

Nottingham Free School

Family Newsletter March 2021



Dear Parents, Carers, Guardians & Students,

I hope that this newsletter once again finds you and your family and friends safe and well. As I write, we are making the final preparations for our students' return to school, and we cannot wait. On top of the challenges presented by COVID-19, you will now know that we have also been coping with the impact of a serious cyber-attack on our IT infrastructure. I am relieved to report that while 'normal' service is likely to be some months away, we are on track to recover relatively unscathed. However, the threat of a further attack is a very real concern, and so we will be asking students to support our recovery by paying careful attention to our IT rules and expectations when they return.

A return to COVID-19 control measures

Our students' return to school should be relatively straight-forward, as the vast majority of our COVID-19 control measures remain unchanged from the autumn term. The changes that we are making are part of the national effort to keep schools open, by introducing asymptomatic testing for staff and students, and asking students to wear mask in lessons until Easter.

Preventing COVID-19 from entering NFS

Our first priority is still to do all we can to avoid anyone coming into school whilst they are infectious. This means everyone staying at home if they or a member of their household develops one or more of the key symptoms: a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a change in their sense of taste or smell.

The lateral flow tests should then help identify anyone who is infectious, but not showing symptoms. I would like to thank everyone who has already given their consent for their child to be tested, and also reassure those who have genuine reasons for asking that their child is not tested. Unfortunately, the recent cyber-attack has meant that we have lost our records of consent, so we will have to rely on the students knowing whether they are going to take the tests in school.

Once we have completed three rounds of tests in school, we will begin distributing home test kits to our students who should by then be confident in their use.

Controlling the spread of the virus

The reality is that we cannot hope to eliminate the virus entirely from our school community, so we will continue to implement our other control measures regarding "hands, face, space" and "catch it, kill it, bin it". The only change here is the recommendation that students wear face masks in lessons until Easter. We will be asking our students to follow this rule, but we appreciate that there may be times when they need to ask for permission for a short break. This will be at the discretion of the teacher, and I will explain this to students when they return.

Examination grades 2021

Ofqual have now provided schools with some initial information regarding Teacher Assessed Grades for students in Years 11 and 13 this summer. However, we will not receive subject level information until Easter. After Easter we will explain our final arrangements to students, parents, carers and guardians. In the meantime, our message is still to urge everyone to do their best, and we will do our very best to ensure none of our students are disadvantaged by the cancellation of exams.

Catching up on lost learning

I would like to finish by hopefully giving everyone some reassurance regarding the impact of students missing school over the last twelve months. Closing our doors to students has been devastating for everyone concerned. Many children, not just those at NFS, have missed out academically, personally and socially. However, we will not be welcoming our students back into face-to-face education by telling them that they are 'behind'. The reality is that none of us ever stop learning, and so we will be viewing the current situation as a challenging part of a longer journey. At NFS we will be making sensible, realistic plans to ensure that our students enjoy the very best choices and chances in life. The students themselves need to continue to focus on working hard, giving their very best every day, and being kind to everyone around them, both at home and in school.

Mark Watts

Head of School

General Notices

As a school, we subscribe to The Day which is an excellent news resource, adapted especially for students. There are articles on a variety of subjects and topics so please do take a look by following this link

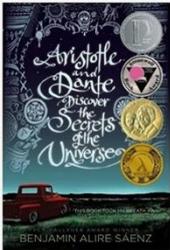
WORLD
**BOOK
DAY**
4 MARCH 2021

World Book Day 2021

World Book Day 2021 was on Thursday 4 March and we are sending out with this bulletin a dedicated newsletter to all parent/carers and students that gives tips on how to find books to read or listen to whilst libraries and book shops are shut, as well as other resources and activities to encourage reading. It also has a link to your student's free book token to print off, which can be used at all participating shops.

