

# THE NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL



Founded 1714

Headmistress  
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Dear Parents

In my summer 2010 letter I mentioned that as an outstanding school we had the option of applying to become an Academy. The Governors decided not to act in haste and they have taken time to consider the implications of such a move. A Governors' meeting was held on March 17<sup>th</sup> and the Governors have asked me to include this statement in my letter to you.

*After much information gathering and consideration, the Governors have decided that they can see no clear and definite benefits to the students of NTS in pursuing Academy status at this moment. However, the Governors will keep an active and monitoring brief on the situation.*

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March (Comic Relief Day) we had a non-uniform day in order to raise money for the charities selected by the School Council. (These are Cancer UK, Oxfam and the Great North Air Ambulance.) In addition, the Sixth Form held a variety of money raising events throughout that week and managed to collect over £2300. They have bought an Emergency Shelter Box at a cost of £600 to send to Sendai in Japan (where we have a link) and their remaining money has been donated to Comic Relief. In total the students raised over £3600 in one week, which was a magnificent effort.

Internet Safety is clearly a concern to us all and our Year 12 Young Enterprise team 'Safety Net' have been providing a service this year, rather than goods. Their company provides cyber bullying presentations and accompanying materials to a range of audiences. On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm we are holding a briefing for parents on Internet Safety and the use of Facebook. There will be inputs from Mr Kinsella and the 'Safety Net' team. I have also enclosed some information for parents that has recently arrived in school on these issues.

In my last letter I mentioned our Activities Day on the 19<sup>th</sup> July and the opportunity for parents to be involved on the day. It is still not too late to volunteer and if you are able to help, please contact the school and ask for Mr. Beechey (Assistant Head).

Finally, I have just heard that our Maths team have won the Regional round of the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Team Challenge and have now been invited to the National Finals in London.

Yours sincerely

*Janet Downes*

J Downes  
Headmistress

## **Facebook Advice Letter**

It has been brought to our attention that some children have Facebook profiles even though the permitted minimum age to use the site is 13, according to the sites terms and conditions.

We are committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the Internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a concern. Websites such as Facebook offer amazing communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind and this is specifically over 13 years old. Possible risks for children under 13 using the site may include:

- Facebook use “age targeted” advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated they were when they registered
- Children may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behaviour
- Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on Facebook is not moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for children
- Photographs shared by users are not moderated and therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own
- Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities private and lying about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options
- Facebook could be exploited by bullies and for other inappropriate contact
- Facebook cannot and does not verify its members therefore it is important to remember that if your child can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else!

We feel it important to point out to parents the risks of underage use of such sites, so you can make an informed decision as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not. These profiles will have been created away from school and sometimes by a child, their friends, siblings or even parents. We will take action (such as reporting under aged profiles) if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our children.

Should you decide to allow your child to have a Facebook profile we strongly advise you:

- Check their profile is set to private and that only friends can see information that is posted
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behaviour such as not sharing personal information and not posting offensive messages or photos
- Ask them to install the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) application from [www.facebook.com/clickceop](http://www.facebook.com/clickceop) on their profile. This places a bookmark on their profile to CEOP and the Report Abuse button which has been known to deter offenders
- Have a look at the advice for parents/carers from Facebook [www.facebook.com/help/?safety=parents](http://www.facebook.com/help/?safety=parents)
- Set up your own profile so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as a friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online
- Make sure your child understands the following rules:
  - Always keep your profile private
  - Never accept friends you don't know in real life
  - Never post anything which could reveal your identity
  - Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents to see
  - Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult
  - Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you

We'd recommend that all parents visit the CEOP Think U Know website for more information on keeping your child safe online [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)