



Smithdon High School

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Re: JHi/LT

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Dear Parents

As we draw to the end of the school year it is important that you have the information to make arrangements for the new academic year in September.

First, Smithdon High School is planning to open fully for all years in September but should this change we will inform you immediately. I also plan to keep the school as normal as possible to make sure that the children can adjust back into lessons quickly and easily, whilst keeping everybody safe. Please find in the attached guidance how we are responding to the pandemic and the actions we are taking to allow the school to open safely and effectively. Please be aware, however, that this is subject to continuing change as new guidance is released. We will contact you before the start of term to confirm the final guidance.

To say it has been an eventful first year as Headteacher at Smithdon would be a little bit of an understatement to say the least. In the first month we had an Ofsted inspection, which although did not give us the judgement I would have liked and that the school deserved, it certainly recognised the promise the school has to offer.

Some of the weaknesses that Ofsted and some parents observed, I believe I have tackled. Staffing is much more secure, with most of the teachers who were teaching your children this academic year returning again next year. Where we will have a little staff change (with Mr Garrod, Mrs Henderson and Mrs Jackson leaving), these positions have all been filled with new, equally specialist staff. With the appointment of other additional staff to our team, it means Smithdon is not only fully staffed for next year but is ready to continue our improvement journey.

I have also sought to recognise the achievements of our pupils much more this year: many have received postcards home throughout the year; been rewarded at our Awards Assemblies and gained more achievement points than ever before. Although plans for Prize Givings and Speech Days have been forestalled, I plan to make sure they happen as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Like many of the students, I enjoyed the Christmas parties and the Carol Concert immensely at the end of the first term and it was great to see the musical, *Legally Blonde*, performed in the school hall for the first time in many years. Again, when we can, there will be new performances, music concerts and events to allow our pupils to demonstrate their talents. New enterprises which were in the process of being launched this year, such as an end of year Activities Week and Work Experience for Year 10 will now take place in 2021.

The reduced number of children in school has allowed us to complete the ongoing work of reroofing the main school building, kitchens, Maths Block and Gym. It has also meant that we have been able to completely refurbish C Block, so students will be welcomed back to some stunning improvements in Art, Food Technology and ICT. I am also actively working for further significant improvements to the fabric of the school over the course of the next year.

This year has been tough and disrupted but remains fulfilling - and it has been a privilege for me and all the staff to have met with or spoken to almost all parents, along with current and future students over the last 4 weeks. I have been so fortunate to have the support of the staff, the parents and the students, who have all helped Smithdon High School to continue to grow and become a greater part of the community - as it should be. I am confident that, despite the school closure, all of our students remain well prepared for the year ahead and that each and every one of them should be able to taste success.

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Please make sure that you all have a great summer. I look forward to welcoming all of our students back in September for the next steps in their educational journey and an even busier and active year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line.

Mr J Hirst
Headteacher