



**ASPIRE**

We endeavour to achieve and aspire to be successful

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Executive Headteacher Mr M Bowler Headteacher Ms F Beach

12<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear all,

### **Change to the school name**

Following the recent consultation regarding the change of school name we are delighted to inform you that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 our school, formerly known as Astley Sports College, will be named: **Rayner Stephens High School**, in commemoration of Joseph Rayner Stephens, a local 19<sup>th</sup> Century reformer and educationalist (See brief biography on the reverse of this page).

In total four new names were considered and discussed by leaders at the school. Detailed discussions considered the relative merits of each one carefully. Through this process it became clear that there was a consensus from those who responded to the consultation to change the name of the school. We also listened to the student voice who made it clear that although becoming an academy, they preferred to remain as a High School in our formal name. We also all agreed that it is right for Astley Sports Village to continue operating under the name with which it has become so successful.

We understand that for some of our community, including some of our students, this change will take some getting used to, but we firmly believe that it is the right time to make this change. Our school is undergoing significant 'root and branch' change and as a new academy changing the name will allow us to forge a new identity as a place of learning. We believe that naming the school after a local historical figure of such importance will give a sense of tradition to our 'new' school from the outset.

The name Rayner Stephens, whilst sounding traditional, is very distinctive, unique and importantly for us, local. It represents a significant point of difference with our current name and will definitely support the change of culture we are defining. The opportunities to reinforce clear rituals and routines within school are fully supported by this name change. We will also seek to utilise the name to full effect in the curriculum and beyond. We will look to develop local history curriculum studies, local geography units, enrichment visits etc. We will use the life of Stephens to demonstrate our ASPIRE core values and make sure that it informs who we are as a school community. Stephens was a great local man, who worked tirelessly on behalf of our community, he is definitely worthy of remembrance.

### **Change to school uniform**

Alongside the change of name and all the other exciting new developments at our school, we require a new identity for our academy, therefore we have carried out a consultation around uniform. Our key aim has been to ensure our uniform remains smart and professional whilst also being cost effective. **As we said in our original letter we will not require any changes for current students, until such time as you replace uniform, or from September 2018 onwards.**

Following the consultation, we have decided to keep the school blazer, but adopt a change of colour to match the new school colours. We have also decided to make the wearing of the school jumper compulsory. The new uniform will consist of a maroon blazer with the school logo, a mid grey v neck jumper, and mid grey trousers or pleated skirt. Boys will have a white shirt with a set collar with a top button and conventional tie, replacing the clip-on tie previously used at the school. In the new uniform, girls will have an open neck collar and no tie. Year 11 students

have also voted to have a different tie to the rest of the school to represent that they are our most senior year group.



**Our new Year 7 who start in September 2017 will be the first to be expected to wear our new school uniform.** All other year groups can wear the new uniform from September 2017 if they wish, or parents can change to the new school uniform at any point throughout the year when their child's uniform needs replacing. All students will be expected to be in the new school uniform from September 2018.

The school suppliers of uniform continue to be:  
Kidstop – 49 Market Street, Hyde, 0161 3684500  
Debonair – Debonair - 82 Old St, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7JT  
MCS Store - 32 Market St, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6ER

### **Joseph Rayner Stephens (1805 -1879)**

Rayner Stephens was a local 19th Century reformer and educationalist, he is a Tameside figure deserving of this important commemoration. During his life Stephens worked as the champion working people in our local area. He was a man of ideas always guided by his deep and strongly held values. He had strong impact locally leading resistance to unfair working practices and poor working conditions.

Stephens' first employment was as a school teacher He later became a preacher and in 1832 was appointed to Ashton-under-Lyne. Alongside other famous reformers of the day, Stephens argued for the 10-hour bill, this was to shorten the hours of labour in cotton Mills to 10 hours per day rather than the customary 15 hours and he opposed the 'Poor Law' which forced children into factories.

Later, Stephens became involved in the Chartist political movement which demanded a charter of rights and economic reform. His Chartist speeches quite famous, he travelled nationally attracting audiences of up to twenty thousand people. At the height of his influence local magistrates ordered his arrest for attending and speaking at

an unlawful meeting at Hyde in November 1838. He was found guilty and was jailed in Chester Castle for eighteen months. Nevertheless, he stayed true to his beliefs and continued his work upon his release and through until his final days.

Amongst his later achievements he founded the Ashton Chronicle in 1848 and opened a People's School for the poor in Stalybridge. In 1857 also opened locally the People's School for Adult Education. He died in February 1879 and is buried in St. John's Church, Dukinfield. A blue plaque to commemorate Joseph Rayner Stephens is sited on Stalybridge Town Hall and there is a monument to commemorate Stephens' life in Stamford Park.



Joseph Rayner Stephens monument in Stamford Park and plaque at Stalybridge Town Hall

We are very excited about these changes and we will write to you later in the term to provide you with further information on how we will be celebrating the opening of Rayner Stephens High School,

Yours sincerely

Jane Barker  
Chair of Governors

Matthew Bowler  
Executive Headteacher

Fay Beach  
Headteacher