13th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As the end of a very strange year in school comes to an end, it is time to start looking forward to the beginning of a return to normality in September. There has been much to celebrate this year both before and during lockdown and the word that best sums it all up is community. The sense of community within and around John Spence is its strength and this has been evident during the recent challenging 4 months where there has been so much support for one another, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support that you have offered the school.

Before going onto consider the details of September it is important to recognise the achievements of our students whilst in school and during lockdown. The past few months will not have been easy for your child and many of you will have struggled to motivate them for such a long period of time, but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the majority have tried their best to engage and there have been some wonderful examples of students going above and beyond with their work. As is required, we have enclosed your child’s end of year report with this letter.

The guidance for September, published by the government on 2nd July, very much recognised that each individual school has its own unique set of circumstances meaning that it has been up to us to put together a plan that works for John Spence. The guidance requires schools to work through a ‘system of controls’ that will reduce the risk of transmission of the virus and this very much underpins the strategy we have developed.

You will find a copy of the arrangements for your child’s year group for September enclosed. Our aim has been to keep things as safe as possible and as normal as possible, so whilst all students will be in full time, the experience for them will be slightly different. Just two examples of this are different access points into the building for each bubble and slightly different start and end times to the school day. Teaching will also be slightly different because there is the need to maintain distancing between staff and students so that teachers can move between bubbles and remain safe as there is a greater risk of adults developing severe symptoms; indeed, we do have a number of staff who will be in school who are clinically extremely vulnerable. Please do read the information carefully and share the details with your child as every one of us has a responsibility to keep one another safe in our community.

The information in this letter will give you an indication of the types of systems we are putting in place so that we can welcome all students back into school as safely as possible. There is much more detail in our risk assessments and strategy documents, but I don’t want to overwhelm you with information. If you would like to discuss any issues regarding safety in school, then please do contact me via the school email address and I will get back to you. From September it is a legal requirement to send your child to school.

Before we get to the summer, we do have the opportunity for up to 35 Year 7 students to attend a two-day summer school on Thursday 20th and Friday 21st August. Each day will include exciting and engaging activities with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and PE. All the sessions have been designed to be active with the majority being based outside, weather permitting!

Places for the John Spence Summer School will be allocated on a first come first served basis therefore if your child would like to attend please text Mrs Brown on 07904 241315 with the following information at the earliest opportunity to avoid disappointment.

* Your child’s name (e.g. Ben Smith)
* Current form class (e.g. 7FOZ)

Once we have confirmed the 50 students attending the Summer school we will send out further information to those students detailing the exact arrangements for the 2 days.

If you do have any immediate queries regarding the Summer school, please contact your child’s Head of Year, Mrs Brown who you can contact at any point either by phone or by email at: 0191 2961432 or leanne.brown@ntlp.org.uk

Finally, the school will close for the summer at 1pm on Friday 17th July. The school office will not be open, but the office email address – jschs-office@ntlp.org.uk – will be checked daily so please do contact us through this method if needed. I have also enclosed some contact numbers for various organisations if you need advice or support during the holidays.

Once again, thank you all for your support this year. The difficulties that many are facing will not necessarily ease as quickly as the lockdown measures so our sense of community remains critical as we continue to navigate our way through these unprecedented times. One thing that you can be assured of is that John Spence will be back in business in September supporting your child.

Best wishes and continue to stay safe.

Jonathan Heath

Headteacher