



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

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

**Tel:** 016973 42160  
**Fax:** 016973 49160  
**Email:** admin@nts.cumbria.sch.uk  
www.nts.cumbria.sch.uk

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

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Dear Parents

Now that the first few days are over, I am pleased to find time to write to you all and update you on recent news and events.

The start of the new term has gone smoothly and, as ever, it is great to see the new Year 7s settling in. **If friends of yours are parents with pupils currently in Year 6, please remind them that our Open Day is on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September and that presentations delivered by the Senior Management Team start at 6.00pm (repeated at 6.45pm).** They are free to look around the site that evening, and tours are available during the school day on Monday to Friday of that week. Please ask them to contact reception to arrange a tour. **NTS pupils currently in Year 11 (and their parents) will be provided with information separately and in a different format.**

It is typically the case that the first letter I send to all parents at the start of the new academic year contains a lot of information and also some important instructions.

**To make things easier for you I have highlighted any instructions in a text box like this one.**

### Examination Results

This year there have been major changes to the examination system, especially at GCSE, and, as you may have read in the local press, it is important not to draw too many conclusions at this very early stage. Generally speaking, though, in the light of all the information we have to hand, we are very encouraged by the results.

In terms of **GCSE results**, the headline figure that we normally share with parents at the beginning of the new academic year is the percentage of last year's Year 11 pupils who achieved 5 A\*-C grades including English and Maths. As was the case this time last year, direct comparisons with previous systems are no longer possible because of the new grading system (9-1). However, if one assumes (as the government has done) that the new grade 4 is equivalent to the lower end of an old grade C (a "Standard Pass"), then our headline figure would read as follows: 72% of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 A\*-C/9-4 grades ("Standard Passes") including English and Maths - and this is clearly a cause for celebration. In fact, one could argue that it constitutes our second best result ever. (Last year the comparable figure was 75%.) This year, 75% achieved 5 or more A\*-C/9-4 grades irrespective of the subjects they studied, 44% of pupils gained a full English Baccalaureate (standard passes), which is 11% more than last year, and 12% of all entries were A\*/A or 8/9. Mia Messenger deserves a special mention for gaining grade 9 in seven subjects and grade 8 in the remaining three. Many congratulations to the 180 pupils who took GCSE examinations last year and all the staff who taught them!

At **A Level** it is no longer possible to calculate the students' average points score (which has, for us, always been one of the highest in the county). Figures, however, that we *have* been able to calculate are largely in line with those of previous years: 22% of all entries were A or A\*, and out of a cohort of 101 we had nine students who gained 3 or more A/A\* grades and four who gained 4 or more A/A\* grades.

The indications are that all of our students have been successful in securing their offers for university, apprenticeships or work-related training. As ever I would like to thank the students for their efforts in securing their grades but also the staff involved in helping our sixth-formers and Year 11 pupils reach their potential and their destinations of choice – particularly Mr Walker, Dr Lovegrove, Mrs Pearson and our new Head of Sixth Form, Mr Priddle.

#### Equipment for Learning

In the light of a recent consultation with staff, I have amended the Equipment for Learning (E4L) list. All pupils must now have with them in lessons the following 8 items of basic equipment:

**Writing pen (including spares)**  
**Pencil**  
**Pencil Sharpener**

**Ruler**  
**Eraser**  
**Calculator**

**Red pen/biro**  
**Green pen/biro**

It would be **helpful** if they also had a glue stick, colouring pencils, some highlighter pens, a protractor and a pair of compasses but these items are not essential.

These items should be available for all classes. Most are available from the Mathematics Office at extremely competitive prices. In particular, Casio scientific calculators are available at £6.20 each. Calculators will be useful in several lessons, not just in Mathematics, and we recommend that all pupils possess, and gain familiarity with, a Casio fx-83GT.

Please note that *pots* of correction fluid are *not* allowed in school; however, pupils are allowed to use the pen-style correction fluid or correction tape provided these are used carefully and sparingly. (These are *not* allowed in examinations.) **Pupils are responsible for all their personal equipment and every item should be clearly marked.**

**All pupils will be reminded in assemblies that they will have until Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September to get themselves organised on this front and that the equipment will then be checked every day for one week, and then on random days thereafter. There will be sanctions from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> for those who do not have the equipment listed above.**

We have found that some pupils are held back in their learning as a consequence of being poorly equipped and/or forgetting things, and this recent initiative is designed to address the problem. I hope that you as parents will be able to support us here and help your child become fit for learning.

#### Departmental Detentions

Unfortunately, there are instances when it is necessary to detain pupils during the lunch hour because classroom expectations/standards have not been met. Should an individual fail to attend a detention, a letter will be sent to parents informing them of an after-school detention; usually at least 48 hours' notice is given to allow for transport arrangements, if necessary. All pupils are aware of the expectations of departments in NTS and how this sanction can be avoided in the first instance.

#### Literacy

The ability to read confidently has a direct effect on academic success and general confidence and motivation in school.

