



Friday 15th October 2021

Dear parents/carers,

This is the last headteacher's fortnightly update for this half term. It's been a busy one, but also joyous due to us being able to run the school in a more 'normal' way and to enjoy the buzz of face-to-face events such as our recent open evenings. If you are having any down time at half term once we break up next week, we hope you enjoy it.

Quick Read

- We're investing heavily in our careers provision this year. We have two new online platforms, are interviewing all of our Y11s, and have set up a brand new, informative Google classroom for sixth formers.
- We have been updating students this week on our procedures for invacuation - this is where it is safer for students and staff to stay inside the building during an emergency. Students have responded to this very well.
- We had a brilliant sixth form open evening this week; it was lovely to see so many of you here. Remember, that our prospectus is interactive and provides more information via our website. The initial deadline for application is 13th December.
- 34 excited Y7 students joined our 100-strong student leadership group this week!
- Our first parent support session focused on supporting teenager's sleep habits is running today - if you can't come, you can access materials on the website afterwards.
- We're thrilled to have started a project with the NHS Wellbeing in Mind team that will run over several years all based in school supporting the mental health of students and staff.
- Y13 assessments are taking place in lessons next week.
- Y11 assessments are taking place after the half term break.
- Our student helpers on our two open evenings were awesome!
- Following student voice, four new clubs have started up as part of our extra-curricular programme: lego, Dungeons & Dragons, warhammer, and Japanese.
- Y7, 8 and 9 have all had some great experiences outside the classroom to support their LIFE curriculum. Y7 have had a singer who also delivered a session on positive mental health; Y9 have had a drama performance and workshop on key issues they might face in today's society; and Y8 are learning how to restart a heart today!
- There's a booklet linked into the LIFE section of this letter full of ideas for families over the half term break.
- Our refugee appeal has been a resounding success - watch our social media channels for updates.
- Our work with a student voice group on peer-on-peer abuse continues, with students already making a difference in school by developing ways for students to report concerns.
- Covid vaccinations for students are taking place on Wednesday next week; please complete the consent sent to you yesterday before midnight on Sunday.
- Don't forget we offer a free breakfast from 8am in school every morning!
- Safeguarding: do you know what the term 'County Lines' refers to? Find out below.





Longer Read

Careers Updates

Stokesley School has always been committed to careers and we are pleased to announce some exciting updates. We have invested in two new online platforms - Morrisby.com and Unifrog.org. Morrisby is the leading careers-matching service for schools, a powerful tool for helping all students to self assess and understand what career options are available. Unifrog supports students looking at higher education and apprenticeships and has lots more resources including videos and online courses to support students.

We also have a new careers room in school where students can access support and we are currently booking in Y11 students for their guidance meetings to support Post-16 decision making.

For sixth form students, we have set up a new Careers Google Classroom where students can see lots of opportunities including virtual work experience and information about university open days and degree apprenticeships.

We will have more careers news after half term so please watch this space.

Invacuation

This week students have been watching an assembly in form time about invacuation. It is highly recommended that, as well as evacuation procedures in the event of a fire, schools have invacuation procedures where it is safer to stay inside the buildings. This might be used in the event of an animal loose on the school grounds, air pollution from a local fire or chemical release, or - in the worst case and rare scenario - an intruder on the school site. Invacuation is put in place to ensure students and staff do not panic in such an event, but stay calm and quiet until help is accessed or a resolution is found. Students have been very sensible about this, asking great questions and showing interest in the procedures. We will practice the drill next week, and then at intervals throughout the year as we do for evacuation.

Joining our Sixth Form?

Sixth form open evening was really well attended on Tuesday this week. There was a lovely atmosphere in our newly refurbished sixth form building with great conversations going on between students, parents and teachers. We hope everyone enjoyed looking around even if the refurbishment isn't quite finished! Thanks so much to everybody who came, the feedback we received was really positive and we've already had 67 students who indicated that Stokesley sixth form is their firm first choice destination, which is great news! Don't forget our interactive prospectus is available on our website in the sixth form area if you'd like to find out more about our subjects and offer.





