safeguarding in particular). Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak.'

Stokesley School Green Group

You will have received a letter from our student Green Group recently asking for your views on single use plastics and reusable water bottles. This project, and the letter, was conceived entirely by our students who range in age from Y8 to Sixth Formers. We are very proud of their social conscience and the efforts they go to to make our school a more environmentally friendly place. Watch this space for further updates!

Headteacher's Star of the Week

In the last two academic years, I have had wonderful opportunities to meet with our stand-out hard working students in small groups as part of our rewards programme. This was known by staff and students as 'Hot Chocolate Friday'. Unfortunately, this event did not lend itself well to our current risk assessments, so has now been changed to 'Headteacher's Star of the Week'. Each week, the tutor teams in all year groups (right through to Y13) nominate a single student who they believe embodies our values of ready, respectful, ambitious and deserves to be recognised for being the best they can be.

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I have a delightful hour on a Friday afternoon visiting each of the students in Y7-11 (and VI form if they are not on a non-contact period), speaking with them about their achievements and passing them a postcard. Following this, 5 ambition points are added to SIMs and - best of all - I phone home to speak to their parents/carers. This is one of the highlights of my week, having an opportunity to speak with you about how your child is enjoying school and making us all very proud.

VI form open evening

Parents/carers of students in Y11 will have received a brief letter from Mr Weedy, our Head of Sixth Form, giving prior notice of our upcoming virtual open evening for entry to the Sixth Form in 2021. This event will be live from 5pm on Tuesday 3rd November and then available to revisit throughout the coming year. It will include opportunities to put questions to our subject specialists. Mr Weedy also reminded parents/carers of the unique selling points of our sixth form: outstanding results that beat all other local sixth forms on many measures, and our exciting refurbishment project which will make current Y11 the first students with facilities befitting a 21st century education. We look forward to you joining us on the night.

Y11 and Y13 exams

You will have seen in the press that students in Scotland will no longer take examinations in the equivalent of GCSEs in 2021. It still appears to be the determination of the government that all exams will proceed as planned in England, notwithstanding the disruption many students have already experienced. It is also important to note that the system in Scotland for this age group is quite different to that in England. Mrs Darbyshire is putting together a paper for those interested, that summarises the information we currently have about how courses are being adapted for students in Y11 and Y13. This paper will be circulated to parents and placed on our website next week.

Coronavirus Update

At the time of writing this letter, we have been informed of 6 cases of coronavirus within our school community since the start of term: 5 students and 1 staff member. 3 of the students were single cases in unconnected year groups/pods, and 2 were in Y13. According to the Local Health Protection Team, this is classed as 'low average' instances of cases in the current climate and amongst schools. We are as frustrated as our parents and students are when we have to ask people to isolate; we would much rather students were here with us, but must follow the advice of Public Health England. Where some schools have been sending home whole year groups, we do strive to ensure only those who fall within the guidelines for being a contact are sent home. Although, where there is any element of doubt, we must err on the side of caution. Whatever we do, there is no getting away from the fact that it is disruptive, and we sincerely hope the Department for Education recognises this when making decisions that affect those students who are facing exams imminently.

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PE Kit

To coincide with the launch of our brand new Sports Hall, we will also be launching a new PE Kit for Y7 students joining us in September 2021. Please be assured that there will be **no** expectation for existing students to switch to the new PE Kit until their current one has worn out or been outgrown. We are currently reviewing designs and will be consulting with students before picking the final one.

Message from the Parent Teacher Association

Written by Mrs Wiseman, PTA Chair.

‘Over the last few months we have continued to raise money to help contribute to, and improve, school facilities, although the events we had planned for this year have unfortunately had to be cancelled.

We are hoping to resurrect the Family Fun Day, Quiz nights and Welcome Evening in 2021.

During the summer holidays and the autumn term the PTA, in particular Naomi, have been busy collecting second hand uniforms to sell on. This has been a huge success, raising nearly £500! It has also reduced landfill. We’d like to extend a massive thanks to Naomi for all of her hard work on this. Please look on our Facebook page (Stokesley School and Sixth Form College PTA) for more details regarding how to support this initiative: we always need good quality 2nd hand uniforms. Thank you to everyone who has donated items so far.

If you are interested in being part of the PTA we would be delighted. The meetings we have are informal and a way for you to meet other parents. You do not need to commit to everything we do, but if you are able to contribute a couple of hours of your time in a year it would be fantastic. The date of our next meeting and AGM will be published shortly on the Facebook page and the school website. We look forward to meeting new members.’

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett,
Headteacher

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