

21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach half term there remains a degree of uncertainty about the challenges that we all may face in the coming months, but one certainty is that, at John Spence, we will continue to keep everyone as safe as we possibly can and focus on the support and progress of all the students in the school. One of the key attributes that we associate with being Fit for Life is resilience and this is certainly something that we have seen from both students and staff over the past 8 weeks.

As far as possible we are keeping things as close to normal as we can and whilst the additional opportunities that we are currently able to offer are limited, it is great to see how well the students are engaging with them. Year 11 support and intervention is being well attended, the Year 7 Goals programme is up and running and we are already hosting various careers intervention and outside agencies so that we can offer the support and guidance our students need.

The support and wellbeing of students is paramount and to this end I am pleased to say that our long awaited Hub will be opening shortly after the half term break. The Hub will be multi-purpose, but will primarily be a base for our mentoring team; it contains a group teaching area and 5 counselling rooms. The Hub is just one of two developments next half term as we will also be opening our Engagement Centre which will support those students who are struggling with full time mainstream provision. These developments have been planned for some time, but are even more critical now as we continue to navigate our way through the challenges associated with lockdown and ongoing restrictions.

Following the half term break we will be altering some of our timings for different year groups. The main reason for this is that Years 9 and 10 have only had very limited time with their form tutors so far this year. The new start times are as follows:

	Start of Day	End of Day
<b>Year 7</b>	8.50am	3.05pm
<b>Year 8</b>	8.50am	3.00pm
<b>Year 9</b>	8.40am	2.50pm
<b>Year 10</b>	8.40am	3.00pm
<b>Year 11</b>	8.30am	2.55pm

The staggered timings do mean that we are able to keep the year group bubbles reasonably separate, but more importantly reduces the congestion to and from the school, so please do encourage your child to arrive at school only 5 minutes or so before their start time. The times of lessons and break/lunchtimes remain the same. As we enter the colder months, I am pleased to say that our uniform suppliers now have training pants in stock that can be worn on the days when students have PE in school. [www.michaelsehgal.co.uk](http://www.michaelsehgal.co.uk)

One other amendment to the school calendar next half term is that the school will close for students at 1pm on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November to provide staff with time to engage in additional online training. This will mean that Years 9, 10 and 11 will be leaving school prior to their lunchtime so please contact your child's Head of Year as soon as possible if you would like them to remain on site for their lunch and arrangements will be made. The training itself will be undertaken in the weeks preceding the 18<sup>th</sup> November and is linked to our roll out of Google Classroom for learning both in school and at home. To this end if you have not yet completed the short GoogleForm regarding remote learning then you can do so using the following link: <https://bit.ly/3743dc1>

As of writing, we have had three positive test results from students, but have had no further report of symptoms or positive tests from any of those students who are self-isolating as a result of these cases.

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We also remain fortunate in that no staff are currently absent from school due to symptoms or symptoms in their household.

Finally, we have already had some questions from Year 11 students about their Prom this year! It is clearly a very long way away and hopefully things will have significantly improved by then, but we cannot offer any guarantees, therefore we strongly advise you not to buy any dresses, suits or indeed anything for the Prom until we are able to confirm what will be happening.

I hope that you all have a relaxing, if somewhat restricted, half term break and we look forward to welcoming the students back on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and understanding throughout the term.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Heath', is displayed within a light grey rectangular box.

Jonathan Heath

Headteacher