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Chief Executive/Head Teacher: Mr D Judson, BEd, NPQH

14 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I informed pupils last week that I will remain as Head Teacher at the school for at least the academic year 2021/22; Directors and Governors will begin the process of seeking a candidate to lead the school in the Autumn Term 2021. It is their belief that by advertising the post at this time that we will be in a strong position to attract a field of high calibre candidates for a September 2022 start. However, I will remain in post until the time that the Governors and Directors are convinced that they have secured the right person to take the school forward in the long term.

As we come to the end of the academic year and start to make plans for our return in September, details of which can be found at the end of my introduction, I felt that it was prudent to use my introductory section of this letter reflect on the last 16 months. As we know this unprecedented period in all our lives has brought with it significant disruption and sadly on occasion significant heartache and devastation for our staff and the community that we proudly serve. However, in partnership with our colleagues in the public sector, most notably the heroes and heroines of the NHS our response to this seismic challenge has been immense – and as such we should be very proud of what we have achieved at Hurworth.

This short reflection of achievement is testimony to the courage, determination, passion, enthusiasm and professionalism of Hurworth staff over this period:

- In March 2020, we moved to Remote Education within days of being told to limit attendance, whilst continuing to educate those children who most needed our help and the children of key workers.
- We fed the most vulnerable, cared about their welfare and watched out for their safety.
- We opened the school more widely in June 2020, despite public concern, and built parental confidence and trust.
- At extremely short notice, we put in place processes for teachers to assess pupils as part of a different approach to awarding grades due to exams being cancelled.
- In September 2020 as the new academic year began, we achieved extraordinary levels of attendance demonstrating parents/carers trust in us.
- We taught intensively throughout the Autumn Term, assessed gaps in knowledge and planned interventions.
- Then on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, after just one day at school, attendance was again restricted; at this point we moved immediately to Remote Education while still making provision in our schools for those who most needed our support.
- We knew more about Remote Education this time, so immediately parents/carers reported that the quality and quantity of Remote Education exceeded their expectations.
- We implemented Covid-19 testing for pupils at the school.



And after responding and addressing these challenges we have seen a successful return for all year groups on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. As with other returns, this one was carefully planned; whilst the logistics of managing this was daunting, operational plans were put in place to ensure that this went as safely and efficiently as possible.

As I have already alluded to that whilst our Remote Education offer has been excellent there is no substitute for children being in school and now that we have welcomed pupils back fully, for what we all hope is the final time, we must not underestimate the challenges that we face, but I truly believe that we will meet these head on.

And on that note, we will see the final step in the relaxation of restrictions with the end of “bubble life” when we return in September.

#### **4R Core Values**

At Hurworth our aim is to provide all pupils with an educational experience driven by the desire to "Achieve Excellence with Care", whilst supporting all our pupils to become the very best version of themselves.

Our values are based on the four key expectations within the school:

- Relationships
- Resilience
- Respect
- Responsibility

We have called these our 4R Core Values. These core values are underpinned by five identified areas that together provide an overarching framework for all areas of school life:

- Opportunities
- Success
- Learning
- Expectations
- Character

In September, the 4Rs will continue to be embedded throughout the school. This will help clarify what the expectations are both staff and pupils, to provide support and ensure consistency across the school, and to create a unified identity for everyone at Hurworth.

Our core values allow our pupils to be **responsible** and **resilient** lifelong learners who strive for excellence by developing positive **relationships** and learning to **respect** themselves and those around them.

The warm and welcoming family feel to the school is an important part of its identity and we have high **expectations** of our pupils in all aspects of school life. We believe that the development of **character** is an essential part of **learning** and we will provide **opportunities** for all our pupils to experience **success**.

The highest standards are expected from our pupils and we firmly believe that a strong parent/carer-school partnership is essential as we work together to meet the needs of each child, provide them with the very best education possible and celebrate their successes.

## **Standards – including Equipment/Uniform/Jewellery**

At Hurworth we aim to support all our pupils to become the very best version of themselves. To ensure that all expectations and standards are clear we have created a Values Charter that links directly with the 4R Core Values.

The Values Charter can be found on the school website, in your starter packs or can be requested via contacting the school.

### **Uniform**

I am pleased to say that pupil's uniform has been first class since we returned from the latest period of lockdown and as part of maintaining high standards we will be checking pupils' uniform on the first day back after the summer holidays. If your child's uniform does not meet the required standard then they will be spoken to over the course of the first day and you will be contacted in order for us to highlight our concerns to you.

**Please note pupils will return to school in September in Summer uniform** which comprises of Maroon polo shirt with school logo, optional school jumper, plain black trousers (Leggings, ski pants, skin-tight trousers, shorts or  $\frac{3}{4}$  trousers are not permitted). They will remain in this uniform until October half term, when they return to school following this break they will move to the "winter uniform" of white shirt and school clip-on tie in the appropriate house colour.

