



Friday 4th December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers (& Students),

As we approach the festive period in school, we are reflecting on all the wonderful seasonal events we are sadly not able to hold this year due to our current way of working. However I am pleased to share with you the events that we are still able to enjoy.

Monday 14th December	Senior Awards Virtual Event
Tuesday 15th December	Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 15th December	Non-Uniform Day (Christmas Jumper)
Thursday 17th December	Year 11 - Sixth Form Study Experience Day
Friday 18th December	End of Term – early close at 1.30pm
Start of the Spring term	Monday 4th January 2021. Please note this is not a staff training day.

Christmas lunch will not be quite as extensive as in previous years and it will be the only food service offered on Tuesday 15th December, but we hope it will bring some well deserved festive cheer. On the same day we will hold our 'Christmas Jumper' non-uniform day, when we will raise funds for SleepSafe Selby [LINK](#), a new local charity we were introduced to by our fantastic House Champion Team. We will be asking students to make a small donation to wear their choice of clothing for the day. There is no need however, for students to wear Christmas jumpers; only if they wish. Thank you to those of you who used Parent Pay to make the recent donation for Children in Need. We would encourage you to use this service again if you wish.

As we have done for a number years during December, our students have been donating (in a COVID-19 secure way) to the Wetherby and District Food Bank Hamper Appeal. Thank you for your support of this worthy cause. The decorated shopping trolley in our foyer is filling up.

As a school community this term we have all played our part in keeping the school safe and fully open. This has meant many changes to how we operate. With this in mind, I am sure you will understand why we ask that you ensure, this year, students do not bring cards and gifts for friends or staff into school. We will share this message in school and will ask students and staff to share seasonal wishes virtually, perhaps donating instead to a cause close to their heart.

Year 9 Parents & Students

I rather showed my age yesterday when I referred to Year 9 as 'the 3rd year'. Does anyone else remember when we had 1st/2nd/3rd/4th/5th years in schools? This was in response to the question '*Sir, why do we call it a sixth form?*'

Year 9 students will soon need to make some exciting decisions as we begin the process of selecting option choices, for courses they will study in Year 10 and Year 11, and maybe beyond in the sixth form.

This can be a challenging time for both students and parents, as for the first time they will need to consider what appears on their timetable in September 2021!

One of our core staff values is 'High expectations - no limitations' which translates into us offering a truly massive choice at Key Stage 4, rather than restricting subject options for our superb Year 9 students. This is very unique to Tadcaster Grammar School and our staff really do believe that the needs and aspirations of students should drive our practice in this area.

Our Curriculum Teams have produced some excellent resources to help with the process, all of which can be found on the school website [HERE](#). I would urge parents of Year 9 students to spend some time reviewing these carefully, and discussing the various choices at home.

Mr Dunphy (Assistant Headteacher) (m.dunphy@tgs.starmat.uk) is at your service if you have any queries about this process.

Year 11 Parents and Students - Sixth Form Study Experience Day

We have always regarded our offer at Tadcaster Grammar School as a 7 year experience. All the staff would be delighted to welcome back our Year 11 students into our high performing sixth form in September 2021. Our curriculum offer, outstanding staff and peerless pastoral support ensure all students achieve and are cared for as individuals.

We are excited to be able to offer Year 11 an insight into post 16 provision on Thursday 17th December. Students will be offered an exciting day of sixth form lessons. This will provide students with a great taste of what fantastic opportunities are available to them.

Safety during drop off and pick-up times in school

We are receiving increasing numbers of parents rightly concerned by the potentially dangerous congestion caused by vehicles parked on the roadside at the end of the school day. We are seeking support and guidance from NYCC Highways and will request vehicles are moved if parked on the double yellow lines in front of school.

We are concerned that an accident could occur and some parents have reported near misses. With increased numbers of students also cycling and walking to school we are especially concerned for their safety. We urge adults to drive onto the school site and use the pick up point. There has been a lot of praise for this working more efficiently this year. Thank you for your support with this.

Year 11 & 13 (and any other students taking national exams in 2021) parents, carers and students

Earlier this week, the Department of Education released [GUIDANCE](#) on how the national examinations will take place in summer 2021. I think we can cautiously welcome this development, although the devil will, as always, be in the detail. We will of course keep you up to date as this agenda develops.

Google Classroom/Google Meet Acceptable Use Agreement

If the school is directed to partially close, as part of our continuity of education approach we are planning to deliver a range of interactive online learning experiences through the live function of the Google Learning Platform - Google Meet. **We require that all parents and students have read and signed our Acceptable User Agreement (AUA).**

In addition, parents will be unable to access our virtual parents' evenings without signing the AUA in advance.

