

Rayner Stephens

H I G H S C H O O L

Newsletter

Headteacher Welcome

Dear families,

I am writing to update you at the end of an extremely busy and unusual term. Included at the end of the letter are a few good news stories from the school. The current restrictions have put a stop to the majority of the enrichment and extra-curricular activities that usually take place throughout the first term, but fortunately the staff and learners have found ways to continue to support the school and wider community through on going charity events. Hopefully as restrictions ease we will be quick to return to our usual enrichment programme and that our newsletters will again be full of celebration of learner's achievements in all aspects of school life.



Fay Beach -
Headteacher

Covid-19 Update

I want to start by thanking our families and the wider community for their ongoing support at what is a very difficult time for everyone. When I wrote to you at the end of the first half term the tone of the letter was very positive as although the school has had to make many changes learners and staff had responded well to this and at that point the school had only a couple of confirmed cases and self-isolation amongst both colleagues and learners was relatively low. However, after half term and in line with schools across the North West we saw significant increases in positive cases and self-isolation. Although none of the cases have been identified as having been passed through transmission at school the impact of the increase has been difficult to manage on top of losing key members of staff from the building during the second lockdown due to the guidelines that were put in place. I am extremely proud of how the staff have pulled together to support learners at this time, they have all taken on additional responsibilities and workload when asked which meant that we only had to shut to a year group for two days. At times this term we have had significant reductions in staffing teachers, support staff and senior leaders that has impacted on our capacity and ability to provide the usual service to our learners. We have not been impacted as badly as some schools in Tameside however it hampered our ability to deliver the curriculum effectively at all times and continue with the same level of whole school improvement that we did in the first half term.

Achievement **S**uccess **P**rofessionalism **I**ntegrity **R**espect **E**ndeavour

We hope that the relaxation of restrictions over the Christmas holiday does not cause the same level of impact in the spring term. As I write too you the DfE has just announced the introduction of mass testing in January and the staggered return to face to face teaching. Hopefully these measures will significantly reduce the impact of self-isolation in the coming months. Further details on how the school will manage both of these new announcements will be provided in separate communication.

Parental communication and Parents Evenings

The current restrictions on parents attending school for meetings is highly frustrating for everyone and has continued to pose challenges for us. To support communication the schools has run a number of information evenings and launched the new parent app *Insight*. The app is an excellent tool for keeping updated on your child's attitude to learning and rewards, as well as having instant access to parental letters and your child's most recent data reports. It is also a way of updating your details and communicating regarding attendance. We urge all parents to download the app. Guidance on installation and the service it provides is available on the school website.

We are aware from the parent survey that the majority of parents want face to face parent's evenings using social distancing however the current guidance to schools from the Local Authority is that parents evenings and where possible all other parental meetings take place remotely. The trial run of the technology for remote parents evening that took place this half term was unsuccessful and so we had to postpone the Year 11 parents evening. The school has invested in a remote system for parent's evenings for the rest of the year and are looking forward to rolling this out starting with Year 11 in January.

In my last letter I shared the parent survey regarding the catch up curriculum offer. All schools are being provided with £80 per learner to support catch up activities in core lessons of English, maths and Science. Some of this will be delivered through additional small group interventions. As part of the government scheme the school has provisionally been allocated two academic mentors to support this intervention, these mentors were supposed to be allocated to us in October, however the government providers have not been able to recruit to the level that they were planning and have written to me again in the past week to say that they are again unable to provide this resource to us for January 2021. The school has identified learners in need of additional catch up and are now pursuing alternative solutions to support this aspect of the catch up curriculum. Curriculum leaders are regularly reviewing learners' assessments and adapting the curriculum to take into account the further disruption to learning that has taken place this term.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our learners and families for their ongoing support in helping us to manage suspected and confirmed cases of coronavirus within the school community. Could I please ask that if, over the Christmas break, any learners obtain a positive test results, that parents immediately share this information with school via the school's dedicated coronavirus email address: covid@rshs.aspireplus.org.uk. We will send a reminder to families about coronavirus related absences after the break.

School Improvement

Although the level of progress this half term has been more limited due to covid-19 we have continued to work on school improvement. In January we move into the Stamford Park Trust which will bring a greater capacity for rapid school improvement.

Improving the curriculum

This work has already begun with the Trust, having appointed a new Executive Principal for Secondary Education to work with Senior Leaders across all the Stamford Park Trust secondary schools. The Trust has begun a full review of our school curriculum that has already led to changes to provision at Key Stage 4. Due to this there have been changes to all year group's timetables. This is mainly changes to the timing of lessons rather than changes to their class teacher. The new timetable will come into effect for Year 11 on the 5th January and Years 10 to 7 on 11th January.

I trust that you have found the information helpful. I would like to thank you for your continued support at this difficult time. There are many barriers currently in place that make our usual level of communication and access to members of staff more difficult. We understand that everyone is finding it difficult and the changes have put new and difficult pressure on families as well as staff and learners. Thank you for your patience and supportive comments in the communication we have received from you. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas holiday and look forward to continuing to work together during the rest of the academic year.

Yours sincerely,



Fay Beach

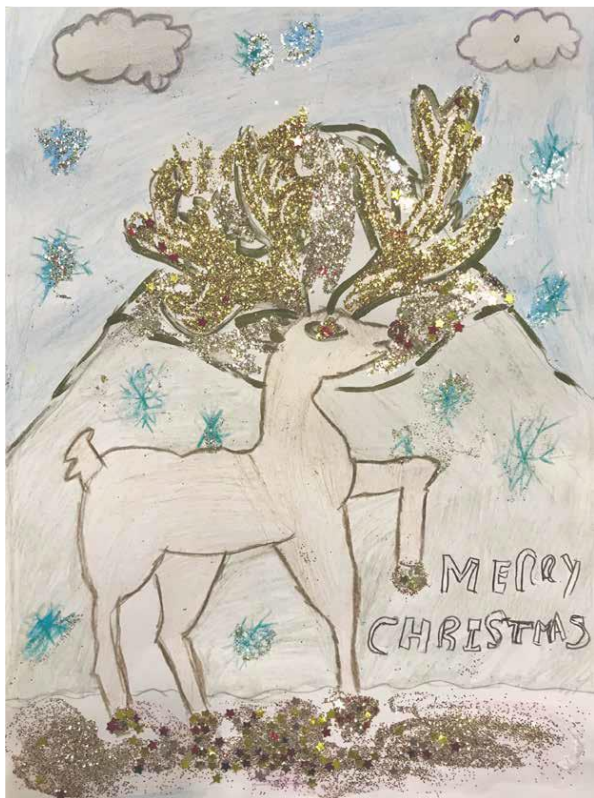
Student Council

Fantastic amount of donations and support for the local food bank again, a massive thank you to all our families and staff.



Student Council

This year the we run a Christmas Card competition, we had some fantastic entries, take a look at some of our winning entries.



Winner Year 7 learner

2nd place Year 8 learner



3rd place Year 8 learner



Astley Sports Village

As you may be this year ASV run a Christmas Gift appeal that will be going directly to families in a local primary school who are really struggling this year with the reality that their children won't wake up Christmas Day for any presents. No child should wake up without a present on Christmas Day and not have that Christmas Magic as a kid.

It has been a huge success with over 450 presents donated in 3 weeks, all were wrapped on before being delivered to Poplar Street Primary School Headteacher Monday morning

