



SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Engaging minds, broadening horizons

Seaham High School
Station Road
Seaham
Co. Durham
SR7 0BH

01915161600

Head Teacher: Mr G.W Lumsdon

Deputy Head: Mrs A Carr
Deputy Head: Mr J.E Henderson

17th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

The Autumn term is drawing to a close and I'm writing to thank you for all of your support over this difficult term and year. I am aware of the disruption to learning that the track and trace process has had and the challenges that this has caused at home as well as school. Our aim this term was to re-establish relationships and routines and I am delighted to say that I believe we have achieved that. The students on the whole have returned fantastically following the first lockdown. I believe that the vast majority are pleased to be back in school and have demonstrated great resilience and fortitude. I am proud of all the Year Groups and the work their Achievement Leaders, Year Managers and Tutors have done to reassure students, re-integrate them and re-establish those important school habits and routines. There are two Year Groups that deserve special mention, however.

Year 7 have been an absolute joy this year. We are trying to identify what has gone so well as all staff are continually praising their attitude, work and effort. One thing we believe has helped has been the Bubble system whereby Year 7 have been protected and kept apart from the rest of the school, largely based around the LRC. They have been hit among the hardest with Track and Trace, especially 7MKF but to their credit they have adapted well and thrown themselves into their on-line learning.

I must give significant recognition to current Year 11 for their positive attitude and effort in what must be an incredibly challenging year for them. Every child's school life is being impacted but for Year 11 in their final year to have their experience blighted by this situation is very hard. They are resilient, however and making the best of it. We will endeavour to give them as enjoyable an experience as we can whilst ensuring the quality of education is the best we can possibly deliver. I know they have particularly appreciated when staff are self-isolating that they still teach lessons remotely to preserve continuity of education. I am particularly pleased with the work of the School President and his team for re-establishing the Ambassador programme in very difficult circumstances and like us all they are getting used to virtual meetings to prevent breaking the Bubble system.

I must also recognise the hard work, resilience and willingness of staff to adapt to new systems and procedures. Staff have truly gone the extra mile to ensure we are not just functioning as a school but actually beginning to flourish once more. We have continued to review our procedures and adapt to ensure as many of the normal things that we do are able to happen again. Intervention across the school is up and running, peripatetic lessons are happening, homework clubs and other extra-curricular events and enrichment are taking place where possible. This is huge testament to the efforts of staff. As with the Year groups one body of staff need a particular mention and it is a group that often do not get the recognition they deserve- that is site and cleaning staff. They truly have been



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exceptional in their efforts. I get frustrated when we have had a positive case and the perception with some is that it is to do with the school not being deep cleaned. This is not and has never been the case. The work and flexibility of site staff and cleaners has been second to none. They have changed rotas, adapted to new systems, protocols, machinery and taken it in their stride. If ever any group deserve to be described as Key workers it is these staff and without them this school would undoubtedly have not functioned as well and successfully as it has.

We have unfortunately had 24 cases so far this academic term that have impacted on staff and students within school requiring others to self-isolate. I have tried to be very open and transparent with students and yourselves and explained each case to students via a live broadcast. I will continue to do this despite the inevitable worry and anxiety it causes as I believe it is important that you know the reality of what we are all facing. The news of a vaccine offers real hope but there will be challenges ahead in the new year. It is easy to focus on the negative reality of 24 positive cases but conversely if you think that there are 1160 students and 140 staff that helps put the figure into some perspective. What is really worth celebrating is the fact that all students and staff affected by Coronavirus have returned to school fit and healthy, which is the most important thing. We can all manage a bit of disruption to school life and work as long as no-one is seriously ill.

One final group needs a special mention and that is yourselves parents and carers. Your support has been unstinting and we much appreciate the many positive messages we have had. You more than anyone support your children, influence their learning and decisions. You have supported throughout with attendance and those times where disruption to home life has resulted from self-isolation.

Can I wish you all a safe and restful Christmas and all the best for the New Year!

Yours sincerely

Mr G Lumsdon
Head Teacher



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