



**Friday 9th July 2021**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the penultimate fortnightly update of another extraordinary academic year. It's a bumper edition this week, so please use the headings to read the parts that you find most interesting, or apply directly to you.

### **Year 8 Remote Learning**

As I have said in previous communication, I was incredibly disappointed to have to ask Y8 students to stay at home, working remotely again, following the spike in positive covid cases we have experienced in the year group.

However, the staff and I are absolutely delighted with the resilience shown by the Y8 cohort (and any other students who have been asked to isolate). Engagement with online learning has been absolutely superb this week. 97% of students have been attending their online lessons. We have, of course, been in contact with the parents of the 6 students who haven't been able to engage.

We are looking forward to our students' return to school and a different approach to isolation in September; the amount of lost learning nationwide has no doubt created inequality between children. Despite this, the level of attendance in our school for face-to-face learning and online learning throughout the year have made us confident that our students have not been impacted by the pandemic as much as many other students up and down the country. The national data that is available on attendance and engagement across the country shows that our students are in a very strong position relative to their peers in other schools.

### **New independent learning policy for Y7, 8 and 9**

Following a review of homework or 'independent work' we are implementing some changes to our policy in years 7 - 9. More information will follow in a separate letter, but from September students in years 7 - 9 will be set all of their independent work for the week via their google classrooms on a Monday, with a suggested timetable of how much time they should spend on each piece of work across the week. The main focus of the majority of independent work will be on retrieval of previously taught knowledge and may be set as online quizzes, although there will still be times when other homework is set in place of this. All students in years 7 - 9 will have weekly independent work in English, maths, science and MFL, as well as time set aside to read each week, and fortnightly independent work in their other subjects. Our aim is to give more structure, consistency and purpose to independent work to allow students to retain more knowledge over time and make greater progress as a result.



## Rotary Competition

During lockdown this year we felt it even more vital that students were able to take part in competitions and do something a little different. We always like to get students involved in Rotary events and competitions; this year, they were able to enter four Rotary competitions: Young Writer, Young Photographer, Young Environmentalist and Young Artist. We had a lot of entries and it was great to see some of the talent in our students. It was even more exciting to have some winners! Well done to William in particular whose artwork has been put through to the national competition - we look forward to the results.



## Student leadership

Student leaders have had a fantastic year fulfilling their duties across our main leadership body and within our splinter groups. They have led on numerous charity fundraising events, created and led assemblies on summer safety, carried out anti-bullying drives as well as promoting ways in which we can remain healthy whilst saving our environment. Water fountains are now located in all our food service areas because of our Green Group and under the weekly guidance of Mrs Darbyshire, students debate the numerous suggestions and tackle any concerns that are raised from their peers or through their year group meetings. The team of 56 is ever-growing and with the support of Miss White and Mrs Brosnan the momentum has now developed into our newly established trust wide leadership programme. We look forward to seeing how our longer term projects progress next year, alongside the creation of our relocated Place for Peace with the support of Mr Green, Head of Art and Photography.

## Results days and a 'well done' to Y11 and Y13

Positivity and resilience have been the key contributing qualities which our Y11 and Y13 have demonstrated in abundance. For the second year running, we have been faced with constant uncertainty due to the coronavirus and the slow decision making of the government on the cancellation of formal examinations. We are all proud of the way in which our students have conducted themselves. Mrs Darbyshire will be writing to you next week with the information for results days.



### **Y10 and Y12 assessments - another big 'well done'**

We would like to congratulate our Y10 and Y12 students on completing their most recent set of assessments. Due to missing out on assessments in the summer term last year, this was the first time they have undertaken a full suite of assessments in every subject replicating what we hope will become a reality again next summer. Incredibly, after having no covid cases since our return in March, on the first day of the assessments one case meant that a number of students had to self-isolate. This did not deter the determination of students and with the support of Mrs Douglas, our exams officer, Mrs Darbyshire and our invigilators, we are pleased to report that their behaviour was exemplary throughout and that we are exceptionally proud of students in both year groups for completing excellent preparation and being the best they could be in every assessment.

### **Library (OLC) activities and reading for pleasure**

This year saw the launch of our Reading for Pleasure schedule aimed at encouraging all of our students across all year groups to read and participate in numerous enrichment activities to enhance their enjoyment of literature. Students have participated in reading marathons, Story Day, World Book Day celebrations and Roald Dahl Day. Our recent student questionnaire showed that over 300 students in Y7-9 had participated in additional activities on top of the whole school events including writing book reviews of their favourite novels from this year, quizzes and competitions. Next year's calendar includes some exciting new events and surprises as a result of our student voice. Mrs Roberts, our OLC Manager, is very excited to share this with you all in September. However, we don't want our students to stop reading over the summer so we have invested in MyOn. MyOn is an online reading platform with a huge range of books including fiction and non-fiction with choices to suit all tastes and age ranges. Your son/daughter will receive an email from Mrs Roberts next week which details how they can access this platform.

