



The Nelson Thomlinson School
Wigton
Cumbria
CA7 9PX
...still "outstanding"
(Ofsted, May 2013)

Headmaster:
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Parental Questionnaire

I should be most grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it to your child's Form Tutor by Friday 12th December.

Conditions for Learning

Low level disruption in schools is in the national headlines at present and is something that can be a significant barrier to learning. For a number of years we have focussed on this issue by asking teachers who stops them teaching and asking pupils to identify individuals who impede their learning. Following consultation between members of the pastoral team, pupils are placed on a Conditions for Learning report (C4L report) which is overseen by the Senior Management Team. This is the most important pastoral report in NTS and individuals are closely monitored until such time that they understand and meet the standards expected in lessons. This year, 23 pupils have been identified from KS3 and 4 and will begin 2015 on the C4L report; this compares with 29 last year. All pupils who were mentioned by teachers or their peers will be spoken to by their Head of Year and a number of parents will be contacted over the forthcoming weeks in connection with this.

Literacy and Numeracy Tuition

We are delighted to announce that we have been able to further increase the level of literacy and numeracy tuition available to our Year 7s who need that extra boost. In addition to numeracy and spelling withdrawal that occurs during the school day, we are now offering a weekly literacy booster session to selected Year 7s after school. The sessions are designed to target areas individuals find difficult but at the same time ensure that developing these skills can be a fun activity.

Progress Reviews

All pupils in Years 8 to 13 will have received their Progress Review by the time we break for the Christmas holidays. As you will be aware, National Curriculum Levels have been abolished with the implementation of the new National Curriculum. However, as a school we have elected to retain 'tweaked' levels as a vehicle for tracking pupil progress across Years 7 to 9. This is because we believe that pupils and parents are familiar with, and understand levels, and because we are in a period of transition between national systems for school accountability, such that we do not feel it would be beneficial to invent a new system until future demands on schools are made clearer.

For Years 10 to 13, we have made one change to our procedures so that subject teachers are able to use their professional judgement in answering the question 'Is the pupil likely to meet their target?' For Year 10, it is relatively early in their GCSE career, so any 'No' at this point means there is a significant concern that requires

attention. For other years, any 'No' also means there is a concern that needs urgent attention, and you should contact the relevant Head of Department to discuss possible ways forward.

As always, please do ensure that you make a comment on your child's report before sending it back to school. Your feedback is very valuable to us in helping to strengthen the partnership between pupils, parents and school.

Year 9 and Year 11 Options

There are some dates for your new 2015 diary with regards to Options. With the introduction of new style qualifications for next year's Year 10 and Year 12, I am sure you will want to attend the relevant information evenings. These are as follows:

- Year 9 Options Evening: Tuesday 10th February, 7.00pm in the Main Hall
- Sixth Form Information Evening: Tuesday 3rd March, 7.00pm in the Main Hall

GCSE Mock Grades

Year 11 pupils will receive their mock GCSE examination results on Thursday 18th December and will no doubt wish to reflect on the whole experience and the implications. Some will be pleased with their performance, others less so. Either way, it is clearly important that pupils learn from the mocks and understand the need to respond, particularly if they underperformed. The action they take in terms of revision needs to take place sooner rather than later given that the real examinations are imminent. In some cases, I imagine that the mock results will come as a shot across the bows but at the other extreme, please do congratulate your child if he/she has met his/her targets.

Staff leaving NTS

At the end of this term we will be saying goodbye to Mrs C Slack (part-time ICT teacher) who has resigned. Mrs J Price (Technology Administration Assistant) has decided to retire early in order to spend more time with her family. Mr T Myler comes to the end of his temporary stint with us having covered maternity leave in the Art Department, and Miss A Moody will be going on maternity leave herself. We wish all these colleagues the very best.

School closure in bad weather

If the weather deteriorates in the next few months to the extent where we are forced to close the school, please note that you will be informed as soon as is practicable via the school web-site and Radio Cumbria. I should reiterate here that we will endeavour to keep the school open whenever possible and will only resort to closing it in extreme circumstances.

Carol Service

Please note that the carol services at St Mary's Church on Tuesday 16th (Years 7 & 8) and Thursday 18th December (Years 11, 12 and 13) will start at **2.15pm**, not at 2pm as previously advertised. Parents are most welcome to attend. The bells will be rung on Thursday by Mr Brockbank and a group of students, parents and friends of the school.

Christmas Concert

This will be held at 7pm in the main hall on Monday 8th December. Tickets cost £3.00 (£2.00 concessions) and are available from the music office but will also be available on the door.

Use of the Bus Bay

After a couple of near misses where parents have driven through the bus bay please could I remind you that this area is not for access other than for the Home to School transport coaches. The entrance into the school and bus bay area, as well as the exit, should also be kept clear and not used as a turning area.

FONTS 100+ club

I have attached a letter from the Friends of Nelson Thomlinson School regarding their 100+ club. This is one of the ways FONTS raises money for the school and we are extremely grateful for their support.


ICT: Microsoft Office

Parents might like to know that pupils can download a copy of Microsoft Office through their school email account. (Normally, parents buy a student version of Office which costs over £60.) The downloadable version will be active for the time that the child is enrolled at school. However, there is an advantage to the bought version in that they will still have a working copy of Office once they leave the school.

As ever, I would urge parents to contact the school if they feel that we can improve the service we provide in any way.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Northwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mr DS Northwood
Headmaster