Details about our application process will be sent out shortly after half term, there will be an online application form to complete which will also ask students for an initial indication regarding which subjects they are interested in taking. The deadline for this will be 13th December.

Student Leadership

In the last two weeks, the Y7 cohort were offered the opportunity to join our large and successful student leadership body. Mrs Darbyshire was thrilled to receive 34 applications. The students participated in a bespoke training afternoon in preparation for their first meeting this week. Our Head Girl and Head Boy were also delighted to welcome such an enthusiastic group filled with fresh ideas! Next week, the 'student leader ideas' button will be added to the student dashboard. This student-driven idea will enable any student in the school to put forward an idea to be considered by the group. With over 100 students now participating in student leadership we have excellent representation across the larger student body. Well done to our new Y7 for joining the team!

Supporting mental health

Friday 15th October is our first session working with parents to give advice and support. This term's topic is *supporting your teen to have good sleep habits*. All materials from the session will be available on the school website shortly after the session. Please look out for future events and if you have ideas of events or topics that would be of benefit to you, please let us know by emailing sen@stokesleyschool.org.

Next half term, we are excited to welcome into school the Wellbeing in Mind Team. The Wellbeing in Mind team is made up of NHS professionals including senior clinicians, higher-level therapists and education mental health practitioner trainees (EMHPs). The team will be working alongside our staff members to support the positive mental health and wellbeing of students and staff on a project running until 2024.

Y13 Assessments

Y13 assessments will be taking place next week starting on Monday. These assessments are happening during students' normal lessons for each subject: all students are still expected to follow their full timetable and be in the building all day as usual, including during tutor time. The timetable has been shared with students so please encourage them to set time aside to prepare.





Y11 Assessment Weeks

The Y11 November assessment weeks will commence on Monday 8th November for two weeks. Students will sit formal assessments across most subjects. Next week, they will be given a timetable and you will also receive a copy from Mrs Darbyshire. Please encourage your child to start revising if they haven't already. Should you have any general queries, please get in touch with Mr Wilson, Head of Year 11, on n.wilson@stokesleyschool.org. If your query is subject-specific, the class teacher should be your first port of call.

Amazing student helpers

We would like to publicly thank all the students in years 7-13 who did such a great job at our Year 6 open evening last Thursday and at Tuesday night's Sixth Form open evening. Our students make our school what it is, and those students who gave up their own time to promote the school did an incredible job over two long nights. We received wonderful feedback from everyone who came along. If your child was one of those helping out, please give them a massive 'well done' from us!

LIFE updates

It's hard to know where to start with the LIFE curriculum over the past couple of weeks; there's been so much going on in school outside of lessons! It's been a real joy to see your children taking part in so many activities that are enriching their school experience, from clubs during lunchtimes to participation in additional LIFE sessions.

With over 45 clubs on offer weekly in school, lunchtimes and the hour after school are buzzing with students doing things that make them happy. When we first launched the brochure, we asked for suggestions of additional clubs that you would like to see running and, at the request of students, now have four additional weekly clubs: lego on a Friday, Dungeons and Dragons on a Tuesday, Warhammer on a Monday and Japanese on a Thursday, two of which are being run by sixth form students! If your child hasn't yet signed up to a club, please encourage them to do so. The lists are far from set and students are welcome to join at any time.

In terms of enrichment through the LIFE curriculum, this term has seen students in years 7, 8 and 9 take part in sessions outside the classroom. Y9 students were treated to 'YOLO', a performance which deals with some of the key issues that face students in today's society. They behaved impeccably and we were impressed, in particular, with the maturity shown in the discussions that took place in the workshop that followed the performance. This week, Y7 attended a performance from up and coming singer Bronnie who then delivered a workshop and Q and A session on mental health, body image and resilience. It was great for students to be able to hear these messages from someone who isn't a parent or a teacher, and brilliant to see them enjoying the performance too: there were some seriously impressive dance moves! The Y7 students were an absolute delight to have in the room and





a credit to themselves, to their parents/carers and to the school. We were really impressed but, of course, not at all surprised!