This month we are launching the 'Read the World' challenge. Each week, book suggestions from different countries will be updated on the Nottingham Free School's website, Instagram and Twitter page. Our aim is to encourage students to explore new authors outside the traditional canon and to widen their world view. For each country there will be an option for 'YA fiction' and for our 'Mature Readers.' World maps will be uploaded onto Teams, or downloaded [here](#) for students to fill in and track how many authors they can read from different countries.

Our March Books of the Month are two books from Mexico to launch our Read the World challenge:



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

A coming-of-age story about two Mexican-American teenagers as they struggle with their identity, relationships and school.

Winner of the Stonewall Book Award



MATURE READERS

Like Water for Chocolate by Laura Esquivel

Tita is forbidden to marry Pedro, and instead has to look after her mother while he marries her older sister. A magical realism story that is centred around food and love.



Year Group information/key dates	
Year Group	
7	<p>Y7 Parents' Evening will be taking place on Wednesday 17th March. Please see Miss Wilson's email regarding information for how to book appointments for your child's parents evening.</p> <p>Each week, there is a weekly bulletin shared to the Y7 teams channel which involves notices, news articles, a focus for the week and weekly challenges. The Y7's have responded really well to the weekly challenges so well done for all your entries for these challenges.</p>
8	<p>Students should have received an email from Unifrog – this is safe and will be used to research future options and careers. Y8 Parents' Evening will be taking place on Thursday 22nd April – further information about this will be sent out at a later date.</p>
9	<p>All Y9 students have now had the KS4 curriculum guide e-mailed home so please take some time to read through this together. Parents' evening is coming up soon so you will be able to ask subject staff any questions you may have then.</p>
10	<p>Thank you to all parents/carers who were able to attend parents evening last week and for persevering with our technical issues. For those parents who have contacted Miss Cockayne she will provide feedback from your child's subject teachers in the coming weeks.</p>
11	<p>With just over nine school weeks left for our Year 11s, we are overjoyed to welcome the students back into the building this week. Furthermore, our teachers are delighted to be able to finish delivering their courses and helping our children achieve their potential. We have provisionally said that all year 11 lessons will finish on Friday 28 May, and until this date our teachers are aiming to gain evidence for grades that best reflect our students' hard work. Teachers may ask students to do some additional work during the Easter break, or after May half-term, to support this process. Your child's teachers will contact you directly if this support is necessary. On a lighter note, we are beginning to plan our leavers' assembly and prom! If national restrictions are relaxed as planned, we will let you know details of these events over the coming weeks.</p>
12	<p>This week is National Careers Week – there are a lot of activities and information available for students at www.nationalcareersweek.com Students have also been given links on Unifrog to a range of information – this is in their lockers.</p>
13	<p>This week is National Careers Week – there are a lot of activities and information available for students at www.nationalcareersweek.com Whether or not university is the next step, this is well worth a look.</p>

Subject messages/news

Valentine's Bake Off-2021

Years 7 to 9 had the opportunity to take part in the Bake-off over February half term. We had an amazing 56 entries and some amazing bakes and meals were created. The students should be incredibly proud of themselves. All entrants will receive a certificate when they return to school. The winners in each year category will also receive a prize. All entrants can be viewed on a display board by the main staircase. Here are just a few examples of the brilliant work produced.

Ms Read



Detentions - We are reintroducing R40 detentions. Should your child receive one, you will be notified.

Weekly PSHE lessons – tutors have been delivering PHSE lessons since we started back in January. We have provided sessions on online safety with a focus on evaluating content that is viewed. Extremism and radicalisation with a focus on what might be considered an extremist viewpoint and how to support someone who they are concerned about. Mental health has been discussed and revisiting signs and support for students especially during this lockdown. In the upcoming weeks, we will be looking at Internet Safer Day (online safety) and providing an achievement assembly. All resources which have been delivered this half term are available on the PSHE section of the website for you to view and discuss with your child.

Comic Relief – Friday 19th March is a non-uniform day

Careers

National Careers week - This week is National Careers week. There are many opportunities to watch talks and take part in activities on-line – please look at: <https://nationalcareersweek.com/> and the attached list.

