

THE NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL



Founded 1714

WIGTON, CUMBRIA, CA7 9PX
Tel: (016973) 42160 Fax: (016973) 49160
Email: admin@nts.cumbria.sch.uk
www.nts.cumbria.sch.uk

Headmaster
Mr D S Northwood, M.A., M.Ed.

February 2013

Dear Parents,

I felt I should write to update you on one or two issues.

The recent **Year 11 parental support evening** went very well. On Tuesday 5th February a number of parents (whose children had been specifically targeted for intervention) were given advice on how best to support their children at home. Three sessions were run, led by members of the Senior Management Team, and the feedback we received was positive. We are considering running a similar event for parents of Year 10 pupils.

It has been brought to my attention that a small number of **pupils are arriving at school very early**. This is not a problem as such but I should perhaps remind you that the legal responsibility for pupils lies with us *only from 8.40am*. The library is open and staffed from 8.30am, should you wish your child to be supervised a little earlier, but before this time and beyond the confines of the library (and outside its opening hours) we cannot be expected to look after him/her. I should add, perhaps, that on the whole pupils are very well-behaved and that there have never been any problems on this front. Pupils attending *organised events by members of staff* outside school hours will of course come under our duty of care.

Uniform continues to be at the forefront of our minds and I am pleased with the progress we have made here, thanks in part to your support. Some parents and local residents continue to complain about the state of pupils' uniforms around town and whilst this is regrettable, it is obviously hard for us to monitor what happens off-site. Suffice to say that we will continue to take a very strict line on standards from the moment pupils set foot on the premises to the moment they leave.

At this time of year we turn our attention to **forthcoming examinations and option processes** and I have included the following information from Mr Parker, Deputy Head (Curriculum), which I hope you will find useful:

It is startling to realise that February half-term represents the mid-point of the academic year. However, for those year groups with public examinations, there is far less than half a year to go as a result of the summer examination series beginning in May. Before then, there is still much work to do, and a number of key curriculum events that I would like to bring to your attention.

Year 9:

All of Year 9 will be involved in making their Option choices for Key Stage 4. This process has already begun, with students receiving information about careers guidance in assembly, to be followed up through lessons in ICT. After half-term, there will be an Information Evening for all Year 9 parents/guardians where I will explain the Options process, the organisation of the Key Stage 4 curriculum, and the possible Routes through the subjects on offer. I urge you to attend, as it will help you to be able to help your child make the best possible decisions about their future. The date for Options Information Evening is Thursday 21st February, in the Main Hall starting at 7.30pm.

Year 11:

Year 11 also have decisions to make about their future plans, especially as they are the first year group to be part of the government's 'Raising the Participation Age' programme. In reality, students will still make choices about whether to attend our Sixth Form, other post-16 providers within the local area, or to enter employment with training for example, through an apprenticeship. As usual, our Sixth Form Management

Team will provide all students with the necessary information, advice and guidance as to which is the most appropriate destination for them beyond Year 11. A key part of this process is the Sixth Form Information Evening, to be held on Monday 4th March, starting at 7.00pm. Again, I would urge you to attend so that you can help your child make those important decisions. By then, students will have received information about career options, as well as information about the subjects on offer in our Sixth Form from September 2013. Subject teachers will be discussing the post-16 courses they offer with students during lessons throughout February.

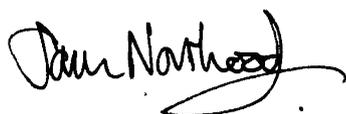
Examinations and revision:

Our whole-school tracking processes indicate that we can look forward to another high quality set of examination results in the summer. However, in the run-up to those examinations it is vital that students in all examination years take full advantage of the extra support/catch-up/revision sessions that many teachers are holding both at lunchtimes and after school. Controlled assessment deadlines are fast approaching in many subjects, and it is critical that students meet those deadlines set by their teachers, as there is a long administrative process to be followed once work has been submitted by students.

Ultimately, good examination performance is influenced by the quality of the revision each student does in preparation for each of those examinations. Please encourage your child to devise a revision plan for each subject, as it will benefit them in organising their time, as well as making them realise that time is short. If your child has not already begun revising for the summer examination series, then please encourage them to start in earnest **now**. No child can perform to their best if revision is left to the night before the exam! I wish every student the best of luck in all of their examinations.

I should stress that the next few months are crucial in educational terms for *all* pupils. Having settled into their respective year groups and become accustomed to certain systems and expectations, pupils will be focusing on fine-tuning their approach to study and their Attitude to Learning with a view to finishing the year strongly and making genuine *progress*. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to ask you to keep encouraging good attendance and the completion of homework in particular. As a parent myself, I realise that this is no mean feat, but any inroads you can make on this front are greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Northwood'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Mr DS Northwood
Headmaster