



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

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

December 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

### **School Closure in Bad Weather**

We have always prided ourselves in the fact that we remain open whenever we can but as we enter the festive period and the temperature falls, there may be occasions when we have to close the school. Please note that the only reliable sources of information relating to school closure are:

- The official school website
- The official school facebook page

If you are in any doubt about school closure, please check the above sources and do not rely on hearsay.

As far as the school Facebook page is concerned, for those of you who do not know, here we post, amongst other things, letters, newsletters and trip information – as well as information about travel disruption and school closure. The Link is: [www.facebook.com/TheNelsonThomlinsonSchool](http://www.facebook.com/TheNelsonThomlinsonSchool). For non-Facebook users our school website will continue to be updated with the latest letters, newsletters etc.

### **Year 11 Support**

Our Year 11 pupils have experienced a fairly intensive period of additional input from teachers and outside speakers recently with a view to preparing them for the mock examinations and the remaining months leading up to their final tests. In addition to the usual Parents' Evening on 17<sup>th</sup> November, a small, targeted group of parents and pupils were invited to a Revision Skills Evening delivered by members of the Senior Management Team on 16<sup>th</sup>, which seemed to be well received, and we also held a 'Live and Learn' Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> where outside speakers came into school to give motivational talks and advice to all of the Year 11 pupils. SMT and pastoral staff have also been working with specific individuals as part of our usual mentoring programme. I have to say how pleased I am with the way the pupils have responded to these initiatives and their positive reaction to the advice and help we have given them. If you are a parent of a Year 11 pupil and feel that your child could do with additional support on top of what we have already offered (e.g. help with revision planning), please do not hesitate to contact the school.

### **Financial matters**

As a result of national funding problems, inflation and - in Wigton specifically - low birth rates (and consequently low pupil intake figures), we are approaching for the first time in the school's history a period of significant financial pressure. This has required me to speak to the teaching staff about voluntary redundancies, of which we need about 4 or 5 in order to prevent the school from going into



deficit. A number of other local schools have experienced similar difficulties and have gone through the same process.

As parents, you should be reassured that there will be no impact on the education of pupils at the school. It is simply the case that the school's income has decreased, along with pupil numbers, and we obviously cannot afford to pay for more staff than we need. Any staff who volunteer to leave will do so at the end of the academic year, and I shall of course provide you with details nearer the time.

### **The House System**

This feels part of the fabric of the school and the ever-present updates, courtesy of the ICT Technicians, keeps the sense of belonging at the forefront of the minds of both pupils and staff. The three weeks of activities at the end of October changed the scores, placing Peregrine in the lead. Since then, there has been a Year 9 inter-House event which covered an array of sports, attendance awards, Christmas Shoe Box awards and the usual departmental and pastoral House Points. House Assemblies are calendared for the last week of term, and we will ask the pupils to look to their strengths and come forward with ideas for activities which will increase the totals for those Houses lagging behind. The next round of activities is due to start at the end of January and ideas for the three week block of time should appeal to a range of pupils with a variety of skills and take into account potentially inclement weather. In the interim, a number of staff have organised Christmas activities which will ensure the momentum that has been created continues into the New Year.

### **School Trip Information**

For your information I have included with this letter details of the school trips that we run. This is simply to help you discuss with your child the kind of activities they may be interested in and to plan ahead financially. Please note that families who are entitled to the Pupil Premium are eligible for a 50% reduction. Further details will be provided when letters are sent out by the trip organiser.

### **Parental Questionnaire**

I should be most grateful if you would spend just a couple of minutes completing the attached questionnaire. We are always keen to improve the school in any way possible but also understand from a parental perspective what we are doing well. Comments in the boxes at the bottom of the questionnaire are therefore of particular interest to us. Please ask you child to return the completed form to his/her Form Tutor **by the end of term**.

Thank you for your continued support of the school and your child's learning, and I hope you have a pleasant and relaxing Christmas break.

### **FONTS**

I have attached a letter from FONTS regarding their fundraising activities and how you can help.

Kind regards,



Mr DS Northwood  
Headmaster

# Nelson Thomlinson School External Planned Trips exceeding £50

For parental information/planning purposes as at November 28<sup>th</sup> 2016

Trip	Trip Leader	Date of trip	Cost	Year group(s)	Frequency
Ski Trip Lower and Middle School	Mr G. Birch	Feb 2017 Feb 2019 Feb 2021	£950	Year 8-11	Every 2 years
Sixth Form Ski Trip	Mr M. Beechey	Feb 2018-not running Feb 2020	£980	Year 12-13	Every 2 years Not 2018 due to low numbers
London Trip	Mrs J. Peart	Easter 2017 2018	£500	Year 9	Every year
Berlin Trip	Mr M. Smith	Easter 2017	£400	Year 11	No additional trip planned
Holland Football Trip	Mr G. Clark (PE) and Mr S. Rudd	Spring Bank ½ term 2018 2020	£420	Boys Year 8 and 9	Every 2 years
AS Geography Manchester fieldtrip	Miss R. Allam	July 2017 July 2018	£120 £130	Year 12 (Subsidised by Geography Dept.)	Every year for Geog. students
Taiwan	Mr G. Broster	May/ June 2018	£1400	Year 9,10 (By application process)	A few students every 2 years
Washington DC	Mr T. Priddle	Feb. Half Term 2017	£1250	Year 13	29 pupils Further trips to be reviewed
France	Miss C. Lane	July 2017	£470	Year 7	70 pupils
Spain	Miss C. Lane	Easter 2018 Provisional	£550	Year 10-13	20 Provisional booking
Drama trips	Mrs R. Carroll	Oct – December	£70* £40**	Usually Year 10-13	Every year

