



Friday 22nd January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the headteacher's fortnightly update which has information regarding: our Y7 charity; the trust-wide Erasmus project; feedback from the recent parent survey; an update on coronavirus testing in schools; an update on Y11 and Y13 exams; a look ahead to options for Y9; some important careers updates; and a reminder about parents' evenings.

Y7 Charity

Before Christmas every Y7 had the opportunity to nominate a charity they would like the year group to support: students were able to nominate up to three charities each before the final five were taken through to a vote. The five charities that were put forward from the year group were: Bliss, Children In Need, Teesside Hospice, Cancer Research UK and the British Heart Foundation. The final vote took place recently, with Cancer Research UK receiving the most votes at 29.6% and Children In Need coming close second at 23.9%. The results have gone out to students in form time and they have been asked to try and think of ways we can raise money when we are able to do so.

Erasmus

You may have seen the news on our Facebook site that, as a member of the Areté Learning Trust, Stokesley School and Sixth Form College is proud to be part of a European project team (funded by ERASMUS+) to create better social media education for all young people across Europe. Student input is vital to the outcomes of the project and we are inviting our students to be involved in the research element of the project to establish their use, attitude and understanding of social media. We would love to hear your child/children's thoughts about social media. Please could you encourage them to complete the survey by following this link <https://s.surveypal.com/4yI97PSWu> and submitting their responses by 29th January. Further information will follow on this exciting project soon.

Parent survey feedback

I mentioned in the last parent letter that I would provide feedback on the survey that 390 of you kindly completed before Christmas. This survey was distributed in all three trust schools and the findings have been very interesting for us here at Stokesley School. Some of the highlights for us were that 34% of parents whose child(ren) are not in their first year thought the school had improved in the last year; 22% of parents whose child(ren) are in their first year thought that the school had exceeded their expectations. We were also delighted that areas of the school we have been working on, particularly since our last Ofsted inspection, were highlighted as strengths by you, such as: attendance/truancy control; discipline; school security; celebrating reward and achievement; and school communication. 'Caring teachers' and the attitude of our support staff was also appreciated as a top feature of the school. The survey, interestingly, maps your comments and ratings against the current Ofsted criteria for





inspection and - as a result - we have decided we would very much like you to lead the inspection team in the future as you deemed us good in all areas and outstanding in our brilliant sixth form! There are some areas we would like to look into further that you think could be improved; this included homework and careers education. We aim to ask you more questions to drill into this when the situation at school is more 'normal'. With regards to careers education, there is a section at the end of this week's letter informing you about a range of careers activities we are currently undertaking. Thank you very much for your feedback, it is greatly appreciated, listened to and acted upon.

Testing Update

We are currently undertaking regular testing of our staff who are coming into school to work as mentioned in the last update: this means 90 tests a week from our 140 strong team. The government has, yet again, announced a change (or 'pause') to policy regarding the daily testing of students and staff to stop them having to self-isolate should they be a close contact of a positive case. We await further instructions at the moment but are glad this chopping and changing doesn't affect you too much as parents until the students return to school.

Y11 and Y13 exams update

This week there have been two updates relating to exams. Earlier this month, schools were given the responsibility of deciding if it was suitable to go ahead with vocational exams in January and February. Due to the current national and local Covid figures, Mrs Darbyshire and I decided it was not appropriate to proceed with these exams in the best interests of our students and our community. Following this, and due to mounting pressure to not leave this decision with schools, the government has now decided to cancel all external exams for the remainder of January, February and March: primarily, as not all students nationally would have suitable and equal access to prepare fully for these exams, but also in the interests of public health. This impacted on around thirty Y11 students who were all personally contacted by their class teacher or Mrs Darbyshire. For the second update, the government has released the consultation around the potential proposals and arrangements for summer exams in 2021. If you would like to look at this and haven't already, you can do so by following the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-1_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf

A look ahead to options for Y9

The options process for our Y9 students will be starting soon with tutor time sessions to get the students thinking about possible career choices and what qualifications they might need to progress to these. All of the students will be encouraged to sign up to Start, this is an online careers platform that students will explore during tutor time. There are profiles





students can complete that suggest possible career choices based on what they are good at and enjoy doing, these then link to the qualifications needed for these careers so that the students can start making informed choices for their options in Y10 and Y11. Obviously, our options evening will not be able to take place in the same way this year; instead we are hoping to share this information through a dedicated website. This will include videos explaining the overall process, as well as videos from each subject explaining the course and hopefully answering any questions you may have. This will be launched on the planned date of the options evening, Wednesday 3rd March, and will stay live through the process for you to go back to if you need to. Ultimately, the choices need to be entered by Friday 12th March. They will be entered online by the students, the details of how this is done will be on the website when it is launched and the student login details shared.

Careers updates

Careers Google Classrooms are constantly being updated with news, information and resources. There is one classroom for each year group - all students have been invited so ask them to show you if you would like to know more. The Year 11 classroom is particularly useful with lots of parent guides including: apprenticeships, T-Levels, employability skills, student support services for college and much more.

Codes for Careers Google Classrooms if your son/daughter hasn't joined yet are as follows:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Sixth Form
fjz72uj	2gbzrbp	vqzgps2	qtdjmzc	4eseyta	ot5endy

1-1 Careers Discussions are taking place for all Y11 students and these can either be by telephone or google meet. Students should email our Careers Advisor j.harrison-henry@stokesleyschool.org or text 07958712651 (school mobile) to set one up. Afterwards, a summary of the discussion, along with useful links/info/resources will be emailed to students via their school email address.

Globalbridge is a platform all students in years 9, 10 and 12 have access to and can create a profile on - this includes creating an online/virtual and interactive CV, and accessing exclusive opportunities and resources. Virtual onboarding and profile building sessions will be taking place live with Globalbridge via google meet in the next couple of weeks.

Grofar is a system where we track every students' participation in all careers-related activities and events throughout their time at Stokesley School. Students will be given access to this as well as the opportunity to review what they have learned and provide feedback. Students can set themselves targets in their career planning journey and access a variety of useful resources.





National Apprenticeship Week is taking place from 8-14th February 2021. Students in all year groups will spend time on apprenticeship awareness activities during tutor time. Years 11 and 12 will also have virtual assemblies from ASK (the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for schools and colleges programme) which is funded by the National Apprenticeship Service, part of the Department for Education.

Students in Year 11 will attend the (virtual) National Apprenticeship Show and they (as well as Year 10 students) will have access to all resources from the event for a further 30 days.

Virtual Work Experience is taking place from 8-14th February 2021. All students in Year 10 will participate in Virtual Work Experience via Changing Education. A full week is scheduled to include: virtual sessions with employers, virtual workplace tours, personal journals, specific employer projects and activities etc. Look out for a separate letter about this soon.

National Careers Week is taking place from 1-6th March 2021. Every subject area in school will devote a section of one lesson during the week to careers. The intention is to link curriculum subjects to careers, motivating and inspiring students across all subjects.

Reminders: parents' evenings

Parents' evening for Y13 is next week on Thursday 28th January. Following on from the success of our Y11 trial of appointment bookings and video links, we have secured a contract with the software providers and will be carrying this through to all other year groups across the school. The next parents' evening after Y13 is for Y9 which takes place on Tuesday 9th February, information regarding this will be arriving with you next week.

Thank you for reading our updates this week. We hope all of our families are keeping well and would like to remind you that we are here to support you in a number of ways, not just academic, so do not hesitate to contact us via office@stokesleyschool.org if you need assistance.

Yours faithfully

Mrs H. L. Millett
Headteacher