



December 2017

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

The approach to the Christmas holiday is always a busy time of year, but it is important to reflect on all that has been achieved and enjoyed during the first term. Congratulations to all of our year 7 students who have completed their first term. They have fully involved themselves in our community and we look forward to seeing them develop over the coming years.

At the other end of the age spectrum, our year 10 students are starting to think about their next steps as they plan their work experience and think about their Post-16 choices. We will be running some Post-16 workshops after Christmas for our year 9 and 10 students which will look at a variety of choices as well as planning the start of our Post-16 provision which will start in September 2019.

The Christmas events both in and out of school are always a joy to be part of and we are so proud of all of the students who participated in the music events across the city such as The Big Sing and Christmas in the City – we have a very creative, talented group of students.

Our focus on careers has seen has also included optional sessions where visitors come into school from a variety of sessions to talk about their career. This term the speakers have been from more vocational backgrounds such as the army, hairdressing and beauty, performing arts, manufacturing and engineering. Hearing from people working in particular careers and being able to ask individual questions is such a great opportunity to either find out more about a particular area of interest or one which is completely unknown and we would encourage all students to participate. I would also like to thank all of those parents and volunteers who have so generously given up their time to encourage our students.

January sees a focus on assessments for many of our students and we have provided them with revision materials earlier than usual to encourage a steady approach to revision and to help them plan for some much needed rest and relaxation over the Christmas period.

I wish you and your families a happy and relaxed holiday and offer my sincere thanks for all of the support that you give to your children and our school community for which we are very appreciative.

Mrs J Brown
Head of School

Trips and visits

Please note that the following trips/visits have been planned for the forthcoming year. We hope that this list helps you as Parents/Carers with financial planning. During the course of the year, other activities may be added to this, as we are sometimes offered opportunities that are too good to miss!

Year group	Activity	Dates	Approximate cost
7	Walesby Scout camp – 3 day/2 night residential	21-23 March 2018	£120
8	Walesby Scout camp – 3 day/2 night residential	22-27 June 2018	£120
9	Spain – 1 week visit for those taking Spanish GCSE	27-29 June 2018	tbc
9/10	Jekyll & Hyde Theatre Trip	21 March 2018	£15
9/10	GCSE Music – Wicked at The Birmingham Hippodrome	26 April 2018	£38.40
9/10	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award – Training weekend	12-13 May 2018	£198
9/10	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award – Practice expedition	7-8 July 2018	
9/10	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award – Qualifying expedition	21-22 July 2018	
10	Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award – Training weekend (only for those without Bronze Award)	12-13 May 2018	£250
10	Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award – Practice expedition	6-8 July 2018	
10	Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award – Qualifying expedition	20-22 July 2018	

Curriculum News

Spanish

It has been a productive term for students studying Spanish. Year 7 have been preparing for their assessments by writing some paragraphs in Spanish about school and year 8 have been doing the same on the topic of clothes and fashion. Those students practising their vocabulary and flash cards little and often are really seeing the benefits in terms of their progress and confidence. Year 9 have embarked on the GCSE course and have completed some fantastic work on the topic of holidays; whilst year 10 have been learning to discuss city life compared to life in the country, as well as shopping preferences and cities they would like to visit. Well done to all students who have shown dedication and enthusiasm with vocabulary memorisation, they should be very proud. Thank you also to families for your continued support with this.

Flights to Valencia for 34 year 9s and 4 members of staff are all booked and we are starting to get excited. The group will be exploring the area, trying out their Spanish and meeting new friends in our partner school IES Matilde Salvador in Castellón de la Plana. The Spanish group will be coming to the UK in June and are hoping to stay with families of students here at NFS.

Science

Nottingham Free School's Science students have been participating and exploring a variety of scientific areas so far this year! This term, our year 7 and 8 Science club students have been learning about DNA and where it is found. They even had a go at extracting DNA from a kiwi fruit! They have had a BLAST whilst learning about Science incorporated with Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Our 9 and 10 CREST award students have been growing plants using a sustainable amount of water. Ken Burrell, who has joined us from Hydrolite, has been helping the students set up various hydroponic systems that have very kindly been given to the school. The students are enjoying getting involved in growing various herbs and vegetables in areas that have very little or no soil using these techniques. We look forward to sharing all our produce later on in the year.

Our Year 10 Biology students have been getting stuck in with some heart dissections. This is a great way for them to learn about the structure of the heart and how it works in preparation for their GCSE assessments in January.



English

We have had a busy half term in English, with the students working hard to improve their reading ages even further. All students now have a sticker on their planner which tells them their reading age and their standardised score, plus a target of where they need to be at the end of the academic year. As our first GCSE exams are fast approaching, the Year 10s are memorising key quotes from exam texts, for example, Lord of the Flies and Power and Conflict poetry. All students have also received a revision book to help them with their studies.

