



Founded 1714

**The Nelson Thomlinson School**  
**Wigton**  
**Cumbria**  
**CA7 9PX**

*...still "outstanding"*  
**(Ofsted, May 2013)**

**Headmaster:**  
**Mr DS Northwood, M.A., M.Ed.**

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

### **School closure in bad weather**

It was extremely regrettable that I was forced to close the school on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December. This was because we were struggling to save our boilers from being flooded, water was dripping from the ceiling in many areas, the Peter Ireland Building was flooded and a number of members of staff, especially those living in Cockermouth and Carlisle, were either evacuating their own homes or struggling to travel to work because of flooding on the local roads.

If the weather deteriorates again in the next few weeks or months to the extent where we are forced to close the school once more, please note that you will be informed as soon as is practicable via the school website and Radio Cumbria. **Please note that these are the only reliable sources of information and any news that is spread by any other source (including social media) should be checked by visiting the school website.** (I have been made aware that ITV.com, for example, publicised the closure of the school on the following Monday, which was not true.)

I feel that we have been extremely fortunate at NTS in the light of what other local schools have experienced. (I attended a recent meeting with LA representatives offering our support and to discuss how best we can help the Carlisle schools, some of which are still under water.) I am also very grateful indeed to all those pupils (and their parents), and to NTS staff, for braving the difficult conditions and making every effort to get to school. In terms of school transport, I apologise on the bus companies' behalf for the disruption to their services.

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, such as those we have witnessed recently.

### **School Governing Body**

We currently have a vacancy on our Governing Body for a Parent Governor. A letter outlining the procedure with a nomination form will be sent out to all parents at the beginning of next term.

### **Carol Service**

Please note that the carol services at St Mary's Church on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> (Years 7 & 8) and Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December (Years 11, 12 and 13) will start at **2.15pm**. Parents are most welcome to attend.

### **Christmas Concert**

This was cancelled, as you will be aware. We are hoping to rearrange this and will update you in due course.

### **Pupils paying for school meals**

If your child pays for meals in the school canteen, could I ask you to send them in with smaller denomination notes? (We have struggled of late to provide them with change.)



## **Conditions for Learning**

The Conditions for Learning reporting system (C4L) is about to begin again. Those pupils who have been identified by teachers and their peers for disrupting teaching and learning will be placed on this 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 expectations in lessons. Final numbers are being collated and parents will be informed in due course.

## **School Nurse**

Mrs Postlethwaite will join NTS in January 2016 as School Nurse. Initially she will be in school for one day a week which will increase to two after March.

Mrs Postlethwaite is an experienced school Nurse who has previously worked in NTS and is qualified in Specialist Public Health in School Nursing and is a registered nurse. She will be able to offer our pupils advice and support on health and emotional well-being issues with the aim of developing health promotion further within school. Drop-in sessions will be held during lunchtimes and the referral process will be through the pastoral team.

## **Literacy and Numeracy Tuition**

The fundamentals of literacy and numeracy remain a key focus at NTS and nowhere is this more important than in Year 7. The government requires additional support to be given to any pupil in Year 7 who achieved below level 4 in English or Maths. At NTS we offer this support in the form of free one-to-one or small group tuition. As a comprehensive school we do not believe that parents should feel the need to pay for private tutors and it is important to us that we provide this support to those pupils who require it. If we feel your child would benefit from additional tuition you will receive a letter from Dr Henley advising you of the provision available. We also continue to promote the importance of reading to all of our pupils. The Year 7s have now completed their first half-term of Accelerated Reader and there will be a special assembly before the end of term to reward the most dedicated tutor group and individuals with some festive goodies. The programme has two key features. On the one hand it encourages reading through the competitive nature of accumulating points and points mean prizes. On the other hand, the programme allows teachers to ensure that pupils are not only reading and comprehending what they read, but also that they are reading books at a level that progresses reading skills. Our English teachers are finding this information most useful in trying to further improve reading ability at the school.

## **Year 9 and Year 11 Options**

There are some dates for your new 2016 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 9<sup>th</sup> February, 7.00pm in the Main Hall
- Sixth Form Information Evening: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 7.00pm in the Main Hall

## **'Mindset for Exams'**

All pupils in Year 11 attended an event on November 20<sup>th</sup> designed to assist them with their preparations for examinations, with guest speakers presenting to them from a company called Live-n-Learn. As a school, we're mindful of the fact that sometimes, hearing the same message about revision skills, time management, stress management and positive attitude from a third party can be highly impactful in persuading pupils that their qualifications really do matter to their future. One piece of pupil feedback read "I learned that I *can* do it if I try," whilst another wrote "I feel more positive about my work and exams, and it made me want to succeed and achieve my dreams".

I am hopeful that all pupils remembered to put into practice the skills and tips for success they learned during the day, and that success will follow, not just in the mock exams, but in the final examinations in the summer.

## **GCSE Mock Grades**

Year 11 pupils will receive their mock GCSE examination results on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> 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, the mock results may 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.

The mock grades being reported are, with the exception of Art, all theory exam component grades, and do not reflect an overall GCSE grade, which would also contain scores attained in controlled assessments and/or practical coursework. When teachers write the Full Report, a current grade will be reported, which will represent overall GCSE attainment based upon the theory mock exam score and scores in controlled assessments and/or practical coursework. The Full Report is due to be issued in the week beginning Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Staff leaving NTS**

At the end of this term we will be saying goodbye to Mr Wakefield (Teacher of Science), Mrs O'Grady (English Higher Level Teaching Assistant) and Mrs Johnson (Maths Higher Level Teaching Assistant). You should know that Mrs Johnson has taken ill-health retirement and we are particularly sad to see her departure in these circumstances.

### **Use of the Bus Bay**

Following a couple of near misses where parents have driven through the bus bay, I remind you that this area is only to be used by school buses. 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.

In terms of Lowmoor Road itself, if at all possible please do not drop your children off within 50 yards of the school exit/entrance. Doing so not only causes significant congestion but also increases the chances of an accident occurring.

### **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.

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