All Year 7s will participate in the Accelerated Reading scheme and parents will receive more information this half-term. The library is extremely well stocked and open within and beyond the school day. In addition we discretely monitor the progress of any pupil whose reading age is below

their actual age and we will prioritise support for those pupils. We do hope you will support our focus by discussing reading at home and encouraging your children to read every day outside school. Some children are reluctant to read. This reluctance often stems from difficulties with reading, choosing books that are too difficult or not being able to find a text that interests them.

We offer, free of charge, small group or one-to-one tuition for any Year 7 pupil who enters the school with considerably less than the expected standardised score in English or Maths at the end of Key Stage 2. The tuition gives pupils confidence in areas they often find difficult and off-putting. It also helps ensure that any gaps in understanding are filled so that the secondary curriculum can be accessed. The Learning Support Department will be assessing Year 7 pupils in the first half-term and contacting the parents of pupils who will receive this extra tuition.

**If you believe your child shows these traits, please do not hesitate to contact the school and we will support you in getting your child to read.**

### Emotional Intelligence – Plus (EQ+)

I have always been a firm believer in the promotion of so-called 'soft skills', in emotional intelligence and in improving the ability of pupils to interact effectively with others in different contexts, not least with adults and as part of a working community. Many pupils suffer when they find themselves in a different social context (e.g. a discussion with an adult, a classroom presentation etc.) and find it hard to adapt. So, as part of the School Development Plan this year, we intend "to promote Emotional Intelligence across the school through normal lessons and Form Periods such that pupils recognise its importance in NTS and beyond, and to encourage pupil progress in eight key areas, using where possible pupil role-models as teachers." The idea is that the project will last for the duration of the pupil's time in school, by the end of which he/she will, ideally, be 'EQ competent' and 'interview ready'. Some pupils - those who already demonstrate talent or potential in this area - will be encouraged to become EQ+ Champions and help those who find these soft skills harder to acquire. Significant research has been done in this area, and you may be interested to explore this subject more by searching for material on the internet by its key founder, Daniel Goleman.

### Staff changes

Current staff taking on new positions:

<b>Mr Walker</b>	Assistant Head i/c Teaching and Learning
<b>Mr Priddle</b>	Head of Sixth Form
<b>Mrs Cope</b>	Coordinator of Consumer Technology
<b>Mr Cooper</b>	Head of Computing
<b>Mr Heagarty</b>	Citizenship Coordinator
<b>Mrs Hedley</b>	Temporary Teacher of Science

We welcome the following new permanent staff:

<b>Mr Plackett</b>	Teacher of PE
<b>Mrs Johnson</b>	Part-time Teacher of History
<b>Mrs Mullarkey</b>	Careers Leader

Temporary replacements include:

- Mrs Galley                      Temporary Head of Art in CJ's absence
- Mrs Lynn                        Temporary Head of Music in RR's absence
- Ms Calvo                        Temporary Head of History

- Miss Wright                   Teacher of Geography – maternity cover for EC
- Miss Pearson-Rolph       Temporary teacher of English – maternity cover for MAN
- Miss Preston                Temporary teacher of Art – maternity cover for CJ
- Mr Thorpe                    Temporary teacher of Music – maternity cover for RR
- Miss Hanabury             Temporary Maths TA

### Prize Ceremonies

For Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 ceremonies will be held in school in extended assemblies starting at 9.15am and lasting approximately half an hour:

Year 11	Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 10 prizes)
Year 10	Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 9 prizes)
Year 9	Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 8 prizes)
Year 8	Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	(receiving Year 7 prizes)

We will hold our formal senior prize ceremony for the Sixth Form on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm in St. Mary's Church. Prizes will be presented to last year's Year 11 as well as to the Sixth Form.

### Friends of Nelson Thomlinson School (FoNTS)/PTA

There will be a meeting towards the end of September for current and **prospective new members** of our PTA. The date and venue will be confirmed nearer the time via ParentMail and our Facebook page. Please come along and see what they do.

### Building works

During the summer break the main external work carried out has been the installation of the trunking for the new fibres required as part of the process of changing our internet provider. Once finalised this should double the connectivity speed for all pupils and staff. Works completed by the site team have included the refurbishment of two Science labs as well as the painting of a number of classrooms. The sixth-form block has also benefitted from a total redecoration. The other main work has comprised the installation of additional locks on the external doors around school, which in conjunction with the secure access system at reception, should enhance the overall external security to the main school buildings.

### Data Collection Sheet (just for Y7 and new pupils from other year groups)

**The Data Collection Sheet will be issued shortly. Please amend or complete this as appropriate. (PARENTS OF YEAR 7 AND NEW PUPILS ONLY)**

The Data Collection Sheet is issued yearly for you to check and confirm that the information we hold about your child(ren) is correct. During the year, if there are any changes to personal details you are required to inform us to make sure we have as up-to-date information as possible. This is imperative in situations where your child may be ill and we need to contact you urgently. We often like to celebrate our successes by including photos of NTS pupils in our prospectuses and newsletters but it is obviously important that you give us permission if you feel comfortable doing so.

