



Armthorpe Academy

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

24th September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

COVID update

Unfortunately, we have had a few students and staff absent from school with COVID this week. Given the loosening of restrictions this is somewhat inevitable. It is important we do all we can to protect one another and minimise the spread of the virus. Please follow the protocol below:

- Ensure your child self-tests using lateral flow tests twice a week (preferably Sunday and Wednesday). Tests are available in school should you require more.
- Should your child test positive, please inform us as soon as possible ARM-attendance@consilium-at.com.
- Book a PCR test. Your child will need to isolate until the results are returned.
- Inform us of the results. If negative, your child can return to school. If positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days since the first sign of symptoms, or if asymptomatic, the date of the test.
- Once your child is well enough, they should access online learning at home. All work from lessons is uploaded by staff onto Microsoft TEAMS. This is to minimise gaps in your child's learning when they return to school. If you require the loan of IT equipment for the duration of the isolation period, please email your child's Head of Year.

As yet, we have not heard anything about the facilitation of COVID vaccinations for 12-15 years olds, but as soon as we do, we will inform you.

Year 7 GL Testing

Over the next fortnight, now that our Year 7 cohort have settled in, all students will be completing GL assessments. The GL tests are completed independently using a computer and are nothing to worry about; they cannot be revised for as they assess reasoning and the knowledge that students have stored from their learning to date. In the first instance, our students will be completing tests in English, Maths, Science, Reading and PASS – Pupils Attitudes to Self and School. Together the assessments will enable us to:

- Baseline your child and identify hidden potential at transition.
- Track attainment in core subjects throughout Key Stage 3.
- Gauge the attitudes and mindset of your child so you can also identify and address any barriers to learning.

Year 8 and 9 Setting

We have had a couple of enquiries about student groupings from last year, so to dispel any misconceptions, the changes from last year are detailed below. Year 7, 8 and 9 students were not taught in sets last year. There was one higher ability group in each year group that remained the same class in every area of the curriculum; the rest of the cohort were taught in mixed ability groups. We have made significant changes to the timetable this year so that groupings can be more bespoke to individual curriculum areas rather than students being in the same class for every subject. For example, all Year 8 and 9 are now taught English and Maths at the same time (previously they were in two halves). This means it is possible for a child to be in set 1 for English (as this is a subject they excel in), but set 2 or 3 for Maths because they find this a little more difficult and require a greater degree of support. It is important to understand that all groups follow the same curriculum and are taught the same content; what differs is the pace of learning and the extent of support that is required. It is not possible for students to be taught in pure sets for subjects such as history and geography because as a foundation subject not as many teachers are required. In this instance the year group are split in half and the settings are half year group settings (identical to last year) which may appear to be more mixed ability. The reality is when students pick

GCSE options, classes will have a more diverse range of ability beyond the core because students have an element of choice in what they study. Genuine sets, which are fluid, will always remain in core subjects. The timetable we have now gives us much greater flexibility to move students as appropriate each half term based on what they know and remember. Staff teach to the top in each set and scaffold as appropriate to ensure all students are challenged in line with their ability. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Hanquinioux.

Vaping

It appears the latest teenage craze in our community is vaping. Thank you to parents who have contacted me this week who have seen students vaping commuting to and from school. It is not something as yet we have had significant issues with in school, but it is important we work together to nip this in the bud. The vast majority of our students are fabulous. Respect and responsibility are two of our school values; it is heartwarming our students are also eager to inform us about students making poor choices. Put simply, we do not expect to see anyone wearing an Armthorpe uniform smoking either inside or outside of school. E-cigarettes are a banned item in school, and as such, any items brought onto the school site will be confiscated and behaviour consequences applied.

E-cigarettes contain a range of harmful and potentially harmful substances. They are not regarded as safe, especially for children, teenagers and young adults. Research shows that nicotine exposure can have significant negative impacts on brain development. Please support us by speaking to your child about the dangers of vaping. We cannot and will not search children as they enter school, but we need individual parents to work with us to ensure that your child does not bring any banned items into school. Please be vigilant by looking in bags and pockets as it appears e-cigarettes are readily available to teenagers from shops in the community. We will obviously be liaising with the police to inform them of intelligence gathered speaking to our responsible students.

School Photographs

Individual student photographs were taken in school on Thursday. Students have a card with a QR code in their planner. Should you wish to view and purchase the photograph, please follow the instructions on the card.

Celebrating Success

Finally, we have had fantastic attendance at our enrichment activities after school this week. It has been lovely to see students enjoying a range of activities from arts and crafts to music to GCSE revision. If your child has not got involved yet, please encourage them to do so. Our enrichment timetable is detailed in the enrolment pack. Each of our departments shares and celebrates success on our Twitter social media account. Follow us @armthorpeDN3 to celebrate our students' achievements with us.

Have a great weekend.

Kind regards



Claire Robbins
Headteacher