



Dear Students, Parents, Carers and members of our community,

Welcome to the last half term of the academic year. I wrote to you just before the break to give you an update on our plans for June and July. Once again, almost before the ink was dry, the landscape moved once again, with the date for the start of new arrangements in secondary schools being moved back to the 15th June. This will mean that our telephone calls to the families of students in Years 10 and 12 will now be spread out across this week and next week.

Preparing our school for more students and staff

This week, for the first time since NFS 'closed' on 20th March, all staff returned for some training and induction regarding the next phase in our response to COVID-19, albeit in three groups on three separate days in order to limit the flow of people through the building. We have now started the preparations for not only the planned series of one-to-one meetings for Years 10 and 12, but also what will come after that.

Remote learning is going to continue for some time

As you can imagine, as a school we are desperate to welcome all of our students back into school. Unfortunately, even when that does happen, it is highly likely that students will only attend for part of a week. That means students will have to continue to complete significant amounts of their learning at home. We are well aware that after ten weeks of remote learning, some students might be starting to flag a little. Therefore, I would encourage everyone to review a few of the basic elements of learning at home, in order to make the most of the final weeks of this term.

A weekly routine is essential

One of the enormous benefits of remote learning is the flexibility it gives students to shape their days and weeks around their individual preferences and other responsibilities. For example, your children might have particular days when they help to look after younger siblings. I would encourage everyone to consider a routine across a week, rather than trying to make every day the same. We know that some students have been able to continue following their school timetable, while others have preferred focussing on a smaller number of subjects a day, but spending longer on each. The important thing is to write it down and stick to it. So, if they haven't done so already, ask your child to set out their weekly routine for you, and go through it with them to make sure they are managing to keep up with all of their subjects. Please remember that students can ask their teachers and tutors for advice and support should they need it.

Creating the right environment

I have a suspicion that some of our students will have been trying to persuade parents and carers that 'working' on the couch in their pyjamas, with the TV on in the background, is best because it is 'comfortable'. We know that with many parents working from home as well, space can be difficult to find. However, even small changes can improve students' focus and ironically help them to get through their work faster so they can actually enjoy more leisure time. Getting dressed as if they were going to work with someone else and working at a table are hopefully easy tweaks that will improve students' productivity.

**A message
from the
Head of
School**

Concentrate on quality, rather than quantity

It is better for students to complete fewer pieces of work and do them well, than to rush through a number of tasks at the expense of quality. We have reorganised work packs in an attempt to make it easier for students to organise themselves, but where there are a number of tasks within a pack they should choose one piece to finish properly first, before moving on to the next piece. Their teachers will understand!

Read every day

As simple as it sounds, reading every day is a great way for students to keep their academic progress on track. Please encourage students to challenge themselves by reading books or articles that expand their knowledge on a particular subject, or at the very least their vocabulary.

Rewards help everyone!

A reward can be anything from adding an extra ten minutes on to a break time, to control of the remote in the evening, to ingredients for a home-baking session! The best rewards are the ones they can share with the rest of the household!

So, students, if you have set yourselves a sensible weekly routine and you are sticking to it; if you are producing some quality work; if you are reading every day; well done! When we finally get back to 'normal', those of you who have developed and maintained good study habits will definitely benefit in the long run!

Finally, and as always, I hope you are all well and managing to stay safe and I am still looking forward to meeting you in person. Please read on for messages from other members of staff.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Watts

Head of School

Safeguarding: important information for parents, carers & students

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.

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.

Safeguarding information continued:

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.

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.

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

jtomasevic@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – senior leader for KS4 achievement

abritten@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – senior leader for year 8 achievement

rfarnie@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – senior leader for year 7 achievement

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

sdetton@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of year 8&9

scockayne@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Head of year 10&11

dmachin@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk – Achievement Co-ordinator for year 10&11

Keeping Up with Education

Reading

Please continue to send your reading recommendations to Miss Grant on rgrant@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk.

We will be publishing our second video of these very soon.

An analysis of more than 9.9 million students found that only those students who read **15 minutes or more per day made accelerated reading gains**. Students who had less than 15 minutes of daily engaged reading time saw below-average reading gains, putting them at risk of falling behind their peers. Students who read between just over a half-hour and an hour per day saw the greatest gains of all.

Notices for Each Year Group

Year Group	
Year 7	<p>The focus for year 7 this half term is Willing to Learn. Most year 7's are completing their work on time and I would like this to continue this term. You are all working really hard and the motivation and resilience you are showing is very impressive. Please make sure to complete your first work pack by Friday 5th June. The next work pack will be available on Monday 8th June on the school website and your teachers will have also set deadlines on Teams. Start your week off by planning your next few weeks of work, making sure you have time to complete all your deadlines. Please make sure to look at the developmental tasks on the work pack as well. If there is a particular subject that you are struggling with, try one of these tasks to help you with your progress. If you need any help with any of your work, please make sure to communicate this via email or Teams.</p> <p>Before half term, I sent out an achievement assembly which showed how hard you have been working and featured awards set by teachers and be kind nominations which were nominated by your peers. I am very proud to share these achievements to you all and some of you have been doing some amazing things whilst you have been at home. I hope that you continue to do this. Well done to all of you that won an award in the achievement assembly!</p>
Year 8	<p>This terms focus is self-motivation. Miss Detton has spoken to a large proportion of students and their parents/carers over the past term and this is an ongoing challenge for a lot of students. In the weekly bulletin 1st June, Miss Detton outlined some top tips to keep you motivated during lockdown. Remember the 1st cycle for work is due Friday 5th June and from Monday 8th June, new work will be set for you on Microsoft Teams. Please remember if you are unsure about anything you can email your subject teachers directly, your tutor or head of year, or call school and we will call you back. Finally, well done to everyone who featured in the Achievement Assembly last half term and thank you everyone for sharing your stories outside of school. Some of you have been doing some amazing things to help support your friends, family and communities and I am incredibly proud to share your achievements with the rest of the school.</p>
Year 9	<p>Similar to year 8, Miss Detton has been in contact with a large proportion of the cohort now and has identified some students are becoming de-motivated as the weeks continue. Please refer to Miss Detton's year 9 weekly bulletin 1st June for some top tips on motivation. Remember your first work deadline is Friday 5th June and new work will be set Monday 8th June. Please remember if you are unsure about anything you can email your subject teachers directly, your tutor or head of year, or call school and we will call you back. Finally, well done to everyone who featured in the year 9 Achievement Assembly last half term and thank you everyone for sharing your stories outside of school. Some of you have been doing some amazing things to help support your friends, family and communities and I am incredibly proud to share your achievements with the rest of the school.</p>
Year 10	<p>Sincere thanks to all parents and carers for their support and understanding during this time of uncertainty. A few key messages for you at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A polite reminder that students will be continuing with remote learning as we start the new half term, with assignments set on Microsoft Teams each Monday and a deadline of 12pm on Friday. If students are unsure about any of the work set they can email or chat on Teams with their subject teacher. We appreciate how challenging it is for students to remain motivated during the school closure, but putting in the hours at home will ensure they are better prepared for lessons when the school re-opens. • The one to one achievement mentoring will now start in school the week commencing 15 June. The mentoring is a stepped programme to review current progress, set targets, talk about post 16 destinations and support with any issues students may be facing. • The week commencing 8 June will see achievement mentors making calls to households to establish whether it is appropriate and safe for your child to attend these sessions. This mentoring will replace the usual contact from your child's tutor. Weekly contact will continue for those children with key workers. • Your child's tutor will be in contact at the start of July to see how things are going and whether they can offer any additional support.

Notices for Each Year Group continued

Year 11

Welcome back Year 11 to the last few weeks of Year 11! I hope you had a lovely half term and made the most of the sunshine. There will be no more work set after the 19th June and I would like to say a massive thank you to all students who have completed the bridging tasks ready for Post-16. Your child's tutor will be in touch by the end of June to check in with them on their wellbeing, Post-16 destinations and to say their goodbyes. Please get in touch if you are still unsure about your child's Post-16 destination.

Sixth Form

Welcome back to all students! Hopefully you enjoyed last week's half term break and you feel refreshed and ready for the final half term of Year 12.

This is a half term with many challenges. Mock exams are almost upon us (taking place in the week starting 15th June); students should make sure that they are revising in preparation for these so that we have an accurate picture of where they are for when we are finally back in the classroom.

On the topic of being back in sixth form, over the course of the next week tutors will be contacting home to discuss our initial steps in this process. Our intention is to start making appointments for students in Year 12 to come in to sixth form once a week – meetings which should start in the week after the mocks (week beginning 22nd June). These meetings will, of course, depend on individual circumstances and will be discussed in detail in next week's phone calls. In preparation for these, it would be very helpful if students could start identifying areas of study that they have found difficult to focus discussions on next steps.

Longer term, students should be exploring their intentions for life after sixth form, whether this be employment, apprenticeships or university. A fantastic place to start this is Unifrog, a website with a wealth of information and helpful videos on the process. If university is the intention, many institutions are holding virtual open days which, while not as exciting as the real thing, are good for getting an insight into individual universities and what they offer. Any students who want to discuss next steps should email tutors or Mr Cleveley directly.

These are tricky times but these phone calls and, hopefully, meetings represent our first steps in getting back to something like normality. We're really looking forward to seeing all the students again.

Top Tips for Families

If you have a child on the SEND register who is struggling to adjust to this new way of working then please have a read...

Firstly, a big well done for all those parents and students who have battled on with school work in these difficult circumstances. It has been a struggle for many families when their children find school work a challenge even with support from staff. I would hope by now that any issues with accessing work or the type of work available have been solved but please still talk to tutors, subject staff and SEN key workers if there are any problems. I can be contacted on jharnan@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk and am happy to liaise with staff and any outside agencies on your behalf if necessary.

At some point we will be making the transition from home to school learning and this may prove difficult for many students. The following link has been shared by the City Autism Team but is relevant to many children who may feel anxious about coming back to school and is being used as a resource for parents and teachers.

<https://www.schudio.tv/courses/the-big-transitions-for-autistic-and-send-pupils-after-lockdown>

Any thoughts or issues raised by this please let me know as we all wish for a smooth transition to school whenever that is made possible.