



Friday 13th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to this fortnight's update which has information on: celebrating attendance at Stokesley School; exams and exam preparation; remembrance; applying to our sixth form; dates for your diary; and, an appeal from our Head Boy and Girl, Ben and Holly.

Celebrating attendance

As part of our school community, many of you will be aware of the work we have done over the last couple of years to improve attendance. In November 2018, Ofsted judged the school to be 'requires improvement'; one of the significant reasons contributing to this judgement was our attendance procedures and associated data. I am delighted to report that we have seen a strong upward trend in the data and, with your support, attendance is currently 96%. Under normal circumstances, this would be an excellent figure worth celebrating. However, latest government statistics show that secondary school attendance nationally is 87% since schools reopened in September. I would like to thank parents, carers and students for their continued resilience during this pandemic, and for being an integral part of our school improvement journey.

Update on exams and exam preparation

You will have seen in the media that the summer 2021 exams have been cancelled in Wales for students taking GCSEs, A-Levels and equivalent qualifications. The intention in England is to proceed with examinations, but there is a desperate need for the government to be more proactive in contingency planning and addressing any unfairness that has naturally developed in the system due to teacher and student absences. In our school, we have planned for all eventualities as best we can: we have reviewed timings of mock examinations and made sure they are best placed on the calendar to provide us with all the information we need to either generate centre assessed grades or continue preparing the students for exams.

Mrs Darbyshire and Mr Hamer have been busy preparing the students in Y11 for their mocks which begin next week. We would like to thank you as parents for also doing your bit by making sure they have a good diet and sleep pattern, as well as helping them to get the balance right between study and other important contrasting activities. Y13 mock exams follow the Y11 ones closely, and we continue to be impressed with our older students' focus and committed approach to learning.

Remembrance

This year, our Y10 Bridge course students were tasked with installing the display of poppies kindly knitted by members of the Stokesley community.

The students completed research in class to learn about the significance of the poppy and the work of the British Legion. With Stokesley Fire Station staff, they worked hard to install the display and we are very proud of what they achieved.

On Wednesday, five students from the group were chosen to take part in the Remembrance Day two minutes silence on West Green which they did with great respect.

Within school, we marked the occasion of remembrance with a special broadcast to all of the classrooms in school. I gave an address via Google Meet about the meaning and origins of remembrance and the opportunities the two minutes' silence gives us for personal reflection.





Sam, in Y11, played a moving rendition of the Last Post and we were once again inspired by the quiet respect shown by all of our students and staff.



Applying to our sixth form

Last week's Sixth Form Open Evening proved to be a huge success, and Mr Weedy would like to thank each and every student and parent who attended. The evening was full of fantastic questions from prospective students, with many of the subject Google Meets becoming really rather full. We hope that you enjoyed it as much as we did, and if you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact us on sixthform@stokesleyschool.org.

We have already received a number of official applications, including those from external students wishing to join us at Stokesley Sixth Form. The sooner we receive your application, the sooner we can tailor our curriculum to our current Y11 cohort. To do so, visit our specially created website at www.explorestokesleysixth.org where you can find the link to the application form at the bottom of every page.

Once the Y11 mock examinations are over, Mr Weedy will be sending out a questionnaire for Y11 to fill in so he can get a clearer picture on numbers for next year and the kinds of subjects our students would like to study.

Dates for your diary

I would just like to remind you that school is closed for students on Friday 27th November for a professional development day. As is traditional, school will also be closing at 12.30pm on the last day of term, Friday 18th December. The bus companies have been informed.



An appeal from the Y13 Head Boy and Girl

"In the past at Stokesley School we have collected for our local food bank at this time in the term. This year is no exception, and we are intending on collecting for our local food bank in Middlesbrough.

"Starting from Monday 16th November, we would love it if students would donate as much as they can, bringing in with them varying items of both food and other necessities, so that by the end of this period we might be able to help those in need throughout the surrounding area. Such items that would work best are as follows:

- Soup
- Cereals
- Dry Pasta
- Rice
- Tinned tomatoes
- Pasta sauces
- Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tea bags and coffee
- Tinned fruit
- Biscuits
- UHT milk
- Fruit juice (squash)
- Other various canned goods
- Toiletries (soaps, toilet paper, shampoo etc.)
- Household items (laundry liquid detergent, laundry powder, washing up liquid etc.)
- Baby supplies (nappies, baby wipes etc..)
- Face masks and hand sanitiser

"As we're sure you'd agree, this year has been a challenge for all of us. We feel it is more crucial now than it ever was that we donate as much as we possibly can. This will of course contribute to a charitable cause that we're sure you'd agree is worth helping. The collection period for this is anticipated to last until December 7th, allowing for adequate time (four full weeks) for students to donate all manner of goods.

Thank you in advance for your kind and generous support."

Holly and Ben.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher

