



HEANOR GATE SCIENCE COLLEGE

“Develop all learners to achieve their full potential”
“Create a culture of aspiration”

Principal: **Mr S Huntington**



26 April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

It feels strange but nice to be writing a letter to you which isn't focused purely around COVID-19. Whilst we are well aware that the pandemic is not yet over, we can all start to look forward knowing that brighter days are ahead of us.

As restrictions begin to ease and we all reflect on the past 12 months, we must look to the future with optimism. As a school we feel we have navigated the pandemic as well as possible and our position throughout the various challenges epitomises where we have come as a school in the last 5 years.

We have secured our status as a good school, both in the eyes of Ofsted but more importantly our school community. In correspondence back in February we notified you of plans for all Spencer Academy Trust schools to be rebranded so that all schools are easily identified as being part of the Spencer family of schools. The consultation is now complete and, as of Wednesday 1 September 2021, Heanor Gate Science College will be renamed Heanor Gate Spencer Academy. We have been working hard behind the scenes to establish a new school badge which to the naked eye bears some resemblance to our previous colours/logo and at the heart of it is reference to the history and tradition of 'the Heanor gate'.



HEANOR GATE SPENCER ACADEMY

We have been very mindful that the name change should not bring any financial implications to existing parents and, with this in mind, new uniforms will only be mandatory for the incoming Year 6 cohort. For all other year groups transition to the new uniform can be done when existing current uniform items need to be replaced in the coming years. We are still awaiting the sample PE kit but we thought we would share the new branded uniform with you.



As we move into a new era as Heanor Gate Spencer Academy, our vision now is to make sure that our school goes beyond good, to succeed in giving the children in this area the very best education possible. That of course includes the best examination results, but also means the best opportunities, access to excellent facilities and the best advice and guidance to succeed in life. Our first whole staff face-to-face meeting in over a year took place last week and highlighted just how much passion there is amongst the staff body to take this school to the next level.

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In the press you will have heard politicians scaremonger that our children's generation will 'lose out' as a result of the pandemic, or that our children have months of summer gloom where they must 'catch up' their lost learning. We genuinely believe both viewpoints are completely untrue and feel that with the right leadership our students will continue to flourish in the months and years ahead.

That's why we are delighted to inform you that as of Monday 7 June, our school will be '**Stepping Up**' as part of our '**Step Up, Not Catch Up**' initiative.

After May half term, Year 11 and Year 13's centre assessed grades will have been reported and we have been strategically planning to maximise the impact we can have on the whole school community after this point. Rather than wait until September, all of our students will '**Step Up**' and move into the next year of their school life, enjoying a really challenging final 7 weeks of learning. New classes will have their teacher for the 2021-22 academic year and make real strides towards their curriculum aims. We will return to subject specific teaching venues and students will once again be able to cook in a food room, paint in an art room, conduct an experiment in a science lab and so on. Extra-curricular activities will restart, students will have access to outdoor spaces at lunchtimes and educational visits can start to be planned once again.

As part of this we will, of course, continue to follow government guidelines around hand sanitising, social distancing and COVID-19 testing.

For Year 11 students who are applying to sixth form, Year 12 study will begin on Monday 14 June. This means that in a year where learning has been disrupted, giving our students this time will really help to secure any knowledge gaps that may exist in GCSE content and then allow students to really get to grips with the demands of their chosen courses at Post 16.

For Year 11 students who have chosen not to return to our sixth form, a bespoke package of support has been planned and will encompass all of the careers guidance and skills development required to move onto their next intended destination. Year 13 will have a similar bespoke support package designed to help them progress to university, apprenticeship or work place. The final day of face-to-face teaching will take place for both these sets of students on Friday 28 May, but both may be invited on site for face to face support as part of their support packages.

These plans will also afford us the opportunity to extend our transition opportunities for our incoming Year 6 cohorts, from Monday 28 June, our new Year 7 students will enjoy 3 weeks of transition activities to help them familiarise themselves with the academy in advance of September.

I hope as a parent/carer you appreciate that this is a one-off year with an entirely unique set of circumstances. We have designed this initiative as a set of solutions to help our young people succeed. There will be no plans to make this logistical adjustment in the future but feel that it is what our students deserve in light of the situation we are faced with. By ensuring complete focus in the final half term it will facilitate students and staff being able to have a proper summer break and return in September already ahead of traditional starting points.

Students will receive an assembly during the week commencing Monday 3 May to outline exactly what implications the 'Step Up' initiative will mean for them and their particular year group. In the meantime, if you have any specific questions then please feel free to contact your child's Achievement Leader.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Huntington
Executive Principal



Mr M Jones
Senior Vice Principal