



John Spence

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parent/Carer

We all woke up for the first time this morning where HRH Queen Elizabeth II is no longer our queen. Regardless of views, we cannot help but be moved by the loss of a monarch who has been a constant in the lives of British people for over 70 years. It is also important to remember that when she died she was a mum, grandma and great-grandma and the loss that the royal family will feel is something that many of us will be able to understand.

In memory of her life, we will be holding a minute's silence at 12.00 today as the first opportunity reflect on her life as well as inevitably reflecting on the losses that we all have at points during our lives. Next week we will hold assemblies exploring the Queen's life and the impact that she had on the world. We do not yet know the date or the arrangements for the state funeral, but will let you know as soon as we have any details regarding the impact on schools.

Focusing back on school, it has been great to welcome the students back to school this week, in particularly Year 7 who have settled in incredibly well. They have already taken advantage of the golden coin scheme by attending extracurricular clubs and although the rain got in the way yesterday, there is still the chance for them to collect more coins today.

Prior to the summer, I wrote to you all with information about the coming year including details on uniform and I would like to thank you for support as the vast majority of students have been in correct uniform, including bags. We have identified some issues and the parents of those students have been contacted and the issue quickly resolved. I would like to emphasise again, that we do have uniform stock to either loan in school or provide to you as 'pre-loved', we also have a uniform fund that we can use to support the purchase of new items if needed; please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need any support.

As ever, the students respond well when we set expectations and it was notable yesterday that standards were an improvement from Wednesday and as mentioned, the biggest change is that all students are now bringing a bag into school. From Monday the full system will be introduced and you can see the details of this in the uniform section of our website.

I also mentioned attendance in my end of summer term letter, which was much lower for us last year than has historically been the case. I shared the information in the table below with students during assembly this week, which details the performance of students with various levels of attendance for the cohort that have just left us.

Each row relates to a particular attendance bracket - 95%+ attendance at the top down to less than 80% attendance at the bottom. The final column is the difference between the expected grade average a student should achieve and their actual grades. Don't worry about what the numbers mean, but what is absolutely clear is that those students who have good attendance perform broadly in line with

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expectation whereas as you move down the rows the gap gets bigger and bigger. By the time you reach the bottom of the table, on average students perform nearly 1.5 grades lower than they should in each of their subjects.

Attendance %	Tgt A8	Exam A8	Residual A8
95 Plus	4.74	4.65	-0.09
90-94.9	4.84	4.42	-0.41
85-89.9	5.09	4.44	-0.65
80-84.9	4.39	3.20	-1.19
Less than 80	4.22	2.83	-1.39

This reflects what happens up and down the country and shows just how importance good attendance is for the outcomes of young people. Your child needs to be in school otherwise the gaps in their knowledge and skills will only widen making it harder for them to make the progress they are capable of. When asked, a student in year 11 last year who had 100% attendance throughout his 5 years at John Spence, said the reason why he managed this was because his 'mam made him come to school'!

I do appreciate that it's not always that easy and there are some days when a student is genuinely too unwell to be in school, but all too often the reasons provided for absence suggest that the student probably could have been in school even though they may not have felt 100%. Working together we can get attendance of all students at the school to the levels that we saw before Covid.

On the subject of Covid, we have had several queries this week about isolation periods; there are none. If your child is well enough to be in school, then they need to attend in line with government guidance.

Finally, having just welcomed our new Year 7 into school we now have our Open Evening for parents of pupils in Year 6 on Monday 19th September between 5pm and 7pm. Please do let friends and family know, again details can be found on the website.

Thank you once again for your support to help make the start of term as smooth as it has been.

Best wishes



Jonathan Heath
Headteacher