

Headteacher: Mr D. Whales | Chair of Governors: Mr A. Brown

30<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Dear parents/carers

I am writing to you in preparation for the upcoming academic year.

Firstly, as a reminder, the start dates for this year:

- **Monday 2nd September** – Full staff training day (no students in school)
- **Tuesday 3rd September** – Open to years: 7, 11, and P16 only (not 8,9,10)
- **Wednesday 4th September** - Open to all years (term begins)

**Please note that during the first week only, the school day will finish at 1.15 pm from Tuesday to Friday, except for Year 7 who will be in for full days (finishing at 3.15 pm).** Further details can be read in the letter I sent out in July [here](#).

The six-week break can disrupt routines for all of us, so we have designed the start of the term to help your children adjust. During the first week, we will explicitly teach core elements of school routines and expectations so that we are clear about what is expected of us all.

Over the past 18 months, we have experienced rapid improvement in all aspects of our school. We have worked diligently to implement new routines and expectations, which have positively impacted the day-to-day experience for the entire school community. I am now delighted to report that these changes have also dramatically impacted on this year's exam results. The 2024 results are some of the best in the school's history with almost a 10% improvement across the board. In terms of school accountability measures, we have seen an improvement in every single one of them!

For Year 11 and Post 16, having witnessed the students collect their results this year, the recipe for success remains the same. Simply put, those students who worked hard, had good attendance, attended revision sessions, and studied, did very well.

Last year there were lots of changes launched in September, this year the plan is to continue to work to further improve. There are no major changes, we want to continue to build what we are calling the 'KSA way', this means ensuring we operate in a school-based around 'kindness and safety', more specifically we want to make sure we develop your children to be *Ready, Responsible, Respectful and Resilient*. This first week we will be teaching them what we mean by these words and how we believe they translate into every single Ken Stimpson student, every day.

To really make a difference we need the support of parents at home – the readiness part starts with you. The basics like arriving at school on time (they can be in school from 8.30 am, the gates shut at 8.43 am), in the correct school uniform, and with the right equipment. As I often say, parents spend a lot of money on uniforms and equipment, we, therefore, believe students should be wearing it and using it! The second biggest part you can play is making sure your child's attendance is high – there is increasing evidence that high attendance gives a real boost to exams, with absolute certainty we do know that low attendance dramatically negatively impacts outcomes.

As I say, last year's focus was very much on making sure the basics were in place; things like behaviour and attitudes in lessons. That will of course remain. This year the plans include a major drive on character development. Those students who exhibit the KSA way (the 4 Rs) will almost certainly go on to be successful not only with their exams but as people as they navigate life's challenges.

As we begin the Autumn term there will be regular letters updating you on specific events and other school improvement plans. In addition, if you are interested in coming into school and seeing for yourself what the school in action looks like, and meeting with me, you are all very welcome to join me on one of the Open Mornings which will begin in early October, more details will follow.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this. I wish you all the very best with getting your children up early and ready for school at the start of September; for many that will be like entering a new time zone!

We will be here to support and challenge your children to be the very best that they can be.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Whales', written in a cursive style.

**Mr Whales**  
**Headteacher**