### **Enrichment and educational visits**

As we have slowly crept out of the grasp of the restrictions imposed throughout lockdown, we have been able to recommence many of our sporting activities and academic enrichment trips. In the last few weeks, Miss Stewart, Teacher of PE, responded to students' requests, who were inspired by her own interest in competing in triathlons, to start training in this area. It was wonderful to see so many getting involved. Many other athletics and sporting activities are now up and running too. Our dedicated team of staff hope to enhance this further, covid allowing, in September. A number of educational visits have now also taken place with various groups of students included in our geography fieldwork trip with Mr Jones and Mr Page; visits to the Fire Station, local farm, horse riding; and next week a number of our students are going surfing with Mrs Byrne and Mrs Darbyshire! There will be many more opportunities for all students as life returns to normal.



### Chromebooks

A reminder that the warranty and insurance will finish at the end of August for our Y9 students who leased a chromebook through us when they started in September 2018. Once the last payment is made that device now belongs to you. From September if the device stops working we will be unable to send it away for repair. We will endeavour to solve any problems in house if requested, but would have to ask parents/carers to cover the cost of any parts needed. You will be notified of this before we action anything. An opportunity for all parents to lease a new chromebook will be available over the summer as we open a portal for our new Y7 students. This will mean receiving a brand new device under full protection of the warranty and insurance again. Further details will be sent out in the next week or so of how to sign up to the portal again if you do wish to start a new lease deal. All students will be required to still have a device in school with them each day, with enough charge to get through the whole day. We will have a stock in school that can be lent out each morning and returned again at the end of the day should students not have their own.

### Uniform

You recently received communication about the launch of our new PE kit alongside information from School Shop, who already supply our main uniform. **There is no obligation for anyone to buy the new kit (other than new Y7) whilst the old one still fits**, but the staff and students have done a great job designing it so we are sure it will be a hit. School Shop are in school on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th July running a uniform sizing event - Friday is fully booked by Y6 students, but there are still slots on Saturday that you can book via School Shop if you would like to come and try uniform items on.

### Support from local businesses

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the following local businesses who have kindly donated towards our attendance initiatives for end of term rewards. We are delighted, with their help, to be able to make our attendance rewards benefit the whole family as we know being in school every day is a real team effort.

- **Pistachio Stokesley** - beautiful cup cakes.
- **Your Voucher Book** - 10 free voucher book apps, 3 awarded at the end of spring term and 7 to be awarded at the end of the summer term.
- **Dudley Arms** - Sunday lunch for 4 awarded at the end of the spring term and lunch for 2 in the café plus coffee and cake for 2 to be awarded at the end of the summer term.
- **Stokesley Leisure Centre** - 4 free swim vouchers to be awarded end of summer term.
- **Ayton's Traditional Yorkshire Fish Shop** - 2 vouchers for fish and chips.
- **The Mill and Il Mulino** - 100 x £10 vouchers.
- **Stokesley Golf Course** - 2 season tickets.
- **Stokesley Driving Range** - 2 season tickets.
- **Stokesley FootGolf** - 4 family vouchers
- **Stokesley Crazy Golf** - 4 family vouchers.





**We have more exciting prizes to give away on the last day of term so make sure your child is 'In it to win it'.** All draws take place on Thursday 22nd July and only students who are present (or isolating) can claim their prize!

### Staff Goodbyes

At the end of term, we say goodbye to a number of valued staff who are moving on to pastures new. These staff are:

Mrs Blakemore, Assistant Head of Maths; Mr Thomas, Teacher of Literacy Plus and Maths; Miss Lightwing, Teacher of English; Miss Thompson, General Teaching Assistant; and Mr Weedy, Assistant Headteacher.

We wish them every success in their future endeavours and wish to take this opportunity to thank them for all they have done to support the school and your children.

### A LIFE curriculum update

We are so proud of the way in which our students have engaged with the new discussion-based LIFE curriculum that we introduced in September, and which has run throughout the year in tutor time both whilst students have been learning in school and at home.

It's been great to see the impact that it's had on our students, and to have seen their confidence with discussing some of their world's more complex topics grow. Both staff and students have played a crucial role in the evaluation of the curriculum throughout the year, and have been part of shaping some changes to how it will look as we move forward.

We are excited, from September, to be introducing LIFE talk lessons for our year 7 students which will help them, over the course of the year, to find, share and use their voice in a range of different contexts, and to develop the skills for talk that are so essential for getting on in life. We will also be supporting our students in other year groups - through their LIFE lessons - to develop these speaking skills over the course of the year and look forward to reporting back to you on this as it unfolds.

Thank you for your ongoing support with this aspect of our curriculum. We massively appreciate the role that you play as parents/carers in helping your children to understand the value of their LIFE lessons, and continuing the discussions that are started at school at home.



## Dates for the diary

Term dates for 2022 - 2023 are now published on our website. Please visit [www.stokesleyschool.org](http://www.stokesleyschool.org) and click on 'news' and 'term dates' to find out more.

As indicated in my letter to parents this week, the return to school date may need to change slightly to accommodate the mass testing the government has instructed us to set up. We will write to you soon with a further update.

School finishes for the summer break at 12.30pm on Thursday 22nd July.

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Yours faithfully

**Mrs H. L. Millett**  
Headteacher