Maths

Next term see's the start of the preparation in the maths department for this year's UKMT (United Kingdom Mathematics Trust) challenges. Those students who have already opted for the maths enrichment will form our school team for the regional finals of the UKMT Team Maths Challenge on Wednesday 21st March. This challenge will be entered by a team of 4 year 8's and 9's and requires students to tackle a variety of timed, competitive and engaging mathematical activities while developing teamwork and communication skills, such as a group round, cross number, shuttle and team relay; why not try the problem below taken from the group round. There will also be the opportunity for our top 40 students from each year group to enter the Intermediate (Year 9/10) and Junior (Year 7/8) maths challenges held on 1st February and 26th April respectively. Last year saw our first student, Dilan Lehane, qualify for the next round and we are excited to see what may happen this year. We wish all students who take part in these challenges the best of luck.

The vowels A, E, I, O and U are coded by the squares 1, 4, 9, 16 and 25 respectively.

The consonants B, C, D, ..., X, Y and Z are coded by the integers less than or equal to 26 that are not squares, in reverse. So B = 26, C = 24, D = 23, ..., X = 5, Y = 3 and Z = 2.

(a) Decode the message

20 16 6 1 11 4 3 16 25

[3 marks]

(b) Decode the message

7 4 11 3 6 4 17 17 8 20 1 14 18 10

[3 marks]

PE

Nottingham Free School has had a positive start to fixtures this academic year. We have had sporting success for the boys Football where the Year 8 team came 3rd out of 12 other schools in the Central Venue League and the Year 10 boys team beat Carlton Academy 5-2 in the first round of the Forest Bowl.

The girls have been representing Nottingham Free School from all year groups in the Netball Central Venue League and we are extremely proud of their continual hard work in games and training. Finally the brave cross country students have represented Nottingham Free School on the cold Saturday mornings at Berry Hill Mansfield, the huge commitment from students and parents is appreciated by all of us in the PE department. Notable performances are Finlay Wilson and Molly Doran, who both came 7th in the County in their respective races- outstanding performance from them both!

PE Enrichment

PE have added Boxing onto the enrichment programme this year to continue providing new opportunities for our students. A professional coach from the Nottingham Boxing Academy delivers sessions to 20 students each week. The Boxing has been such a success it will continue throughout the spring term.

Music

This term has been very busy in the music department! We had three students taking part in 'Sing City' which is a city wide singing competition. Two of the students made it through to the final and one of them went on to win the competition - well done Adara! On 12 December, the school choir will be singing at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham and taking part in 'Christmas in the City' which involved other secondary schools and primary schools from Nottingham to perform. On 14th December at 6.30pm, we have our Christmas concert which features musical acts, the drama enrichment group and the LAMDA enrichment group. All the students have been working really hard for the concert and I can't wait to see all the performances!

Art

The Creative Arts enrichment group have been busy this term, their most recent pieces were inspired by Chris Gryder, a ceramics artist and together they have made a lovely collaborative piece which will no doubt appear in the art exhibition at the end of the year-so watch this space.



Year 10 continue to impress with their amazing portrait work, they have worked hard this term on a topic that is very challenging. They have done themselves proud and are all looking forward to presenting their best work in their brand new sketchbooks after Christmas.

PSHCE

Pupils have been learning about a variety of topics this term, Year 9 have been learning about the Rohingya Muslim crisis in Myanmar and the complicated politics surrounding the country. Year 10 have been looking at misogyny within our society and how it affects both men and women, they have been looking at their own use of language and discussing ways in which they can change things for the better for a more equal future for all. Year 8 have been recapping on their knowledge of mental health and working on their mindfulness techniques which is particularly crucial with their assessments coming up in the new year. Year 7 have been focusing on citizenship and British values, learning about the UN rights of children and how they can contribute to a community. There are lots of new topics to look forward to in the new year including First Aid training for year 9 by the British Red Cross and a year 10 workshop looking at how to stay safe online.

Philosophy and Ethics – visit to York

Year 10 had a fantastic visit to York from Wednesday 6th -7th December. Students visited York Minster and were welcomed at their Holy Communion service at 12:30pm. They then were given a really informative tour from Jeremy and Timo about the Minster and its history. Our visit to the Minster concluded with candles in the crypt where students were asked to reflect on the troubles in the world including places where people are not free to practice their religion.

We also visited the York Christmas market among other shops including the new Harry Potter shop! In the evening we went on a very chilling ghost walk and got cosy in our onesie's when we returned to the Youth Hostel. Well done to Sam Knowles who won the onesie competition. The next day we visited York Central Mosque. We were welcomed by the Iman Adid Salik to their new building. We received a really interesting and thought provoking talk and the students had a great opportunity to ask questions about Islam and the role of the Mosque in it's local community. It was a great experience for staff and students and we were able to look at the places of worship in and had a chance consider some wider issues, such as religious freedom, tolerance and how different faiths can work together to improve communities. We look forward to running this visit again next year.

Careers

Year 9s and 10s have been busy with career audits and research this term. They have indicated which areas of work interest them and have been researching a specific career. The research included qualifications required, salary, a typical working day and career progression.