It is important to note that many teenage and young person fashion shops sell trousers which contravene these rules in their 'school' section; these are unacceptable. Hoodies are not permitted in school and will be confiscated from your child if they are worn to school.

Black shoes or low heeled 'Chelsea' style boots – Shoes/boots should give adequate cover of the foot for health and safety reasons. Trainers and plimsol shoes are not acceptable and neither are leisure boots such as Dr Martens, Rockport or Ugg boots. Shoes/boots with multi-coloured soles or uppers are unacceptable. Soles of shoes/boots must be plain black and not have a coloured or white line through them. Shoes/boots must be plain black and not have stripes or logos of any kind visible or have decorative bars/buckles/bows or similar on them.

If your child has issues with their uniform, they may be asked to borrow parts of the correct type of uniform from the office. If they refuse to do so, then a sanction will be put in place.

### **Jewellery**

One pair of stud earrings worn in the lobe of the ear is acceptable however other earrings and jewellery, including rings of any type are not permitted; watches are permitted.

If your child does wear jewellery that contravenes school rules they will have this confiscated and it will need to be collected at the end of the day. If your child becomes a 'repeat offender' in this area, they will be sanctioned and their parent/guardian will be asked to collect the jewellery from school rather than it been given to the child at the end of the day.

### **Make up/ Nails/Eyelashes/Hair**

- Acrylic or Gel nails are not permitted to be worn in school, as well as any coloured nail polish. Pupils will be sanctioned if they come to school with acrylic/gel nails, parents/guardians will be asked to organise an appointment to remove nails.
- False eyelashes are also not permitted in school, if they are worn to school your child will be asked to remove them immediately.
- Minimalistic make up to be worn, if too much make up is applied your child will be asked to remove this to reduce the amount worn.

- No 'extreme' hair colours or styles e.g. lines and/or patterns are acceptable. Pupils will be sanctioned if they come to school with any of the above.

## Equipment

A school bag large enough to carry an A4 file must be carried every day. Pupils must attend school with the necessary school equipment on each and every school day – pen, pencil, rubber, calculator, reading book, practical equipment where necessary e.g. PE kit, ingredients etc.

## Rewards

Rewarding positive academic and citizenship characteristics is an integral part of the school's aim in 'achieving excellence with care'. Staff, pupils and parents/carers can track the allocation of green clicks via ClassCharts.

There is a vast range of behaviours for which pupils can earn green clicks within the classroom and during unstructured time e.g. excellent enthusiasm, good quality ILT, good collaborative work. In addition to these we are introducing a category for each of our core values; **Relationships, Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**.

Pupils will be kept up to date with rewards via weekly assemblies. Form tutors will also explore individual ClassCharts percentages and track how many green clicks have been awarded during morning registration. All pupils have their own ClassCharts login to monitor their performance and all parents/carers also have a code to access the system.

If you would like support with accessing your child's ClassCharts then please contact Mrs Clark by calling the main school phone number 01325 720424, or emailing [lck@hurworth.swiftacademies.org.uk](mailto:lck@hurworth.swiftacademies.org.uk).

Throughout the academic year, weekly prizes are awarded to celebrate the pupils with the most green clicks in each form. Each month staff also award Pupil of the Month (Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for each teacher in each department) which earns the pupils additional green clicks. Pupils can exchange the green clicks within the ClassCharts shop. End of term rewards are dependent on the number of green clicks achieved within that term; with virtual and physical postcards being sent home along with our top pupils being rewarded with Amazon vouchers.

This past year has been particularly difficult in terms of limitations for school trips and different types of rewards. We are enthused by the school councils suggestions, and shall continue to refine our rewards offering to provide the best opportunities for our pupils.

## Sanction framework adjustments – including after school detentions

We expect all pupils who attend Hurworth to uphold our school ethos of 'Excellence with Care' and to use good manners at all times.

We would like to take this opportunity to share with you our classroom expectations, which is part of our 4Rs Values Charter. Our classroom expectations are in place to ensure the school provides a positive and settled atmosphere for all. We would appreciate your support in reminding your child of these:

- Always follow the instructions of the member of staff.
- Stand behind your chairs in silence at the start of lessons.
- Get out all your equipment (including planner and water bottle) in silence.
- Write any ILT/homework tasks into planners.
- Equipment must not be shared.
- You will not be allowed to go to the toilet in lessons unless you have a toilet pass.
- Bags must be placed on the floor and coats on the back of chairs.

- Pupils must sit in their allocated seats on the seating plan which will be shown on ClassCharts.
- When completing individual work, pupils should be working in silence; pupils should raise their hands and wait before asking or answering questions.
- Pupils are not permitted to engage in any conversation that does not centre around subject content.
- No answering back e.g.: Staff “get on with your work”, Pupil “I am”, Staff “stop talking”, Pupil “I wasn’t”.
- Pupils must adhere to hygiene regulations.
- Pupils should be stood behind chairs at the end of each lesson.

