

Head of School's Weekly Update 29 January 2021

FROM THE HEAD

The Prime Minister announced earlier this week that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the reopening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

Whilst we are all keen to return to the classrooms as soon as we safely can, it is important that we continue to follow the government guidance and beat the spread of the virus. In the meantime if you need any further support with remote learning or student wellbeing then do let us know.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

North Yorkshire Youth Voice has produced information and guidance for children and young people concerned about their mental health, in the form of the Mental Health Flowchart which signposts you to different mental health and wellbeing services available. To download a copy, please click [here](#).



Just a reminder that next week is Children's Mental Health Week. This year's theme is [Express Yourself](#). Place2Be has created activities and resources to help children (and adults) to explore the different ways that they can share their thoughts, feelings and ideas. There are lots of resources on the [Children's Mental Health Week website](#) that you can use with your child at home; including activity

ideas, tips for parents and carers.

Please also refer to our Health and Wellbeing letter sent out on 25th January 2021. This can be accessed [here](#)

MANAGING SCREEN TIME - TOP TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Now that all of our lessons are virtual and live it is important that students manage their screen time well. We will share some top tips with students next week.

SAFEGUARDING

We have been asked by the Police to alert you to a number of incidents in the area whereby a person has acted inappropriately towards others, particularly females. The police advise *'to maximise safety, walk with someone else if possible and stick to well-lit areas.'*

Obviously your child's safety is of paramount importance to us, please reiterate the key message above with your child and if you are concerned in any way, please do not hesitate to talk to us.

SIXTH FORM NEWS

Sixth Form interviews will start on Tuesday 2nd February and will run over 2 weeks. They will last approximately 10 minutes and will be aimed at giving advice and guidance regarding your options. On Friday 12th February all Year 11 students will be taking part in a taster day to help with their career planning. Please can students complete the google form that they have received indicating their preferred option.

You can still apply for Sixth Form, just complete the application form on the Sixth Form section of the website.

HOUSE CHALLENGE - MEGA MARATHON

During the month of February, we are challenging students to increase the amount of physical activity they are doing. Undertaking regular exercise is

proven to have a beneficial effect on people's wellbeing, which has never been more important.

How to get involved

Record the distance covered (walk, bike, run) during each week of February. At the start of a new week, tutors will ask for students' total distance from the previous week, which will go on the house leaderboard! Recording of distances can be done on a smartwatch or an app for a smartphone. The winning house is decided by total distance covered.

YEAR 7 SHORT STORY CLUB

Our new remote Short Story Club saw yet another successful session on Wednesday 27th January! This time featuring Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart'. Members of the club have decided to write their own spooky mini-fiction for next week's session - watch this space...

CLARIFICATION ON HOMEWORK DURING LOCKDOWN

As a secondary school we are expected to provide five hours of online teaching per school day to our students. We are doing this through a blend of live teaching and assignments set through our Google Classroom platform.

In our discussions with students and parents, and from recent surveys, we are aware that some students, particularly at Key Stage 3 are struggling to complete tasks before they need to log onto their next live lesson.

We would therefore like to clarify that, for Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9), we will not set any additional homework during the lockdown period. We will try to ensure that the total teaching time for each lesson (live elements and set tasks) is as close as possible to 1 hour per lesson.

At Key Stage 4 and 5 (Year 10-13) there will be an appropriate amount of additional homework set as students are moving closer to their final exams/assessments. Therefore students from Year 10-13 may expect to receive more than the five hours of expected teaching time per school day.

If you are concerned about the quantity of work your son/daughter is receiving please contact the head of year in the first instance.

'READ WRITE SOFTWARE'

A reminder to all parents that we have installed the 'Read-Write' software as an add-on to devices. The software can be used to electronically read text to students and much more. If you feel that your child would benefit from this software and they don't currently have it then please contact our SENCO Miss Shallow shallow.j@northallertonschool.org.uk

'MOTE'

'Mote' is a piece of software that is being used more extensively by our teachers at Northallerton. It enables the teacher to provide feedback on a student's work by creating small audio files of the teacher speaking to the student. The student can then access their work at any time and hear the teacher's feedback as if he/she was talking to them. Feedback from students has so far been very positive, telling us that they like to hear their teacher's voice and the ability to pronounce words and give praise is often much more effective spoken rather than written.

Please look out for more 'Mote' feedback on your child's work over the coming weeks.

LOANED DEVICES

If any student is currently struggling with either having to make use of a smartphone or tablet, or having to share a device with a parent or sibling then we can help.

We have access to a number of chromebooks that we are able to loan to students who are struggling to access their live lessons properly.

If this applies to your child then please email their head of year in the first instance.

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

A **huge 98.4%** of students attended online lessons last week, with over **half of students accessing 90%** or more of timetabled live lessons, **totalling over 21,000 hours** of learning taking place. This is a tremendous achievement and **we are very proud of you all!**

We would also like to thank parents/carers for your continued support. We know these are difficult and unprecedented times, but you are all doing an amazing job!