



**Friday 14th January 2022**

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to this fortnight's update letter with lots of news about your school and helpful information.

### Quick Read

- We have a new Chair of the Board of Trustees of Areté Learning Trust, Catherine Brooker, who you may remember as former Headteacher of Stokesley School and former CEO of the trust.
- It's time to sign up for extra-curricular clubs again! Over 400 students attended clubs last half term, and we have also spent time in form learning what activities our students do outside of school. If your child has never participated in a club before, now's the time to give it a go!
- We have developed the Stokesley School pledge in conjunction with students and other staff. This has, at its heart, the mantra to be kind to others both on and offline. The pledge is being launched this week and next week across the school and you can read it below.
- In today's letter, you can find links to safeguarding guidance for parents regarding online sexual harassment and how to speak to your child about this sensitive matter.
- University offers are flooding in for Y13 and we are currently making preparations for Y11's entry to our sixth form. We have had a high number of applications and interviews will start for students after February half term.
- Mr Burns wrote to parents last week to emphasise our current whole school behaviour focus of *respect*. As one of our school's three core values, we are putting some extra effort into reinforcing this important trait with everyone.
- Y11s have conducted themselves brilliantly in their external exams this week (these exams affected around half the cohort).
- Assessments are coming up for Y11 and Y13 which could be used for teacher assessed grades if the pandemic affects exams.
- We are very excited to be launching a literacy website as part of our drive to improve the quality of information and materials available to support this important life skill.
- As always, there are some important dates for your diary at the end of the letter.

### Longer Read

#### **A message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Areté Learning Trust**

Whilst some parents/carers may remember me as a former Headteacher of Stokesley School and subsequently the CEO of the trust, since my retirement in April 2021, I have continued to support the trust we founded in 2015, as a director/trustee. I'm now chair of the board, working with the other directors who give their time voluntarily to support our trust





schools. I look forward to meeting parents/carers at one of the many events organised by our schools and will keep you informed of the work of the trust on a regular basis.

Thank you for the support and encouragement you continue to give to the staff during these challenging times - it is much appreciated.

Kind regards

*Catherine Brooker*

### Clubs and activities

It's time to sign your son and daughter up for their clubs and activities again! They're welcome to join the same clubs that they did last term, they can try some new ones, or they can do both! Invites have gone out on the SIMS parent app and should be there ready for you to accept. Thanks in advance for your support with this.

Last term we had over 400 students regularly attending clubs and activities in school. It's so lovely to see students taking part in the wide range of activities that we have on offer, and to hear them talking about what they do in their spare time. We also surveyed students to find out what activities they do out of school, and form tutors have thoroughly enjoyed talking to their tutees about the amazing things they get up to in their spare time. If your son or daughter doesn't attend an extra-curricular club in school or take part in any activities out of school, they have been encouraged by their tutor to give a club a go: they're a great place to make new friends, to learn new skills, or simply to have fun.

Please join us in encouraging your son or daughter to take part in a club and, if you have success, simply sign them up on the SIMS parent app or ask them to pop along to the club where they can sign up themselves. It would be great to have even more students involved in our offer, experiencing the benefits of the club leaders' generosity of time and skill.

### Stokesley Pledge

In their assemblies and tutor time sessions over the past couple of weeks, students have been introduced to - and asked to sign - the Stokesley school pledge. This is a document which we can proudly say has been created by staff and students working collaboratively (both sixth form students and those in our focus group) and has, at its heart, our expectation that everyone in our school is kind to one another both on and offline. The pledge consists of 7 core statements, which are included below for your information.

- I will earn the respect of staff and students through my words and actions.
- I will not discriminate against anyone and will treat everyone with empathy and respect.
- I will not start, spread or listen to potentially hurtful rumours about people.
- I will listen supportively to people who have been the targets of abuse or discrimination, and to those who have been accused.
- I will challenge offensive comments if I hear them. I will do this directly, and by reporting them to a member of staff, or by using the button on the student dashboard.





- I will not take or share photos or videos without the other person's consent.
- I will keep talking with friends and family about discrimination and abuse, and will raise awareness of these things wherever I can.

We're sure you'll agree that these statements epitomise the way in which we would like *everyone* in our school community to act and that, by behaving in a way that meets these expectations, our students in particular will be setting themselves up well for the future.

### **Safeguarding**

Dame Rachel de Souza DBE is the Children's Commissioner for England. When she commenced this role she undertook the largest ever survey of children - The Big Ask - to understand children's lives. Following on from this survey, a group of 16-21 year olds were asked to consider what they think parents should know and what parents should say to their children when talking about online sexual harassment. Please see the documents attached with this letter for more information.

### **Applications to our sixth form**

As university offers come flooding in for our current Y13, we turn our attention to our next cohort of sixth form students. We have had well over a hundred applications to our sixth form for September 2022, including more than twice as many as last year from students not currently at Stokesley. The reputation of our excellent sixth form and our area-leading performance data continues to spread across the local community. As has been previously communicated, the next step of the application process is an interview with a member of staff in school. These will be arranged for after the next assessments; the interviews will be about 10-15 minutes long and be during school time after February half term. This interview is a chance to discuss chosen subjects and whether or not entry requirements are currently being met, and also if the choices will allow progression to any chosen career paths or courses post-18. We will also discuss attendance and attitude to learning, setting targets if these are not yet where we would want them to be. The time and location of the interviews will be sent out via text or email to the contact details on the application form in the next few weeks.

### **Whole school behaviour focus**

Mr Burns wrote to you all last week to highlight that this term we are having a focus for our students on being respectful. Our school is a community and, like all communities, it is successful when all members treat each other with respect. Respect is one of our core values and it underpins everything that we do. We have based assemblies over this week and next around what it means to be respectful.

We know that the majority of our students are respectful all of the time and demonstrate exactly the kind of behaviour we expect. However, that doesn't mean we should be content with our standards: we expect our students to always strive to be the best they can be and we in turn always strive to make our school the best it can be. You will be notified through text messages when your child's behaviour falls below our expectations around respect.





We are grateful to you for reinforcing with your children all of our expectations around being respectful towards others at all times.

### Examinations

Mrs Douglas and the whole examinations team have been exceptionally proud of the way in which our Y11 students have conducted themselves during external examinations this week. Although this has not involved all students, over half the year group has sat one or more exams and they should be commended for their efforts.

### Upcoming formal assessments

As you are already aware through previous communication, we have our next set of formal assessments scheduled in for the following dates:

Y11 - Monday 31st January for two weeks

Y13 - Monday 14th February for one week

Mrs Darbyshire wrote to you last term to detail the response to the national consultation for examinations 2022. As it currently stands, examinations are going ahead. However, if these circumstances change, these formal assessments alongside other work will make up part of the body of work which would count towards a student's TAG (Teacher Assessed Grade). Please remember there are lots of support materials for exams and assessments on our website under *Key Information > Exam Information* - keep scrolling down!

### Literacy at Stokesley School

Next Tuesday you will receive a letter from Mrs Darbyshire detailing the launch of a new area to our website which will support literacy across the curriculum. Mrs Thomson, one of our established members of the English team and our Literacy Lead, has been working with our wider team to produce this exciting and vital development. Please watch out for this letter which will give you all the details about how you and your children will be able to access a wealth of support through this amazing development.

### Dates for your diary

Y9 parents' evening  
Term ends at 3:20pm

Wednesday 26th January  
Friday 18th February

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Yours faithfully,

**Mrs H. L. Millett,**  
Headteacher

