



Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

Welcome to the new academic year at Nottingham Free School. It is always great to see all of our students after the summer break and to be able to welcome our sixth new cohort into year 7.

Our vision is to ensure all our students achieve a good career through university or equivalent training. Our high aspirations combine the key strands of strong achievement, employability skills and consideration towards others which is summed up in our motto 'work hard be kind'. These principles, which guide our school community, enable our students to reach this goal and be well rounded citizens who are highly desired by higher education and employers.

We are delighted with our first set of GCSE results and so proud of all the students for their hard work and perseverance. These results also reinforce the fact that our focus on independent learning and high expectations leads to success and achievement.

One of the main focus areas for us this year is our curriculum. This is the main drive for all schools as we respond to the new Ofsted framework which has a heavy focus on the quality of education that students experience.

'...the vast, accumulated wealth of human knowledge, and what we choose to pass on to the next generation through teaching in our schools (the curriculum), must be at the heart of education.' Amanda Spielman Ofsted Chief Inspector

It is important to note that 'curriculum' means more than just each subject area; it is everything that we teach including all of the wider curriculum and enrichment experiences.

This also coincides with our school priorities as, after five years of existence, it is a prime time for us to review our curriculum offer and ensure that it is fit for purpose. It is critical that all schools ensure that their curriculum prepares all students for their future, and as the future is part of a rapidly changing world, schools must be prepared to regularly review what they teach. This will be a detailed review and will include reviewing the timetable and looking at how our week is structured. As we research the best structures and curriculum that suits our school vision, we will keep all parents/carers informed of any planned future changes.

During the previous summer term and the August INSET days, teaching staff have started to review their planning including what they teach, the order in which they teach it and how they teach it. This is a long term project that is likely to take at least two years. This won't cause any disruption to students but will ensure that all year groups are on the correct pathway for their stage and are experiencing a quality and thoughtful curriculum.

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The current national curriculum and the new GCSE courses are heavily knowledge-based and content heavy which means that all students have to be able to learn and remember more facts and information. It is critical that our work on ensuring that all students are able to learn and remember more continues. Our knowledge organisers are vital in providing students with the material that they need to know and we will be strengthening the study sessions by teaching a particular study skill every half term to ensure that all students have a broad range of study skills that they are able to apply independently.

Reading is also a critical aspect to this work. All research shows that a student's reading ability and vocabulary is a key indicator of academic and life success. GCSE exams have a reading age of at least 15 years and so our aim is that all students reach this point by year 11 and preferably before that. We offer a range of support and opportunities for all students to increase their reading ability. They also need to be reading at home as much as possible so your support in this is gratefully received. We read every day and so all students must have a reading book with them in school.

Students' personal development is incredibly important too and a real strength of the school. There are many opportunities as part of our lessons and enrichment sessions for students to develop their employability skills. We are also increasing our focus on our 'attitude to learning' descriptors so that all students are able to form and shape their characters into young adults who are willing to learn and take their next steps into further education and employment.

This year, we would like to give parents some summary information about each year group so that you have a better understanding of the focus, aims and events that your child/children will be experiencing. Attached to this letter is an overview of everything that they will be learning in each of their subjects and some general information about their pastoral and curriculum details.

Please take time to read these documents and I thank you in advance for your support and collaboration with us this year to ensure that this is another successful year for everyone.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs J. Brown
Head of School