Our expectations continue beyond the classroom and includes pupils’ journey to and from school and we would expect all pupils to adhere to the following:

- Ensure the safety of themselves and others and respect all property both in school and in the local area.
- Queue in an orderly manner whilst waiting to go into the canteen.
- Placing all litter in rubbish bins.
- During breaks and lunchtimes pupils must stay in their dedicated areas of the yard/field.
- Safe play while playing ball games during unstructured times.
- Smoking and/or vaping are strictly prohibited in all areas of the school and travelling to and from school.
- Mobile phones must be handed in to the space between the office and the main hall prior to registration – they are then stored securely over the course of the day and are available to collect at the end of the day. If your child is caught with their phone over the course of the day, it will be confiscated from them; if a pupil is caught with their phone they will receive an after-school detention.

If our expectations are not met by pupils then sanctions such as loss of unstructured time, after-school detentions, internal and external exclusions will be put into place. After-school detentions will last for an hour after school and will be scheduled on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening. Parents and carers will need to make arrangements to ensure pupils can get home safely after the detention. We will always try to use the extra time to good effect for any catch-up work if needed, as well as a chance to reflect on conduct, discuss and reinforce school expectations and ensure pupils understand exactly what is expected moving forward. Should your child receive a sanction for not meeting any of the expectations above then you will be contacted by school to inform you of the arrangements which are being put in place.

To ensure that our overarching behaviours are met and to ensure we are being consistent across all of the school population, we use the ClassCharts system to record any positive and negative behaviour that is displayed by pupils inside and outside of lessons. Parents/carers and pupils have individual logins to ClassCharts so that progress can be viewed, please contact the school if you require your login details.

Moving forward pupils will be focussing on starting afresh in September, ensuring they continue to build on the already high standard. Pupils are rewarded for their citizenship and we value their contributions to school life in this area as much as their academic achievements.

### **Reading focus**

One of our key focuses for the next academic year is promoting a love of reading for all of our pupils. The importance of reading for children cannot be underestimated. Reading for pleasure can benefit a child’s education, social and cognitive development, their wellbeing, and their mental health.

Therefore, we would love for you to encourage your child to read over the summer. We understand that it can be hard to motivate a reluctant reader, so below are some tips to help you get your child enthused about reading.

1. Make books part of your family life – always have books around so that you and your children are ready to read whenever there's a chance. This doesn't have to mean physical books, there are many great online alternatives such as the online library service, where you can download books for free to your computer or the App 'BorrowBox' on your phone or tablet.
2. Visit: <https://www2.darlington.gov.uk/web/arena/welcome> for more information.
3. Match their interests – Help them find the right book. If your child is not sure what type of book they would like to read next, they can take this literary quiz to point them in the right direction.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/quizzes/which-classic-childrens-book-should-you-read>
5. All reading is good – Don't discount nonfiction, comics, graphic novels, magazines and leaflets. Reading is reading and it is all good.

***The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more things that you learn, the more places you will go. Dr Seuss***

### **Assessment protocols – Years 7 to 9 from September 2021**

We wrote to you earlier this term with regard to the progress review we have held this term and we have provided with you an overview of the topics studied this term by pupils in each subject area, alongside the areas of knowledge that your child had secured and areas they still needed to develop. We also provided details of how our Assessment Protocols for Key Stage 3 were being updated to ensure that all our pupils are able to access a knowledge rich curriculum, be aware of what Non-Negotiable Knowledge they were expected to secure each term, each year and by the end of Key Stage 3. When reporting to parents on progress we will use the Non-Negotiable Knowledge expectations for pupils and measure progress against the following three criteria:

- **Secure** - a pupil is consistently working in line with expectations with very few gaps in their knowledge and skills
- **Developing** - a pupil is working mainly in line with expectations with some gaps in their knowledge and skills
- **Emerging** – a pupil is working towards expectations but may have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills

We will also continue to publish ClassCharts data at each progress review so that you can compare your child's performance against their class/year group.

### **Target Setting and Mentoring Year 9 into Year 10**

We wrote to you earlier this term with regard to the progress review we have held this term and have provided with you an overview of the topics studied this term by pupils in each subject area, alongside the areas of knowledge that your child had secured and areas they still needed to work on moving from Year 9 into Year 10. We will be setting targets for the end of Year 11 in September and will be in contact with you early in the Autumn Term to provide you with targets for your child as well as with details of who will work with your child as their mentor, and support them throughout their studies throughout Key Stage 4.



