



**Friday 18th March 2022**

Dear Parents / Carers,

We're incredibly proud of our personal development offer as a school and are excited that it continues to grow as we come out of the restrictions placed on education by the pandemic. It's been a busy couple of weeks as far as the **LIFE** curriculum is concerned, from the introduction of new clubs through to a theatre performance and workshops which really made our year 10 students think. The first five updates on this week's letter are all about this, so we hope you enjoy finding out more.

### **Quick Read**

- LIFE updates:
  - Our Ukraine appeal raised a whopping £1784 - thank you so much!
  - Our extra-curricular clubs are expanding all of the time and now include study clubs too.
  - National Careers Week has been marked in school with a number of activities.
  - Y10 have benefited from a theatre company's play and workshop based around young people's mental health.
- Due to issues with students' asthma and activation of the fire alarms in school, we have banned the use of aerosol deodorants in school.
- Don't forget the deadline for entering Y9 options - it is today!
- Over 90 Y10 students have taken formal examinations this week in preparation for summer exams; their behaviour has been excellent.
- Y11's interviews for our sixth form have started this week and will continue into next week.
- The first Y12 retro games happened in form time this week - it was highly competitive. We will also be starting work on applying to university in Y12 form time imminently.
- Just a reminder that Y11 and Y13 parents have recently received a letter about supporting children through these crucial next few months. If you missed it, it can be accessed on our website.
- Our partnership working with the NHS Wellbeing in Mind Team continues, and sixth form had an assembly recently from the senior practitioner on managing exam stress. Further support is available for any students that request it.
- Yes@arete, led by our Director of Inclusion across the trust, runs a number of courses for parents. Read on below to find out more.
- We launched a literacy website with parents in January and we are keen to know if you have visited it, and what your impressions are. Please see the longer read below for a link to a short questionnaire.





### Longer Read

#### Ukraine Appeal

A **huge** thank you to our whole school community for the contributions that you made to our Ukraine appeal last Friday. As well as donating a large amount of sanitary products to a local drop-off point, we raised a whopping **£1784** which we have donated directly to 'Save the Children'. The money will be used where it is most needed in Ukraine at the moment, but our total would be enough to provide 161 school-in-a-bag kits, 96 family hygiene packs or a month's food for 26 families. I think we can be incredibly proud of ourselves as a community and, more than anything, that the idea to raise money in this way came from the students themselves.



#### Extra-curricular clubs

Our most recent data tells us that over 800 students regularly take part in extra-curricular activities in school, whether that be being part of our student leadership team, playing dungeons and dragons, taking part in the school production, dancing, debating, playing sport or something else! In the last couple of weeks, our OLC manager - Mrs Bailey - has also set up three new clubs for students to join: Book blog club, Comic and Manga club and, in exciting news, we're also handing over writing and editing our **LIFE** bulletin to students in our **LIFE** bulletin club!

It's also been fantastic to see students - in particular those in year 11 and our sixth form - coming forward with ideas of clubs that they would like to start up in school. One of our year 12 students, for example, has just set up a Human Rights club which will run on a Thursday lunchtime and which any student can attend.

This is exactly what we want to see, and will offer all of the clubs that we possibly can so that students get the very best enrichment experience in our school. If your child doesn't already attend a club, please do encourage them to give one a go - it's never too late to join up and then can do so simply by attending the club; there's no need to sign up.





## LIFE Hub study club

Over the last couple of weeks, we've seen a large group of our year 11 students take up the opportunity to use the **LIFE** Hub for independent study on a Thursday evening. It's been great to see them working independently or collaboratively on either revision or work that they've been set, and those who attend have said that they value the space and resources to 'just crack on' in a way that they struggle to find the motivation to do at home. The study club has also attracted the attention of some staff members who have come down to do their marking alongside the year 11s - it's a great atmosphere and one which we hope more year 11s will take advantage of in the weeks to come.

## National Careers week

Last week we celebrated National Careers week in school, and students were treated to careers assemblies from their Heads of Year and a careers quiz in form time, which consisted of matching members of staff to jobs that they'd had in the past. We think it's really important that our students see that we haven't all always done the jobs that we currently do, and that we've all been - like they are currently- on a career journey to get where we are. Students also had opportunities to link their curriculum subjects to careers across the school. Brain in Gear activities at the start of lessons were career-focused, and staff talked to students about careers linked to their areas of specialism. It's a real privilege to be able to have these conversations with our students and we hope that they've been inspired by some of the discussions that they've had.

