

16 April 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

After a most surreal few weeks, may I formally welcome you back to the school Summer term! As mother nature provides us with so much joy and hope, and the sun provides some comfort and warmth, I know many of us are still adjusting to a new way of managing each day, and for some dealing with angst and sadness as the pandemic affects our loved ones. To those affected please remember that as a school community, we are here to support each and every individual, over the long road ahead.

Over the last two weeks, to aid the national agenda, the school has remained open and my colleagues have continued to offer frontline and remote support. Many thanks to each and every one of them. Over the Easter break, we hope that students will have been able to take a break from their online learning and recharge their batteries. As we return, I thereby, wish to provide you with a number of updates/ reminders and key contact information.

### **Communication**

You will have received lots of important information and guidance from school over the past four weeks and we will continue with this increased communication throughout the school closure. Copies of all correspondence can be found on our school website in the [News section](#). I hope that you have found these communications supportive and are helping to keep you and your children connected with school.

As we settle into isolation some of our staff and families are sharing their ideas for keeping entertained and connected virtually with friends and loved ones. Our Instagram page has featured some interesting ideas such as a virtual visit to Chester Zoo; the opportunity to appear on BBC Bitesize; 14-day challenges and free audible books during school closure. If you have any good ideas for keeping busy or entertained and would like us to share them with our school community on Instagram why not send an email with a photograph and short paragraph to [admin@nestonhigh.com](mailto:admin@nestonhigh.com) and we will share on your behalf. If you don't already follow us on Instagram, we can be found [@nestonhighofficial](#).



### **Free School Meals – Supermarket Voucher Scheme**

You may have read on the BBC News that the Government's new supermarket voucher scheme for children entitled to free school meals has experienced some technical difficulties. We have been advised that the system has now been improved to cope with the high demand and should be running smoothly very shortly. We apologise that some of you have not received your vouchers yet. Vouchers will be distributed electronically, however if you do not have an email address, we will be able to post the vouchers to you. If you think that you may be entitled to Free School Meals and have not registered, please contact [Cheshire West and Chester council Free School Meals](#) and complete the [online form](#). I attach a FAQ sheet that provide information about the Government's scheme to support families entitled to free school meals.

### **Remote Learning**

From Monday 20 April, remote learning will resume. We have had lots of positive feedback from parents about the subject resources provided since school closed at short notice on 20 March, but we are also aware, that some students need more guidance and signposting to encourage them to engage fully. As we begin our third week of remote learning, we will be introducing Microsoft Teams - a whole school learning platform. During next week we will send out a document to guide you through logging in to the system; detail where to find classes and assignments and provide guidance for online communication etiquette.

Through Microsoft Teams we will be able to ensure that the work set is manageable for all students and keep in contact and support students more easily with their studies. I am sure that you will appreciate that, in the current circumstances, it won't be possible for your child's teacher to give detailed feedback on all of the work set. However, parents should be reassured that teachers are regularly reviewing work and monitoring student engagement.

We still have a small number of laptops available for students to borrow, if you wish to use one of the school laptops please email [admin@nestonhigh.com](mailto:admin@nestonhigh.com) and we will arrange a suitable time for you to call and collect.

### **Support if you need it**

Our team of pastoral support staff are keeping in contact with many families on a regular basis by telephone. If you need to speak to anyone in the pastoral team during the school closure for support or guidance please email [admin@nestonhigh.com](mailto:admin@nestonhigh.com) giving your name, contact telephone number and child's name and member of the pastoral team will contact you. If you have a safeguarding concern, there are contact details and guidance on our school website '[Safeguarding Information during School Closure](#)'.

Sadly, we are aware that some children and adults could be facing increased risks as we are all asked to stay at home. Social distancing and self-isolation could be used as a tool of coercive and controlling behaviour by people.

**If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 999.**

Safeguarding and mental health and wellbeing is at the heart of everything that we stand for at Neston High. We have received many emails from the Department for Education, Cheshire West and Chester and other agencies signposting various organisations that can support families. The attached sheet entitled Safeguarding and Wellbeing Collective Advice is a collection of contact telephone numbers and websites to support for families. We hope that you find them useful. Further advice is also attached as an electronic guide to support parents with many of the issues that you may be currently facing, including helping your child to study at home, facts about coronavirus and protecting your child's mental health.

### **Supporting the NHS and Key Workers**

If you follow us on Instagram, you will have seen that last week we raided our stock cupboards and classrooms and donated our school PPE to the NHS. We were pleased to donate some of our PPE to The Royal Liverpool hospital after a request from 2 of our ex-students who are nurses there. We were able to donate 552 pairs of safety glasses, 2100 pairs of disposable gloves and 400 disposable aprons to the NHS. Next week using our Design Technology facilities, Miss Griffiths and Mr Storey along with a team of school staff are going into production to make face visors to protect the many health workers who are caring for people in the Countess of Chester, Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge hospitals along with care homes and the community. May I thank them in advance for their dedication and willingness to help in such challenging times.

I would like to thank everyone within our school community for their relentless support and their ongoing determination in ensuring that our students' welfare and education are protected as much as possible under these exceptional circumstances. The current situation has tested all of us and I am proud of the way that the whole school community, including all of our students have coped and supported each other in these uncertain times. It is important to remember that we will not be closed for ever and we are looking forward to welcoming everyone back as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will continue to support students to 'learn from home' and support families wherever we can.

Stay safe  
Kind regards

K Simpson  
Headteacher