

12 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Over the last few months, we all have had to redefine the way that we run our lives! The world has changed forever. As part of this remodelling educational establishments have also reflected and redefined how they will continue to meet their vision whilst maintaining their core values. It has been a steep curve for many but here at Neston High we have all done our best to support our young people their families and the community we serve. In this context today is a pivotal day for us, as after rigorous planning and consultation we are now ready to move on week beginning Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June to the 'wider opening of school'; as we welcome back in groups our Year 10 and Year 12 students. Over the past few weeks, we have been carrying out risk assessments; setting up classrooms to allow for social distancing; communicating with parents of students in Years 10 and 12 to prepare them for coming back to school; preparing resources and meeting with staff and Trustees to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible. I and my colleagues are genuinely excited to be welcoming more students into the school building and sincerely hope that many of our students accept the invitation to come into the building so that we can re-connect our school family.

The 'face to face' sessions for Y10 and Y12 are part of the blended learning provision for these two-year groups. They have been planned to enhance remote learning and are intended to give students in exam years the opportunity to 'Re-engage ... Re-socialise ... Re-learn and Re-visit'. As for all of our students, it is imperative that students in these year groups continue to engage with their remote learning alongside the on-site provision.

### **Remote Learning – All Year Groups**

Remote Learning will continue for all year groups, subject teachers will continue to upload regular work on MS Teams for your child to complete. Although this work will still be focussed on re-visiting and re-learning subject material it is important that your child engages with this work to reinforce their learning and prepare them for when we return to school. This half term teachers and form tutors will contact families to offer support if students do not appear to be engaging with online learning. However, we are conscious that some children may be finding it difficult to engage currently due to individual family circumstances and you may prefer us not to contact home, if this is the case for your family please let us know by emailing the office [admin@nestonhigh.com](mailto:admin@nestonhigh.com) and we will pass on the information to the relevant staff.

At the end of last half term, we sent some information about MS Teams and the strategies that we would be introducing this half term to connect with students and enhance their home learning experience. These strategies may include:

- Audio recordings over PowerPoints; this will mean that some teachers will add an audio recording to explain how to complete a task.
- Audio posts: teachers can add a voice note to share with students.
- Quizzes: a number of teachers are using quizzes on Microsoft Teams, please make sure your children complete these as they are an important tool for assessing progress and identifying gaps in knowledge which will help our teachers plan further work for their classes.
- Wellbeing Wednesday: During this half term we would like to encourage our students to engage with well-being activities and we will be including a range of activities for students to choose from. This will take place on Wednesday afternoons for all students. These will include nurture-based tasks designed by our Student Support Team and also an opportunity to participate in Lockdown Life <https://2engage.co.uk/lockdownlife/the-lockdown-life-project/>
- Webinars: we will be looking into producing short webinar style recordings to support students and further connect.

I have always been aware that home learning would not be straightforward and that there would be obstacles for us all to overcome. When I meet regularly with curriculum and senior leaders through our online meetings, I am pleased to hear the feedback from class teachers about how our students and teachers themselves are adapting and embracing the new technology and new ways of working. Online learning from home is not our natural way of learning, we are social creatures who learn best when we are interacting with others, however during these unprecedented times we have all adapted well, with the knowledge that soon we will be back in our school building and will probably appreciate face to face interaction a little more. For parents, supporting your child with their home learning will have had its own different challenges, from your child expecting you to be an expert in unfamiliar subject knowledge to either trying to get your child to engage with their classwork at all or perhaps as difficult, stopping your child from spending too much time on their studies. We will all reflect on this time in history and anyone with a school aged child will have different memories of home schooling. To capture the present position for our school, we circulated a questionnaire and have had a very good response. From the analysis we will reflect on how we can adapt our remote learning offer to meet the diverse needs of our families and young people.

To maintain the momentum with MS Teams and to support parents and students with home learning Ms Robinson one of our Assistant Headteachers who leads on Teaching and Learning in school, is currently developing a suite of home learning webinars. These webinars will not be subject specific but will be designed to support students with independent study. The first of these webinars 'Retrieval Practice' can be viewed by following this link ['Retrieval Practice Webinar'](#). These webinars will be available in the

parent section of the school website if you wish to revisit them. Topics coming soon include Metacognition; Memory; Literacy skills related to vocabulary and reading.

### **On Site Provision**

Children of critical workers, and vulnerable children who are already eligible, will continue to be offered a place in school this half term, regardless of the year group they are in. The definition of critical workers remains unchanged and can be viewed on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Due to the increased number of children now going to be in the school building, this provision will change from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. Students will be allocated to a specific group of up to 12 children and be allocated a set classroom to work in under the supervision of a teacher. Students will be expected to wear PE kit if they are attending this group. Students will carry out a blend of activities throughout the day including online learning through Teams, a practical activity such as art/craft and an outdoor physical activity.

### **Staffing News**

I am pleased to welcome Mrs K McCarthy and Mrs H Waites to the senior leadership team at Neston High. Mrs McCarthy joins us as Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Character and Wellbeing and Mrs Waites as Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Assessment, Recording and Reporting. Already they are leading on key aspects of the school and have settled in very quickly. Both colleagues have a wealth of knowledge and experience and we are looking forward to working with them as we develop our new visions and values statement for September 2020.

### **Interesting Educational Resources**

#### **Space related educational resources for home schooling**

The UK Space Agency has published a collection of space related educational resources that schools, parents and carers can use when teaching their children at home.

The resources are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/space-related-educational-resources-for-home-schooling>

#### **BT Skills for Tomorrow**

BT have launched a selection of free online courses to help young people and adults to develop their digital skills, courses range from health and well-being to launching a business and cyber security. <https://www.bt.com/skillsfortomorrow/>

## **Facilities News – 3G Football Pitch**

I am pleased to let you know that after a short delay due to lockdown restrictions, work commenced on the school's 3G pitch during the Whitsun break. The pitch will be completed in time for the new academic year adding to the school's fantastic sports facilities. The pitch will be available for hire evenings and weekends from September 2020. Enquiries for regular lettings should be emailed to Mrs Julie Mounfield, Facilities Manager [mounfieldj@nestonhigh.com](mailto:mounfieldj@nestonhigh.com).

We would like to thank the Football Foundation and Cheshire West and Chester council for supporting this project. A full joint press release with the football foundation will be released very soon.

## **Community News**

### **Cheshire Constabulary – Supporting Parents as Lockdown Restrictions Change**

Please see attached information from Cheshire Police to support you as the lockdown restrictions change.

Clearly as national restrictions are eased our community will become more hectic, but may I request that you work with us by following guidance and remind your child to be thoughtful of their social interactions and be considerate as always to all those who are around the school vicinity when they are travelling to or from school.

Through all the negative noise and continual political rhetoric, I have constantly maintained the focus on the fact that one the day we would be able to breath the life and soul back into our school. Although we are still in stormy waters and the destination is unknown, I will continue to take a pragmatic steady and carefully considered approach as we sail forward. I firmly believe that our young people have holistic dreams and ambitions that need to be nurtured, no matter what the world throws at us! With this fixed in my mind, next Friday when I send out our next bulletin, I will be sharing with you the highlights of welcoming Year 10 and 12 back on site, sharing our plans for the transition plan for Year 6 and revealing the title of Ms Robinson's next webinar.

Thank you for working with all my colleagues to support and guide our young people; for your much-appreciated positive comments, your feedback that allows us to work in partnership with you to move our community forward, and your patience, as together we all explore and discover the emerging new world.

As always, keep safe and enjoy the weekend!

Kind regards

K Simpson  
Headteacher