## The Invisible Man - Inside Out

This Thursday, our year 10 students attended a performance from The Invisible Man theatre company about the mental health challenges that are faced by young people. The performance - Inside Out - gave them insight into the minds of several young characters, all of whom faced their own unique challenges. The performance was followed up by workshops for students in which they could explore the issues in the play in a little more detail. We were incredibly proud of our year 10 cohort who were mature, thoughtful and empathetic throughout - they were a real credit to themselves, to their families and to the school.

***If you're interested in finding out more about personal development and our extended **LIFE** curriculum, click [here](#) to be taken to the school's website where you can read all about what we offer.***





## Use of deodorants in PE

The use of spray deodorants in PE has become more prevalent in recent weeks. This poses two issues for us: spray deodorants can cause complications for students with asthma, particularly when extensive amounts of spray is used; and, secondly, when a number of students use spray together, this can also cause the fire alarm to be activated. The latter causes disruption to learning for the whole school and college, and makes people complacent about fire alarms in the event of a real fire. Therefore, we have taken the decision, in the interests of health and safety for all, to request that students **do not bring aerosols into school**. We have informed students that they should only bring roll-on deodorants or sprays which are not aerosols. We appreciate your support with this matter.

## Y9 options

There are still a few students who haven't entered their option choices into the online portal at [www.sims-options.co.uk](http://www.sims-options.co.uk), the deadline for these is Friday 18th March. After this date there is no guarantee that students will get their first choice options as subjects are filling up already. Any issues please email [options@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:options@stokesleyschool.org). Option allocations will be confirmed after Easter.

## Y10 Examinations

Y10 students who are due to sit a formal examination in the summer have been given the opportunity to sit an assessment in the relevant subject under examination conditions in the hall. This involved just over 90 students. Their behaviour was exemplary and our new Examinations Officer, Mrs Darby, congratulated them all on their conduct.

## Y11 sixth form interviews

Y11 interviews started this week and will continue into next week. This is an opportunity to discuss options and make sure chosen subjects will prepare students well for any intended career goals. We also set any targets necessary to ensure minimum entry requirements are met. It isn't too late to apply if you haven't already! Please get in touch with Mr McGreal, Senior Assistant Headteacher, using [r.mcgreal@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:r.mcgreal@stokesleyschool.org) for more information.

## Y12 tutor time

In tutor time this week, Y12 students engaged really well in our first retro games event! This is the first of what we hope will be regular opportunities to get the heart rate up and encourage some healthy competition amongst the form groups, although first impressions suggest it will take some going to match the competitiveness of 12-Apollo! Next week, Y12 will start their UCAS journey with an introduction to an online platform called Unifrog and a talk about the sort of evidence they need to consider when writing personal statements to make sure they stand out in an increasingly competitive application process.





## Y11 and Y13 key updates

Mrs Darbyshire wrote to parents/carers and students last week with key updates and useful links to assist your child(ren) through the last few months of this crucial year. You can also access these letters via our school website under Key Information/Letters Home.

## Wellbeing in Mind team support for sixth form

Last week, as part of our ongoing whole school work with the NHS Wellbeing in Mind Team, we welcomed Nicola, Senior Practitioner, to our sixth form assembly. Nicola presented to the students on how anxiety impacts us every day, about why it is normal to feel anxiety around exams, and how to manage this anxiety in a positive way. The Wellbeing in Mind team will be supporting the students in the run up to the exam period with follow up sessions for those students who feel this would be of benefit to them.

## Handwriting

Yes@Arete runs a range of training sessions around various different educational needs which are available to interested parents and carers at a discounted rate. Booking has opened recently for a session on the 10th June at Richmond School on 'Speeding Up Handwriting for KS2 and KS3'. If you are interested in this event, or wish to see other events, please visit <https://www.yesatarelearningtrust.net/Training-Events>.

## Literacy website

We are really proud of our literacy website that was launched in January and we hope that you have found it useful. Mrs Thompson, Teacher of English and Literacy Coordinator, and Mrs Darbyshire, Deputy Headteacher, are now reviewing the website content and would like your feedback. Please click on [this link](#) to share your views and ideas. The closing date for this feedback is Monday 28th March.

## Dates for your diary

Y11 Parents' Evening (Invitation only)  
Visit to see 'School of Rock'  
End of Term at 3:20pm  
Training Day (no students in school)  
Summer term begins

Tuesday 22 March  
Thursday 31 March  
Thursday 7 April  
Friday 8 April  
Monday 25 April

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Yours faithfully,

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

