



Teesdale School & Sixth Form

Teesdale School and Sixth Form
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7th September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you and your child have had a pleasant summer. I am writing to tell you how delighted and proud I am to be welcoming all our students back to school, whether they are starting with us in Year 7, re-joining us after the summer break, or choosing to undertake post-16 study with us. It is a privilege to share this educational journey with your children. We especially extend a warm welcome to Year 7s and to you, their parents, and carers, as your child becomes part of the NELT family as a Teesdale student.

I have delivered assemblies to all year groups this week on the subject of working hard and having high aspirations. Thank you for your continuing and valued support with uniform, behaviour, and attitude to learning as we work together to support all our children towards success in their time with us.

The examination results our students were awarded in August were strong at both GCSE and A-level and compared very favourably both nationally and locally. In a year where many schools are reporting that their results were disappointing, we have weathered the storm well here at Teesdale, thanks to the effective partnership of staff, students, parents, and carers.

This year, we will have a focus on extending learning beyond the classroom to help our students to develop even further, both academically, as well as socially and emotionally. Look out for a revamped 'POD' – a free online platform packed with useful resources for students, from knowledge organisers and week-by-week overviews of the learning to interesting and informative links to web pages, video links and podcasts. We are encouraging students to log into their online (EASI) account every night to check for homework and use Office 365 to support them with their learning. If you need any help to access the school's online resources, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help you.

We will be offering an even wider range of lunchtime and after-school activities to extend opportunities for all our students to try something new or to carry on with an activity they enjoyed previously. We welcome suggestions from students and their parents or carers. Please let us know if you have a great idea you'd like to share.

We are offering junior leadership opportunities to Year 10 and 11 students currently (although we hope to involve more students from other year groups in activities such as our Peace Ambassadors programme) and we are expecting to make an announcement very soon on the appointment of our new Head Girl and Head Boy. Keep an eye on our FaceBook page!

There have been some issues with parents being unable to top up their children's accounts to pay for items in our dining hall. These have all now been resolved and we would be grateful if you can make sure your child has enough money on their account to cover their spending. We have improved our school 'meal deal' offer to now include: a hot meal or sandwich/panini, a hot pudding or piece of fruit or biscuit and a bottle of water or carton of juice. This is now charged at £2.70, in line with the rise of the FSM contribution, and continues to provide best value for all students.

I'm sure that you will have heard on the news about the problems in some schools with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete. I would like to reassure you that an initial RAAC survey was undertaken at Teesdale School on December 19th & 20th 2022. A follow-up survey was carried out on April 13th & 14th 2023. No RAAC was found during these surveys.

We have appointed a new Learning Manager for year 8, Mrs Alderson-Heys, who is a former student at Teesdale School and is delighted to be back in the building after teaching in Liverpool for the last few years. Understandably, she already knows the school well and will be a wonderful addition to our pastoral team.

A few important reminders ...

- We will now be opening the school from 8.15am each morning to allow students to purchase breakfast and ensure a more prompt start to the day.
- Parking space is very limited so parents dropping off and picking up children by car must not use the school carpark as it causes issues for school buses.
- Please remember that energy/fizzy drinks are not permitted in school and that **our premises are nut free**.
- If your child is absent, you must contact school every day of the absence including any medical appointments (01833 638166 – **please select option 1**).
- Students may wear one plain stud in each earlobe. No other jewellery is permitted. Students who chose to have their nose pierced in the school holidays will be asked to remove the piercing during schooltime. Our uniform policy can be found on the school website and, if you have any questions about uniform or equipment, or require any further support, please contact us so we can support and advise you. Pre-loved uniform is available from, and may be donated to, The Hub (01833 690150).
- Mobile phones, ear buds and smart watches must not be used in school. If a student chooses to have their mobile phone or smart watch in their bag, it must remain switched off and must not be seen or used during the school day. Should a mobile phone or smart watch be confiscated from a student, it will be kept in the main office and may be collected by your child at the end of the school day.

Finally ... a reminder that, to improve school communication and ensure important messages are not missed, we now have a page on the school website under useful information labelled 'letters to parents'. We will house any school communication here throughout the year for you to refer to.

If you have any questions about this letter or anything else, please contact our school on 01833 638166 or office@teesdaleschool.co.uk, and a member of staff will be happy to help.

Yours faithfully



Miss A Cleckner
Head of School