## **Target Setting and Mentoring Year 10 into Year 11**

We have provided you with an overview of the areas of knowledge that your child had secured and areas they still needed to work on moving from year 10 into Year 11. We have collated Projected Grades for all pupils in all subjects they study and are currently in the process of verifying these grades, both internally and using external validation software.

Projected Grades will be published to pupils and parents once the data has been through rigorous checks. Mentor meetings have been scheduled to take place early in the Autumn Term to ensure this information can be shared with pupils, parents and carers as quickly as possible so that we can set out the aspirations, expectations and support available to your child in as they move through Year 11 into the Summer Examination season in May 2022.

## **Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Citizenship (PSHCE) Education**

Our PSHCE curriculum aims to develop skills and attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, risk-management, team working and critical thinking whilst giving pupils opportunities to develop their understanding of democracy and justice, rights and responsibilities and identities and diversity.

To embrace the challenges of creating a happy and successful adult life, pupils need knowledge that will enable them to make informed decisions about their wellbeing, health and relationships and to build their self-efficacy. Pupils can also put this knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts. Everyone faces difficult situations in their lives. PSHCE can support young people to develop resilience, to know how and when to ask for help, and to know where to access support.

The PSHCE department's aims are therefore to create:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident and autonomous individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

Our PSHCE curriculum also covers the statutory content for relationships, sex and health education as set by the DFE.

Our PSHCE Policy and departmental learning journey can be found on the school website. If you have any questions about the PSHCE curriculum then please contact Mrs Douglass (Head of Personal Development).

## **Mental Health Support**

This year has been very challenging for our pupils and their families and we wanted to let you know about the mental health support that is available for you and your children over the summer holidays and where you can access that support.

Throughout the holidays you can continue to access our mental health blog, where you will find links to mental health support services including Kooth.

Kooth.com is a free, online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform for young people aged 11-18 years in Darlington and the Tees Valley. Alongside their counselling offer, they are running a range of virtual workshops for parents and pupils including support for self-care, maintaining friendships over the break and mindfulness. There are workshops for pupils and parents. Pupils can sign up via kooth.com and parents have the opportunity to attend a session providing a brief overview of Kooth and what the service can offer young people. This session is on Wednesday

28<sup>th</sup> July at 4pm and can be signed up for here: <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/introduction-to-kooth-parentscarers-tickets-161767483899>

Darlington Mind are also running several support services. These include:

### **Drop in Sessions: 1pm- 3pm Mondays.**

Come and chat with other young people in the area for fun chats, and discussions on wellbeing and mental health. Facilitated by Ian or Matt at Darlington Mind.

### **Peer Mentor Scheme**

The main workshop runs 10am-12pm every Monday, with follow-up workshops on Tuesday 10am-12pm (starting 27th July).

### **Mental Health Workshops: 1pm-2pm and 2-3pm (Wednesdays)**

- Session 1 (21st July): **Mental Health Awareness**
- Session 2 (28th July): **Self-esteem and Resilience**
- Session 3 (4th August): **Body Image**
- Session 4 (11th August): **Exam Anxiety**
- Session 5 (18th August): **Self-Harm Awareness**
- Session 6 (25th August): **Mindfulness**

All sessions are virtual and free and you can arrange your attendance by emailing:

[Ian.Neale@darlingtonmind.com](mailto:Ian.Neale@darlingtonmind.com)

[Matthew.hoss@darlingtonmind.com](mailto:Matthew.hoss@darlingtonmind.com)

Our school mental health blog can be found here: <http://mentalhealth.swiftacademies.org.uk/>

### **School Transport – Applications & September**

We are still accepting applications for School Transport for September, if you have not already submitted an application, please could you do this as soon as possible via the link below. Please note you will need to reapply for a place each year. If you are currently entitled to or think you should be receiving statutory transport, please contact the School Transport team at Darlington Borough Council on [schooltraveltransport@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:schooltraveltransport@darlington.gov.uk)

### **[School Transport Applications September 21](#)**

We will be confirming bus places by the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and will send bus passes and timetables out by the end of August, in time for the start of the new school year.

### **Free School Meals**

For pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, parents/carers will receive a FSM voucher to the value of £84.00 by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This voucher relates to the period 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and will be issued as part of the local authorities Covid Winter Grant Scheme. This will be issued via Wonde and will be delivered to parents/carers by the usual method.

### **Social Media**

Follow @HurworthSchool on either Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to keep up to date with important news, events and celebrate achievement.



## Careers

Information will be sent to the parents and carers of Year 11 at the beginning of the next academic year regarding an information evening for post 16 choices.

Full details of the careers offer for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 is available on the Swift Academies careers website.

<https://careers.swiftacademies.org.uk/>

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a restful, peaceful and happy summer and I look forward to welcoming the pupils back to the school in September.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D Judson', written over a horizontal line.

Mr D Judson  
Head Teacher