\*One trip a week totalling £70

\*\*Manchester Drama trip £40

Please circle your child's year group:  
 7 8 9 10 11 12 13



This questionnaire is anonymous but if you would like us to contact you about your responses or respond in person to any comments you make, please enter your child's name in this box →

Please now read each of the statements below and tick the appropriate box:

	strongly agree	tend to agree	tend to disagree	strongly disagree
1. I think that NTS is an excellent school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. It communicates effectively with parents...				
a. ...in my child's report and progress reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. ...at my child's parents' evenings (Ignore if you are a Year 7 parent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. ...through facebook/letters/the website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If there were a problem I would feel comfortable contacting the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It deals promptly and effectively with problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is suitably ambitious for my child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My child receives homework in line with the school policy (see overleaf)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My child receives regular and constructive feedback on his/her work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. It's clear that my child is encouraged by teachers to act on feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My child feels safe in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My child feels both supported and challenged in line with his/her ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. It's clear that my child is encouraged to care about the presentation of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. My child is encouraged to improve his/her reading and writing skills in subjects other than English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please provide information on the following:**

Things you think we do particularly well:

Things you would like us to improve:

If you do **NOT** attend parents' evenings generally, please briefly explain why:

**Please return this questionnaire to your child's Form Tutor by the end of term**

## Homework policy in brief.

Homework should always be:

- **Timely** – the right amount on the right day
- **Regular** – to support a routine that encourages time management and self-responsibility
- **Motivating** – we want pupils to want to learn so that they improve over time
- **Purposeful** – there must be a clear outcome from the work that supports learning
- **Differentiated** – where possible

### **Homework types**

In general, a homework assignment can serve one or more of the following purposes:

- **Preparation** so that the next lesson can take a more interactive form. This might take the form of reading or research. (Sometimes referred to as “flipped learning”.)
- **Practice** in various skills – for example mathematical, language, note-making or essay writing.
- **Learning** a stated section of work for a test.
- **Developing study skills** - especially revision. Good homework may also develop self-confidence, self-discipline and a motivation to succeed.
- Saving time in class, e.g. performing tasks that do not require teacher supervision/guidance/input

Occasionally, homework that consists of merely finishing a piece of classwork may be set, but this should not be the norm. Homework should never be set as a punishment.

### **Normal Pattern**

The volume of homework each pupil receives is determined by the homework timetable. Subject specific allocations are available on request. However, the majority of pupils will receive homework as follows:

#### **Key Stage 3:**

On average, each pupil will receive one or two homeworks per night per week.

The notional time that students are expected to spend on each homework task is as follows:

Year 7: 20 minutes

Year 8: 25 minutes

Year 9: 30 minutes

#### **Key Stage 4:**

Most subjects have two homework sessions per week, with each piece being 30 to 40 minutes on average.

#### **Sixth Form:**

Y12: at least 2 hours homework per week per subject.

Y13: between 4 and 5 hours per subject per week

### **Student Planners**

All students are issued with a planner in which the homework set is recorded day by day and parents are requested to sign the planner each week. Pupils can be asked to produce the planner at registration each morning, correctly completed, together with the homework that has been done the night before.

### **Marking and monitoring**

Homework should be checked promptly by subject teachers, even if detailed marking is delayed for some reason.



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Founded 1714

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28 November 2016

Dear Parents

Just a note to let you know that our recent FONTS meeting went well, with a small but enthusiastic group putting some great ideas forward. One of the main ideas was a Grand Raffle which we will give more information about in the New Year, so keep a look out!

A really easy way for everyone to raise money for the school is to register with easyfundraising. It doesn't take long to register and every time you shop online they give a percentage to the school with it. Try it while doing your online Christmas shopping and we will see how much we can raise. There are currently just 10 people registered on the Nelson Thomlinson School PTA easyfundraising page.

Another way to raise some money, and possibly gain some for yourself, is to enter the FONTS 100 Club. You can buy as many tickets as you would like and there's a chance of winning more than once if your number is pulled out of the hat at the end of the month. The draw runs from January to December and costs just £12.00 per number to enter. Cheques or cash should be handed into the school main office.

We are still open for people to join our 100 Club. Our next meeting will be next term on **Wednesday January 18<sup>th</sup> 2017** in the school Library at 6pm. Come along and have a chat.

Yours sincerely

Anne-Marie Bridson  
 FONTS Treasurer

.....**Return to Dawn Richmond, Main Office, NTS** .....

I would like to buy ..... tickets for the Friends of Nelson Thomlinson School 100 Club. I enclose cash/a cheque (made out to Friends of Nelson Thomlinson School) for the amount of ..... (£12.00 per ticket).

Name:.....

Phone Number:.....

Address:.....

Name and Form of NTS pupil(s) if applicable .....