Unifrog - All students are now signed up to the careers platform Unifrog, which gives a range of information on careers, courses and opportunities. KS3 students (years 7,8,9) will be receiving an onboarding email in the next few days which will allow access to the site. KS4 and KS5 students are already signed up with their school email address. They can use this to reset forgotten passwords.

Year 9 options career research – attached is a page of useful websites to help year 9s and their parents choose options.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding concerns

If you have any safeguarding concerns regarding your child (for example, self-harming, mental health, medical etc.) then as parents the following sites/numbers in 'important contacts' below may be helpful during this difficult time. We would also like to direct you to our safeguarding section on our website which provides you with information on mental health, online safety and safeguarding. As parents you are still able to email key staff at Nottingham Free School who you have been liaising with. We have listed their email and telephone contacts in the box below.

Message from PC Iain Bulloch – Nottingham Free School's School Police Liaison Officer:

Electric Scooters that are not hired through the Nottingham Council scheme are deemed illegal. E Scooters are classed as a mechanically propelled vehicle and they come under the Road Traffic Act and must have insurance.

No companies in the UK will insure them and anyone caught riding E Scooters (other than the rented ones (which you have to be over 16 to ride) could receive a fine of up to £300 and points on a Driving Licence. The Scooter could also be seized for having no insurance for which there is a fee to recover it. You can still receive points on a Driving Licence even if you are under 17 and don't currently have a licence.

Nottinghamshire Police will be running Days of Action where we will be looking at stopping and seizing scooters where appropriate.

Online Safety Parent Support

With most resources being online and requiring access to specific websites, children are required to be online for most of the day. Additionally, some parents are required to go to work leaving children on their own. CEOP (child exploitation online protection) have provided parent resources and activities which are useful to use with your children. Please email kgray@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk or seyers@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk if you have any concerns.

Extremism and Radicalisation

With students isolating more and working remotely, we have all become more reliant on communicating online. Unfortunately, whilst rare, there are negative influencers and online groomers who use the internet, social media and online gaming to spread their extreme ideas, which children can be exposed to. Some of these ideas may be considered radical or extreme and when a person starts to support or be involved in them, this is called radicalisation. As parents/carers, it is important that you understand the possible signs of extreme views and how to access support when you are worried. The following services are available:

NSPCC:

The NSPCC is providing parents and carers online support regarding extreme views and knowing when something can become dangerous. The link below takes you straight to NSPCC and support in recognising signs of radicalisation and how to access support.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>

Lets Talk:

Offers support for parents on PREVENT, spotting the signs and understand Channel. See link below:

<https://www.ltai.info/staying-safe-online/>

<https://www.ltai.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Parent-Guardian-Online-Radicalisation-Information-and-Support-V.2.pdf>

Online Safety – CEOP advice

CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection) continue to provide parent home activity packs. The focus for this week is gaming. Please go to the following website: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>. If you have any concerns please contact Kay Gray for further support.

In addition, CEOP are providing newsletters: see below



Online safety at home: parents and carers newsletter

25th January 2021

With the majority of young people now learning from home, they will be spending more time online doing their school work, playing games or socialising. Technology is hugely valuable for education, as well as a way to keep in touch with friends and family. However it's important we all consider how we can help keep young people safer online during this lockdown, and always. Here's some information about what your child may enjoy online and what you can do to help keep them safer:

Online gaming

Online games are social activities, and most have features that allow young people to chat with others whilst they play.

For information about the positives of gaming, the risks of 'in-game chat' and measures you can take to help protect your child, watch this short video: [In-game chat: a guide for parents and carers](#) .

Sharing images and videos

Young people often share images or 'selfies' and there is potential for some of those to be nude or nearly nude images.

Young people share 'nudes' for a number of different reasons, and some situations are more risky than others. For information about the contexts in which images are shared and how best to respond, take a look at [nude selfies: a parents guide](#).

More information?

Thinkuknow is the education programme from the National Crime Agency's Child Protection Command CEOP (NCA-CEOP). Their aim is to protect children and young people from sexual abuse online.

