



SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Engaging minds, broadening horizons

Seaham High School
Station Road
Seaham
Co. Durham
SR7 0BH

01915161600

Head Teacher: Mr G.W Lumsdon

Deputy Head: Mr J.E Henderson

14.1.2019

Dear Parent/ Carer,

May I first wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. I am writing to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of Seaham High School. Whilst I am new to the role of Headteacher, I am not new to Seaham High School having joined as Deputy Headteacher in 2011. I have been teaching since 1996 and have worked in three schools along the East Durham Coast. I began teaching as a History teacher at Easington Community School as it was then and then moved on to High Tunstall College of Science in Hartlepool in 2003.

When I arrived at Seaham, my main role was to be responsible for the Curriculum and Timetable, however that soon expanded to encompass working with designers and architects on the new build here at Seaham High. In 2015, I also took on responsibility for Culture, which primarily has focused on student behaviour and attitudes to learning. As an aspiring Headteacher for a number of years, I was waiting for a vacancy to arise in Seaham. I am so proud to have the opportunity to lead Seaham High in the years to come.

Coming from an estate in Houghton-le-Spring, I know the importance of education in transforming young people's lives. My father was a fitter in a factory and my mother was a school cleaner before giving up work to look after my sister and myself. Both of my parents instilled in me the value of education from an early age, supporting, encouraging and challenging me to do my best. I believe that this partnership between parents, school and student is vital for young people to succeed - only by working together can students achieve their full potential.

Many would describe me as a traditionalist and I have three clear values that I regard as vitally important to function as a civilised society.

Firstly, kindness. I expect everyone at Seaham High School to be kind towards themselves, each other and the environment. This means treating each other with respect, courtesy and having consideration for other people's feelings and opinions.

Secondly, Integrity. I expect everyone at Seaham High School to be honest, to choose to do the right thing and have morals that are acceptable in a modern society.

Thirdly, Pride. I expect everyone at Seaham High School to be proud of themselves, their school and their local community. They should wear their uniform with pride and be proud of their behaviour, attitude and attendance.



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I also expect staff at Seaham High School to have high standards and expectations of students. I expect them to challenge those students whose behaviour, attitude, attendance or uniform fall below our expected standards and I make no apologies for doing so. By sending your child to Seaham School, you agree to abide by our standards and expectations and I expect support from parents as we strive to work with you and your child to help them achieve their potential. There may be times you disagree with our actions, procedures or policies. In such cases please contact us, talk us through your worries and concerns. We promise to listen and promise to have the best interests of your child, other students and the wider school at heart. I have three children myself currently aged 13, 11 and 8- I know how rewarding, frustrating, challenging and difficult being a parent can be but it is absolutely vital that we all work together as a school, parent and student to achieve the very best.

My main priority this year is to ensure that the progress figures of current Year 11 improve significantly on the progress figures of last year's cohort. Results in 2018 were unusual, attainment in virtually every subject rose, in some cases dramatically so. Yet our Progress 8 figure went down. This means that whilst many students achieved Grade 4 and Grade 5, the progress they made against their targets was not as good as it should be. Every child has targets set in all subjects based on how they performed in English and Maths SATS at the end of Year 6. If a child came in with a Level 5 or a high-scaled score, then they are likely to be targeted to achieve Grades 7-9 at GCSE. Not enough of our students last year made this level of progress and therefore we were well below what we should have been in terms of progress.

This has to be resolved and although much work has been completed there are more strategies currently being implemented. Forecasts are that we should see an improvement this year but a significant concern for the school is "settling". This is where students are content with achieving a Grade 5 or a Merit in a subject and do not see the need to push themselves harder to achieve their target grade, especially if they are not studying that particular subject at A level or post 16 provision. This is something we have to try and combat, as achieving higher grades unlocks so many doors later in life. For example, a student may settle for a Grade 5 in Maths thinking they are not intending to study it at A level, but then may find when they make their University application two years later the course they want to apply for requires a Grade 7 at GCSE Maths. Combatting this notion of "settling" is a difficult one for the school, as we have to maintain a careful balancing act so we do not put too much pressure on students at what can be a particularly testing time.

Another priority over the coming years is to develop our Careers and Guidance information. We have made significant strides in this area in recent years and invested heavily and will continue to do so. This will help prepare our students for the next stage of their life. If you have any questions regarding Careers information, please contact Mr. Reid at the school.



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Other challenges on the horizon are the Government's academy agenda, which we will need to address in the near future. There is also the further expansion in our numbers to cope with. The school is either nearing capacity or oversubscribed in Years 7, 8 and 9. We expect next year's Year 7 to be oversubscribed, which means we need to give further thought to the logistics of the school day. Planning permission for the Garden Village has been granted and a feasibility study into building an extension to the school already been completed.

Changes are coming but they will be gradual rather than rushed. I am a firm believer in evolution rather than revolution and whilst there is much work to be done, Seaham High School is a good school with a strong foundation on which to move forward. My appointment has coincided with the election of a new Chair of Governors following the retirement of Mr. David Wilkinson. Mr. Lee Brown who is a Parent Governor was elected as Chair in November and is also determined to see all students achieve their full potential.

And on a final note, we are increasingly concerned at the number of vehicles parking on double yellow lines outside of the school at 3:05pm to pick students up. This is making an already busy road more congested and therefore more dangerous to the students who are leaving school. We have had a number of concerns expressed by members of the public and have passed these onto Durham police in addition to once again raising this as a concern ourselves. If you arrive before 3:00pm you are welcome to park in the school car park so that you can collect your child safely and without causing problems to other road users, however the gates do not re-open again until 3:15pm.

These are exciting times at Seaham High School and I am delighted to be part of it. I look forward to working with you and your children over the coming years.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Lumsdon
Head Teacher