On Friday, our Y8 students were visited by the ambulance service and have received training in CPR. As it is part of the statutory framework for RSE, it's great that students are able to receive this from trained professionals, and we think that they will really benefit from the presentation, demonstrations and opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice.

And finally, if you're looking for things to do with your child/children over the half term holidays in the local area, [this booklet](#) offers loads of great suggestions!

Refugee appeal

Thanks to an absolutely herculean effort from our school community, we are set to donate a huge amount of clothing to support refugees coming into our country from Afghanistan. Next week, Mrs Fox and a group of our sixth form student leaders will be spending an evening sorting through the collected items ready to take them to charity. We'll be sure to update with you with some pictures via social media and in the next parent update!

Peer-on-peer abuse

You may remember that we wrote to you in the summer term about Ofsted's report into peer-on-peer abuse in schools. Following this report, Mrs Fox and a group of students from Y7-11 have been working hard alongside Mrs Myers - the Designated Safeguarding Lead - to come up with a plan of action for how we make our school feel like a safer place to be. The focus group of students have conducted themselves phenomenally and we have been so impressed with the mature way in which they have worked alongside us to tackle this delicate issue. We are working on a number of strategies with the group around raising awareness, but perhaps the thing that they are most proud of is the introduction of a button on the student dashboard where students can report something that has made them feel uncomfortable without having, in the first instance, to articulate this verbally to a member of staff.

Covid vaccinations

Families in Y7-11 have received information about the vaccinations which are due to take place in school on Wednesday next week. Consent must be completed by the end of the weekend (midnight on Sunday) if you want your child to have the vaccination - none will be accepted after this point. We would also like to remind you, again, that no child will be vaccinated without parental consent and students not receiving the vaccination should attend school as normal. The consent has come out at short notice; we apologise for this, but we are at the mercy of the immunisation team.





Free breakfast

Just a reminder that we are offering free breakfast in school from 8am for anyone who can make it in early. There is a selection of drinks, cereals and toast - all free of charge!

Safeguarding

As part of our regular safeguarding updates, we thought it would be useful to describe a term that you may or may not be familiar with that can affect young people in our area.

'County Lines' is the term used to describe a form of organised crime where criminals based in urban areas pressurise vulnerable people and children to transport, store and sell drugs in smaller county towns. It takes its name from the phone lines used by organised crime gangs to communicate between towns.

An issue of concern in North Yorkshire is the practice of 'cuckooing' where county lines drug dealers take over a vulnerable person's home to store their drugs and cash and use it as a base for dealing drugs. This usually involves identifying vulnerable people such as drug addicts, or people who are vulnerable due to mental or physical health impairments, single mothers and female sex workers. The dealers then coerce, and sometimes threaten the vulnerable person into allowing them to take control of their home so they can use it to store and sell drugs. They usually stay in a property for a short time before moving on to new premises.

The victims of cuckooing tend to live in social housing and the dealers will either stay in the property to deal drugs themselves, or will get the householder to deal on their behalf, travelling back and forth to their home areas to restock. Some of the dealers are criminals by choice and some have been coerced and exploited by organised criminals to work for them. Information from members of the public is vital to help the Police piece together the picture of offending across North Yorkshire. We therefore urge anyone to contact the police if you suspect it's going on in your area. Please [click here](#) to access information from North Yorkshire Police on spotting the signs.

Dates for your diary

Y7 families' visits to school: Tuesday 19th October 4.30pm

End of half term 1: Friday 22nd October at 3.20pm

Start of half term 2: Monday 1st November at the usual time

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H. L. Millett,
Headteacher