For more information, advice and guidance, visit their [parents website](#) and download their [home activity worksheets](#) for fun, online safety activities to do with your family.

Steps you can take to help keep your child safer online

Have an ongoing conversation: Continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use, and what they like and don't like and any concerns about being online. Discuss with them when to unfollow, block or report. For help starting this conversation, read [having a conversation with your child](#).

Make sure they know where to go for support: Remind your child they can always speak to you or an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried or upset. Remind them that they won't be in trouble at that you are there to help. For a breakdown of report services, visit: [Supporting your child with reporting unwanted content online](#)

Make sure they know about NCA CEOP: Young people can report a concern about grooming or sexual abuse to NCA CEOP at <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> and get support from a specialist Child Protection Advisor.

For families: #OnlineSafetyAtHome packs

Our [#OnlineSafetyAtHome packs](#) are still available for you to share with parents and carers to use at home. These include fun activities, conversation starters and practical tips on topics such as:

- [Sharing images](#)
- [Watching videos](#)
- [Live streaming](#)
- [Cyber security](#) (developed in partnership with the [National Cyber Security Centre](#))

CAMHS support

The school's CAMHS support worker has informed us of support for our community during this difficult period.

The contact details are:

If you are a young person or parent needing urgent support outside of office hours (after 5pm) then please contact the CAMHS crisis team Monday-Friday 8am to 8pm on 01158440560 or after 8pm 01159691300. If calling weekends or bank holidays then call 01158440560 between 10am and 6pm

Please pass this on to your child so that they are able to access this support.

Library Services

We have been able to open the library to Year 7 students at lunchtime so they can now visit the library to change their books, do homework and use the computers.

Other students can order books through the virtual library system which all students were emailed about in October.

SEND

Nottingham City are offering parent/carer training in a range of topics which we can access as a school. These can run as group sessions in each topic if we get enough interest. If you feel one or more of these topics would be useful, please email jhaman@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk and we will look at arranging these online sessions next term.

Parent/Carer Training and Wellbeing Workshops

Available now from the
Nottingham City Educational Psychology Service

We are now offering the following online sessions for parents and carers:

- **Emotion Coaching**
- **Building Resilience and Wellbeing**
- **Loss, Change and Emotions**
- **Managing Anxiety**
- **Supporting Learning at Home**



Each session costs just one traded session, as part of your current EPS package

What do the sessions involve?

All sessions will include guidance and information around the focus topic, as well as a Q&A session.

Parents and carers will have the opportunity for supportive discussions, guided by Educational Psychologists from the Nottingham City Team.

All of the above sessions are available now on request

If you have any questions about this training or would like to book a parent support session, contact your Educational Psychologist or email eps.admin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Important contacts

Children's and Families Direct (social services) – 0115 8764800 candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

KOOTH (online counselling) – KOOTH.com

BASE 51 (counselling) – info@base51.org.uk www.base51.org.uk

SHARP (support for self-harming) - 0115 9158900 Camhs.Sharp@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Harmless (support for self-harming) – www.harmless.org.uk

WAIS (domestic violence support) - http://www.wais.org.uk/viewpage.php?page_id=16

Thinkuknow (online safety) – www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Young minds – www.youngminds.org.uk

Samaritans – www.samaritans.org

B-eat (eating disorders) – www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

LGBT – www.youngstonewall.org.uk

Key staff email contacts:

kgray@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – senior leader for student welfare and designated safeguarding lead.

Jharnan@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – SENDCO and designated safeguarding officer.

sseymour@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – student welfare/attendance officer + designated safeguarding officer.

pcleveley@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – P16 lead and designated safeguarding officer

jtomasevic@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Senior Leader for achievement and Head of Y11

abritten@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Senior Leader for curriculum and Head of English

rfarnie@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Senior Leader for curriculum and Head of Maths

ltervit@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Senior Leader for curriculum and Head of Spanish

lwilson@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of Year 7

rgrant@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of Year 8

sdetton@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of Year 9

scockayne@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of Year 10