**You are therefore required to complete the Digital/Video Images Permission slip. (PARENTS OF YEAR 7 AND NEW PUPILS ONLY)**

### ParentMail

Since 'going live' last year, 87% of families have registered for a ParentMail account. Although you don't need to have registered to receive messages from us, you will be unable to 'interact' with the system unless you have done so. This includes responding to any forms or questionnaires we send out and installing the free NTS ParentMail app. We are finding the service an efficient and speedy way of getting information out, and would encourage you to register if you have not already done so. We will therefore shortly be resending instructions to all those who have not yet registered. If you need any help with this, please contact the school.

### Download our free school app to your mobile device and pick up important messages instantly

Once registered, we should like to encourage parents to download our ParentMail app as there are a number of benefits both for you and the school:

- It is free and easy to download
- All messages from school will be sent securely
- No need to search through a busy email inbox for important messages
- Messages arrive as an instant alert on your mobile device
- Some parents do not have an email address, only a mobile number, which means that unless they download the app, we are still having to send out paper copies of letters

To download the app for free from either the Apple store or the Google Play store, simply search **Nelson Thomlinson ParentMail**.

### Lost Property

The School Office receives large amounts of lost property that we are unable to return to the owners because items are not named. This is a shame as it means extra expense for parents to buy replacements.

**Therefore, please can I remind you that you should clearly name each item of uniform, sports kit and any other clothing brought to school, preferably with a name tape but otherwise with a marker pen such that the name will not fade in the wash.**

All items of lost property are kept in the school office for a half-term and are then disposed of, either to the clothes bank or to a charity shop.

### **Reminders:**

#### Driving in the School Grounds

- If you are bringing your child to school by car in the morning or collecting them at the end of the day **please do not drive through the school grounds**. (Pupils arriving by taxi or with physical disabilities are exempt from this.)
- If you are bringing your child to school by car in the morning, please do not stop in the bus bay - you are likely to cause problems for the large number of buses that deliver our pupils to school.
- At other times when you visit the site for an appointment or to pick up a sick child **please remember that there is a one-way system in operation at all times through the school grounds**. The entry is adjacent to the bus-bay and the exit is onto the High Street. Please also remember that we have a barrier in place during the following times: **8.30 – 9.15am; 11.05 – 11.30am; 12.20 – 1.35pm; 3.25 – 4.00pm**
- Please be aware that there are county parking restrictions in force on Lowmoor road.

### School Buses

If your child comes to school on a bus, sensible behaviour is obviously expected and this includes sitting down on a seat with the **seatbelt fastened**.

### Authorized absence

I should remind you that *only in 'exceptional circumstances'* can I grant authorized leave of absence for pupils. Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays. You will be interested to know, perhaps, that there is a direct correlation between good attendance and good examination performance. I am pleased to say that attendance rates for the current year groups are good but clearly this needs to be maintained if pupils are to give themselves the best possible chance of achieving their potential.

### Term Dates, Examinations and Parents' Evenings

These are printed below. Please keep them for reference.

Finally, I should take this opportunity as I always do to remind you of the following paragraph taken from the school prospectus:

"We continue to be ambitious on behalf of *your* children - *our* pupils - and continue to expect in return your support on matters such as homework, behaviour, uniform and respect for others. It is equally paramount that you tell us when you have concerns or when we might have got something wrong. The School continues to pride itself in its attention to detail and when things do need fine-tuning then I would like to know."

Please do, therefore, support us in our work but also challenge us – politely, if you would - as and when you see fit. I am as keen as ever to provide the best possible education for your child.

Yours sincerely

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

## **Holidays 2018-19**

Half term	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Christmas	Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December – Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> January
Half term	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February
Easter	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> April – Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> April
Half term	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> May – Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> May
Summer	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July – Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September

## **Parents' Evenings**

Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Y6 Open Evening
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> October	Y7 Form Tutors meet some parents (by invitation only)
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	Y13 Parents' Evening
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> November	Y12 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> November	Y11 Parents' Study Skills meeting
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Y8 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Y8 Parents' Evening (HMW)
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Y11 6th Form Information Evening
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Y7 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> January	Y7 Parents' Evening (HMW)
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> January	Y10 Parents' Evening
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Y9 Parents' Evening (NELST)
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Y9 Parents' Evening (HMW)
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> July	New Y7 Parents' Information Evening
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> July	HE & Careers Information Evening for Y12 Parents

## **Exams**

Week beginning Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	Y7 CAT tests
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	GCSE English resits
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> , Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> & Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	GCSE Maths resits
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Y11 Art Mock exam
Weeks beginning Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> December	Y11 Mocks
Week beginning Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Y13 Mocks
Week beginning 18 <sup>th</sup> March	Y11 Maths and English Mocks
Week beginning Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Y10 Art exam
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> April – Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May	A-level Art exam
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> & Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> April	GCSE Art exam
Weeks beginning Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup> April	Y10 exams
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> May – Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	GCSE and A-level exams (provisional)
Week beginning Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Y7 exams
Week beginning Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	Y8 exams
Week beginning Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Y9 exams
Week beginning Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> June	Y12 exams