

28th June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As I stood by the school gates at the end of the day on Friday, wishing students well for the weekend, and talking about their upcoming plans, I felt very proud of the way in which the students are continuing to conduct themselves this year. It has undoubtedly been a difficult time, but the resilience and determination of the students shines through and is to be commended.

Summer Mock Examinations

I would like to pay particular thanks to our current Year 10 and Year 12 students; a lot of focus in the media has been on Year 11 and Year 13 this year, rightly so, as they have been working hard to obtain their grades in unique circumstances. However, we must not forget Year 10 and Year 12 who will be the first to sit formal exams after a two-year hiatus. As a school, we feel it vital that the students are prepared academically for these future exams which is why we have set up formal, full mock examinations in our exam venues, as preparation for next year. I have been extremely impressed with how Year 10 students have conducted themselves in preparation for these mocks next week. All students have demonstrated that they can work diligently in period 7 guided-study and they have been a real credit to themselves. Year 12 have already sat their mocks, teachers have marked them, and we are now planning next steps in terms of targets and future support.

Bridging Week

Many of our Year 11 students have recently been in for their Bridging Week into Sixth Form. An important transition event, this year, as a response to the pandemic, we have placed even greater focus on this day and have been extremely pleased with the results. Instead of only one taster lesson, students received up to three lessons per A Level subject, helping them to develop a real understanding of the course. Attendance was superb and students were committed to the process. Students were also quick to take over the Sixth Form area and seemed delighted to make it their own and help themselves to the tea and coffee provided! Well done Year 11.

Training Day

A reminder that **Tuesday 6th July** is a staff training day and there are no students in school on this day.

A Level and GCSE results day information

You will be aware that these are taking place earlier in the summer break than usual this year. The dates and times are listed below:

- **Year 13 Tuesday 10th August 8:30am – 10:30 am**

Students should collect their results from the Sixth Form area

- **Year 11 Thursday 12th August 9:30am – 11:30am**

Students should collect their results from the assembly hall

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If your child is unable to collect their results in person we can post them home or alternatively they could nominate someone to collect them on their behalf. If your child wishes to do this they should email Mrs Sharon Bennett (Assistant Examinations Officer) sbennett@jesmondparkacademy.org.uk with their name and the full name of the person who they are nominating to collect the results. The person collecting the results needs to have photographic identification in order to collect the results. Your child should do this before Friday 23rd July.

Intervention

Since we have returned, a number of students have been receiving numeracy and literacy intervention via Student Support to help close the gap caused by the pandemic. This intervention will be broadened throughout the next 4 weeks to provide booster sessions for selected students in Years 7, 8 and 9 before breaking up and to deliver some specific tasks to complete over the summer to keep the progress moving forward!

Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges

A fortnight ago, OFSTED published its report on sexual harassment in schools after the 'Everyone's Invited' website published many accounts of sexual harassment and assault in schools and colleges across the country. As a school, we take such matters very seriously and make sure that every student feels safe. No student should be subject to any form of sexual harassment in school or anywhere else. Although we were not mentioned on the website, we are intending to introduce new measures, in terms of the way we report and record any incidents and how we talk to and educate our students on the topic. Any individual who feels uncomfortable about the language used to them or about them, who receives or is asked to send inappropriate photos, is subject to any form of inappropriate contact, or hears or sees anyone else in these situations, is urged to come forward and report this so we can investigate. Respect and tolerance have always been core values in the school, and by working together, we can ensure that all of our school community feels safe, supported and listened to.

Highlights of the Month

Earlier this month, I met with 4 Year 7 students who had amassed over 1800 PRAISE stamps this year and achieved their Platinum certificates. This is an outstanding achievement and one to be celebrated. The points, as you can imagine, have been awarded for a wide variety of reasons, including showing determination, working hard and being helpful to others. Well done to the following students: Ivy Middleton, Rahim Rasool, Ruby Rutherford, Ella Crompton and Prisha Thawari.

Also worth commending is that last week saw the Newcastle City Star Awards. Jesmond Park Academy had an amazing 4 students recognised which is more than we have ever had before. The awards are about recognising young people's achievements. It is not simply about being 'the best' at something. It's also about looking at the achievement when measured against the starting point or the circumstances surrounding the young person, which may have been particularly challenging over the last 12 months. So, a special 'well done' goes to Kiyani Mosavi, Majed Zmezm, Isaac Wassall and Jay Parry – the school is extremely proud of you!

One lunchtime this past week, I had a conversation with some Year 8 students about homework provision. I was impressed by their sensible views, their understanding that homework is helpful to their learning and assists them in developing organisational skills. They made a very interesting remark which I think is very important to recognise: 'too much isn't good and too little isn't good either.' The difficulty is therefore finding the right balance – something we will continue to focus on.

Year 6 transition days

This week, we will be delighted to invite students from our Primary Schools into JPA. All visiting students and staff will be kept separate from both each other and from the JPA students and staff to ensure a Covid secure environment, and to enable us to provide the important opportunity to make a physical visit to the school. They will all participate in an exciting Science lesson and have the chance to meet the Year 7 team.

Covid and Future Plans

You will all be aware of the rise in Covid cases in recent weeks, especially in the North East area. A number of local schools have been forced to close or partially close and it is a reminder of the need to maintain vigilance and to take precautions. We continue to have cases on a weekly basis although there has been no dramatic increase. We must continue to respond robustly and proportionately, following Public Health England advice, and this will lead to close contact isolations. This will require support and understanding from everyone. I appreciate this is frustrating, and not where we wanted to be as we approach the end of this school year, However, I am sure that we can all count on your support and flexibility to through the next few weeks as safely as possible.

On this issue, following discussions with the Local Authority and Public Health England, we have decided to keep our Covid arrangements in place for the remainder of the term. We feel that the costs outweigh the benefits; changes so late in the year will provide little real benefit. We do not want to create a situation that could lead to any increase in close contact isolations that could affect summer holiday plans for either our students or staff. On the positive side, we have been given the go ahead to make sure that the curriculum is fully accessible to students in September. We will maintain a number of Covid measures, including separate arrangements for each year group for break and lunch etc. and will continue to encourage hand cleansing throughout the day. However, we will be allowing students to move to different classrooms and subject areas throughout the day.

Changes to the School Day

We are intending to make a small change to the end of the school day for next year. To allow us to increase registration time and enable tutors to spend more time with their students, all lesson timings will be pushed back 5 minutes. This means that the school day will end at 2.45pm next year. If you would like to share feedback on this, please contact the school at admin@jesmondparkacademy.org.uk

Best wishes for the remainder of the term.

Yours sincerely



STEVE CAMPBELL
PRINCIPAL