

Our Ref: IDW/LCD  
Date: 22 July 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Headteacher of George Stephenson High School. The students, staff, parents and the wider community have made me very welcome indeed. Our school has a really positive ethos, with very strong pastoral and academic guidance and a real emphasis on learning in everything we do. I genuinely believe the support, care and welfare of our students is second to none. This school is and will always be a fully inclusive school which puts the students at the very centre of all that it does. We want it to be a school that is always a happy, safe and enjoyable place to be. Further to that we want the school to be at the very heart of the local community and to become the school of choice of all who live here. We are constantly striving to both improve our academic results and thus enhance the reputation of the school and I am very keen to involve and work closely with all of our parents in this.

I would like to ensure that everyone has the following information in preparation for the new school term in September.

#### **Trust Status**

The Governing Body agreed at a meeting on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July to acquire a Trust and become part of a borough-wide North Tyneside Learning Trust. The alteration will change our school category from Community to Foundation with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010. We genuinely feel this will support our approach to school improvement and will further benefit the lives and life chances of children, young people and their families with a focus on raising standards and improving wellbeing. I would also like to make parents aware that several of our Governors' terms of office will end shortly and we will be writing to you with further details regarding nominations in September.

#### **Uniform**

The new school uniform is now available to purchase through Emblematic Ltd, who are located on the North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton. They are able to offer you more flexibility in after-school and weekend opening hours and also offer telephone and online ordering. Please note that uniform is no longer available to purchase from school. The overall cost of the uniform will work out to be cheaper for parents as it will allow you to buy plain white school shirts from anywhere and the only items of clothing specific to the school will be the compulsory school uniform. A uniform list has recently been sent to parents and further details are on our website (in particular, please may we remind you that all students are required to wear plain black school shoes). As advised, we will be expecting all students new to the school to be wearing the new uniform from September 2010 and we hope most of our students will also be keen to wear the new uniform from September. There will however be a "changeover" period for the first term where students will still be allowed to wear the old uniform. We will therefore expect all students to be wearing the new uniform from January 2011. We have made an exception to this rule for current Year 10 students (who will be in Year 11 next year) and, although we would like as many as possible to wear the new uniform, we are prepared to allow them to continue to wear the old uniform until they leave at the end of the academic year.

#### **Public Examinations**

Our students who have been sitting public exams during May and June will be able to collect their results from school at the following times:

- Year 12 and 13 results (A levels and AS levels): **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010 at 10.00 a.m.** in the Sixth Form Study area.
- Year 11 (GCSE) results: **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010 at 10.00 a.m.** in the Sixth Form Study area. (Please note that Year 10 results will be posted to students).

Those students who are intending to return to school to join the Sixth Form in September will also be asked to complete enrolment forms on that day so that timetables may be prepared for them. However, any student who is unable to attend on the day may enrol at the beginning of September.

### **School Meals**

Our catering facilities have been a huge success this year, gaining good local press publicity for the school. There are now exciting new menus, changed on a regular basis, a greater range of options to choose from, a new pricing structure, which is simpler and more affordable for students, and new seating areas so that students may enjoy their lunch break with their friends. November saw the opening of Giorgio's Café which is proving really popular with the students. The Detroit Diner continues to be full every lunchtime. The whole school dining experience has dramatically changed this year and will continue to do so. We have not yet moved back to a cashless system (though we still plan to in the future) so in September school meals will have to be paid for, on a daily basis, with cash. Students who are eligible for free schools meals will have money allocated to their accounts on a daily basis.

I also feel that the decision to keep older students on site, while perhaps not so popular with them, is helping the reputation of the school within the community. We still therefore intend that from September 2010 **all** students, apart from the Sixth Form, will stay on site for lunch. We have taken this decision in order to ensure the safety and well being of all of our students and to respect the wishes of our parents and community neighbours.

### **New Academic Year**

The new academic year begins for all students on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 8.40 a.m.

At the beginning of next term you will receive an Information Booklet, which will include school expectations and diary dates for the forthcoming year. All such information and school news can also be found on our website at **[www.gshs.org.uk](http://www.gshs.org.uk)**.

Please note that the main school telephone number will be changing over the holiday period and our new number will be **0191 216 1115**. The student absence number will be discontinued from September and all student absences should be reported using the main school number. You are able to start using the new number with immediate effect.

### **Open Evening 2010**

I would like to inform you and your child of our Open Evening on **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010**, and invite all students, parents, carers and members of the local community to visit the school to meet me, the staff and students to discover more about our school. The evening will run from **5.00 p.m.** until **8.00 p.m.** **Please feel free to come at any time.** There will be a rolling programme of introductory talks from myself and the opportunity to visit displays, demonstrations and interactive activities across the whole school. Refreshments will be available throughout the evening, together with further information about the school.

Our school continues to improve all the time and I hope you share our pride in this year's achievements. We will continue to improve by working together, consistently having high expectations of all, sticking to our values and sense of purpose and remembering that everything we do is only worth doing if it has a positive impact on our learners. This will help us become a community of successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Thank you for your continuing support and I hope you have a very enjoyable summer holiday.

Yours sincerely



IAN WILKINSON  
Headteacher