

25 June 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we near the end of this unprecedented school year, I want to once again welcome you all to our Sperrin Community and I am looking forward to meeting you in person in the new term.

In order to prepare your child for transfer to Sperrin in August, I want to provide you with more detailed information and guidance that I hope will enable a smooth transition to Year 8.

The Parent Handbook

I have enclosed a copy of the Parent Handbook. Parents are advised to read the handbook and discuss the contents with their child. The handbook is designed to provide important information on school policy, procedures and the normal day to day operations of the school.

Arrangements for Cognitive Ability Tests

Every Year 8 pupil will complete Cognitive Ability tests in August. Your child will attend school on either Monday 17th or Tuesday 18 August: 9.00am - 12 noon, to complete the tests. A personalized letter will be sent to your home. I want to reassure both pupils and parents, there is no prior learning or preparation required for these assessments. Children are not required to wear uniform on this day but must bring their own headphones and a snack for break.

Year 8 Induction Day, Monday 24 August 2020

All new Year 8 pupils will complete an induction session before starting formal lessons. The children are invited to school on Monday 24th August in two groups. Your child will be in **Group 2** and will attend from **1.00pm to 3.00pm**. Parents are asked to drop their child at the front entrance at 12.50 and collect them again from the same point at 3.00pm. Pupils are to attend school in full uniform on this induction day. The session will help your child settle into school and will involve meeting their form teacher, fellow form group, and a tour of the school.

Virtual School Tour

To aid the transition process, we have designed a virtual tour of the school campus. This can be viewed on the school Website or Facebook page.

Teaching and Learning Arrangements for Term One

Given the fluid nature of government advice regarding school restart, Sperrin College have firm plans in place for a number of possible scenarios which are based on advice from The Department of Education, The Public Health Agency and the Chief Medical Officer. The plans include a 'blended approach' to learning, with one week of face to face contact teaching and one- week remote online learning or normal full teaching for all pupils. I will write to all parents in early August to confirm the specific operational and teaching arrangements. These will be determined by medical and Departmental advice available in August.

Health and Safety Measures, Covid -19 Secure Hygiene ‘The New Normal’

Regardless of the teaching and learning model the school adopts in the new term, all children and staff at Sperrin College will be required to adhere to strict hygiene measures, ensuring the safety of all members of our school community. I have enclosed a leaflet with the key safety measures which I would ask you to read with your child. Additional video guides will be posted on the school website which can be viewed to help everyone familiarise themselves with the procedures.

Parent Pay and School Charges

From August 2020, the school will be introducing a new way for parents to pay for school meals and other charges. It is hoped that this ‘cashless system’ will provide additional protection from infection. I have enclosed a letter regarding the new system, known as ‘Parent Pay’. The school will require prior parental consent, when received, your individual account will be activated. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are not running practical activities in the new term in Home Economics or Design and Technology, therefore, we are not collecting the practical subject fee at the moment, however, when practical activities resume, I will write to inform you when these payments will be required. There are other school charges which are outlined in the Parent Pay letter enclosed. Parents are advised to pay the school fees before 24th August, either by cheque or using your Parent Pay account.

Parent App and other Communication Systems

Sperrin College uses a range of different communication platforms including the ‘Parent App’, text service and e-mail. A parental e-mail address is required to activate the Parent App. When consent is given, an e-mail will be forwarded to your account with a guide on how to download the Parent App. Parents can view their child’s timetable, attendance records and academic reports on the Parent App.

If you have any queries, the school will be reopened on the 3rd August 2020, however, more information can be found on the school website and Facebook page.

I am really looking forward to meeting you in August and I want to wish you a restful and safe summer.

Yours Sincerely

B A Heron
Principal
B.Ed. (Hons)PQH(NI)M.Ed.