Work experience: We have launched work experience for year 10 and many have already secured their placement for 14th-18th May 2018. We are so proud of the mature attitude and persistence many have shown in the application process, and hope some skills have been learnt along the way. A big well done to those who have already found a placement. For those who have yet to find one, keep applying!

Careers talks: This term we have heard all about: hairdressing, engineering, performing arts, careers in the armed forces and policing. The talks have been really well attended by students from all years. What an amazing opportunity to find out about careers from employers and employees. We have all learned loads. Thank you so much to all our volunteers speakers.

The talks are to continue next term, starting off with working in fashion and textiles. If you feel you can offer a talk, then we would love to hear from you.

Values: Back in September when the sun shone, Lisa Spencer-Arnell, our Chair of Governors, kindly gave up her time to present in assembly to year 9 and 10. Lisa used her expertise as a life coach to help us reflect on our individuality and personal values. Year 10s reflected in more detail during follow-up sessions in active tutoring. A big thank you to Lisa for all her input.

Trips: Thirty year 7s and 8s visited the National Videogame Arcade last week for a Digital Skills workshop. The students had great fun learning all about careers in this sector. There are many more

trips and opportunities in the pipeline as we pursue our goal of attaining as many student-employer interactions as possible. Watch this space...

Rewards

We introduced a new element to our rewards this year and every Friday now sees a small group of students enjoying a hot chocolate with a member of the senior leadership team during tutor time. Students are nominated by staff for 'going over and above' with our school motto: work hard be kind. It is delightful to see so many students being nominated for such fantastic reasons.

Our weekly 'kind awards' are for any acts of kindness that are spotted by staff. These are displayed on the screens in school and all nominated students can collect a small gift in recognition on a Friday at break or lunch from reception.

House Competitions

This half term, each House Captain and Vice Captain have been tasked to organise a competition. Students have taken part in a skill challenge (won by Clough), geography (won by Potter), general knowledge (won by Potter), logos (won by Hawksley) and maths (won by Clough).

Students have been working towards earning a Christmas party this half term. This has been an exciting challenge and the house which has received the lowest number of negatives this half term is Potter. Congratulations Potter!

Torvill and Potter are on track to win the House Cup at the end of the year. Hawksley have dominated the House Cup for two years - is it time for a change?!

Anti-bullying week

Nottingham Free School embraced anti-bullying week (13th November - 17th November 17) which focused on promoting difference and equality in schools with the tag line 'All Different, All Equal'.

The student executive council delivered an assembly to all students to highlight this special week. However, they reminded students that preventing bullying in school is everyone's responsibility throughout the year and not just one week.

Each subject area focused on inspiring people within their area that had faced adversity. For example; PE highlighted discrimination in sport and how National Governing Bodies have developed campaigns to reduce discrimination. English looked at Wonder by RJ Palacio which focuses on a boy who has a facial disfigurement attending school for the first time. Science looked at women scientists and how they were treated.

The following students have volunteered to be our anti-bullying ambassadors; Molly Doran (year 10), Emily Clarkson-Webb (year 10), Emma Davies (year 10) and Harris Dean (year 7). These four students will be working on various projects throughout the year starting with a student notice board which celebrates our diversity in our school. They will also be collaborating with other schools.

Attendance

Attendance is a key priority at Nottingham Free School as missing school has a direct impact on how well a student achieves.

We aim for all students to have at least 98% attendance in order to support their learning.

Please try to avoid making medical appointments during the school day and be aware that your child's attendance will be affected if they miss their register mark at 8.15am or 1.20pm. Appointments made in between these times will not affect their attendance. If you request any time off school for any other reason you must complete a leave of absence form, available from reception or on the school website

Our term time dates for this academic year and next are all on the school website (Information – Term Dates – Related Downloads).

Students with high levels of attendance receive a variety of rewards including:
Flapjack Friday – flapjacks awarded to the tutor group in each year with the highest attendance
Reward tokens – awarded every half term to all students with an attendance level of 98% or above. These can be cashed in for a variety of prizes or saved up for a bigger prize at the end of the year.

Communication Home

All letters and newsletters are now emailed to you and are also available on our school website (under the information tab).

Please let us know if you have not received any messages or have not been able to log onto your INSIGHT account - all contact with school for general enquiries can be dealt with through

contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

Just a reminder to let the school office know if any of your contact information has changed

contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

School Link Programme

Watch this space for a launch with students about the next steps for our link with our Chinese sister school in Ningbo.

Future key dates

8 January 2018	First day back after the Christmas holiday – 3.35pm finish for all students
11 January 2018	Year 8 Parent’s Evening - 3.35pm finish for all students
15 January 2018	Year 7 assessments begin
22 January 2018	Year 8 assessments begin
29 January 2018	Year 10 assessments begin
16 February 2018	Break up for half term
26 February 2018	First day back after half term

All school calendar and term dates are published on the school website.