Please sign the **Acceptable User Agreement (AUA)** [HERE](#)

Parents' Evenings

Last week saw the first TGS Year 13 'virtual' parents' evening. This went exceptionally well. We are currently experimenting with our approach to these virtual parents' evenings to ensure we give parents the very best service. In particular, we are hoping that the new technologies help us to at least partially overcome the decades-old challenges of these evenings not running to time and parents not being able to book in to see the teachers they want to see. In addition, the on-screen method allows us all a level of confidentiality and opportunity for private speech which being sat in a hall with many hundreds of other adults and students simply cannot meet. Further details to follow. Please remember that **parents will be unable to access our virtual parents' evenings without signing the AUA (see above) in advance.**

Free School Meals

As a school we recognise the enormous impact the pandemic is having on so many families, including the financial strain that may have arisen for some households due to perhaps a job loss as well as the ongoing financial worry and pressure. If you are one of the many households where the income is low, your child may well qualify for Free School Meals. Indeed, since the beginning of lockdown, we have seen a significant rise in successful applications.

If you wish to apply for Free School Meals, you can complete the application form: [Free school meals](#)

In addition to securing free school meals, your child would also become eligible for Pupil Premium funding. This provides school with money that we utilise to support your child with additional educational opportunities - [Pupil premium - GOV.UK](#).

We work closely with our local food banks, who continue to offer vital support at this very difficult time.

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

As a school we strive to offer additional educational opportunities to all students and do not want home financial difficulties to be a barrier. We are here to support. Please feel free to contact our Pupil Premium lead in school, Mrs Hubbard (v.hubbard@tgs.starmat.uk) or your child's House Leader to discuss these matters further.

Points of contact in school

	Year Leader	Pastoral Leader
Year 7 01937 837618 or extension: 218	Ms C Hodgson c.hodgson@tgs.starmat.uk	Mr D Bass d.bass@tgs.starmat.uk
Year 8 01937 837656 or extension: 256	Ms C Kenny c.kenny@tgs.starmat.uk	Ms J Hodgson j.hodgson@tgs.starmat.uk
Year 9 01937 837625 or extension: 225	Ms C Yewman c.yewman@tgs.starmat.uk	Temporarily not in school
Year 10 01937 837615 or extension: 315	Ms D Naylor d.naylor@tgs.starmat.uk	Mr J Fox j.fox@tgs.starmat.uk
Year 11 01937 837677 or extension: 277	Mr A Punt Temporarily not in school	Ms E Proctor e.proctor@tgs.starmat.uk

	Director	Pastoral Leader
Sixth Form	Ms R Knapton r.knapton@tgs.starmat.uk 01937 837623 or extension: 223	Ms J Gadsby j.gadsby@tgs.starmat.uk 01937 837635 or extension: 235

General contact with the school

Please ring Reception on: 01937 833466

Or use the following contact form: <https://tgs.starmat.uk/contact/>

Please also watch out for our school newsletter which will be published next week.

Kind regards,

Mr A Parkinson
Headteacher

How parents and carers can continue to contribute to ensuring we are able to keep the school fully open. **5 key points:**

1. If any member of a household displays COVID 19 symptoms the whole household needs to self isolate pending the results of a test. Students should not attend school while waiting for test results for any member of their household.

2. Notifying school of a positive Covid-19 test result for a TGS student

During school hours Monday-Friday 8.00 am - 4.30 pm	Outside of school hours - including weekends and holidays
Ring School Reception on either: 01937 833466 Extension 308 or 301	Go to the school website at: https://tgs.starmat.uk/ On the homepage, click on the sliding tile (see below) and complete the notification form.  A message will then be sent to the duty staff. Please expect a phone call shortly after submitting your form. The notification form is also available HERE

3. Face coverings

Students should have their own face covering(s) on their person at all times when in school.

4. COVID-19-related student absence

A reminder of what action to take with Covid-19-related absence can be found on our website [here](#).

Can I also ask that if your child is absent with a Covid-19 related illness or issue, and especially if they are taken for a test, that you confirm the outcome of the test and the return date with our Attendance Officer (Ms L. Oxe) attendance@tgs.starmat.uk before they return to school.

5. Contact details

If you have recently changed your email address, or believe the school is not using your correct email address, please contact a.haddock@tgs.starmat.uk as a priority.
