

Headlines

NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

Summer Term 2020

Dear parents and guardians

I had assumed that I would end the term - and the year - with a quick summary letter including some key points and good wishes to all, as is the norm. However, in a year that has been far from normal, that was a naïve assumption to say the very least. Indeed, such is the length and detail of the key points that I have extracted them from my letter and instead included them in the 'appendix' that now forms the bulk of this newsletter.

This has been an extraordinary period, and one from which we will all take our own peculiar memories and emotions. Our journeys have been very different and I offer sincere condolences to all who have lost loved ones over the past weeks and to those who have suffered stress as a result of financial hardship or health concerns. Respect, too, for those who have adapted or found a new skill or path in life as a result of this pandemic, and pride in the way that the whole school community has pulled together.

I had spent fewer than 100 days in school in my role as Acting Head and only five in my substantive position when we went into lockdown. Not a first week or year that I would have wished for or imagined and, with an 'Excellent' inspection thrown in for good measure, I was certainly kept busy. I enjoyed meeting and getting to know many of you via individual or group Zoom and Teams meetings, but this is no substitute for face-to-face encounters and I, for one, am almost 'Zoomed out' now.

The good news is that, as things stand, it very much looks as though we will be open to all in September and that, unlike now, all will be required to be on site unless there is a government-defined reason as to why they should not be. I appreciate that, whilst many will be celebrating this fact, others will have reservations. Please be assured, though, that our full reopening will be subject to stringent regulations and that we will continue to place emphasis on health and safety, hand washing, respiratory hygiene and general health; the cleaning regime will be rigorous, social distancing will be adhered to where possible and PPE will be available to those colleagues who require it. Regulations may change and



you may well have questions or concerns over the coming weeks, so I have included below a link to a repository for non-urgent questions and two links and dates for parent information meetings via Zoom (I'm not quite done with it yet!). More information will follow.

Before we get to the 'key points', though, I would like to take a moment to pause and to remember that this is the end of term and of the academic year 2019-2020. Over the past weeks our students have overcome many hurdles, but they have come together this week to celebrate, too: Nursery girls have continued to play with sheer joy and blind oblivion; Reception pupils have - symbolically - released the butterflies that they have 'grown', and Junior School students have enjoyed their 'moving up' day. Year 6 and U5 enjoyed their induction to Senior School and Sixth Form respectively and all have relished their individual and shared celebratory and valedictory assemblies. These included a thanks and farewell to all of our leaving staff, and a celebration of their time with us. I would like to share the details of this here with you too:

Miss James, Games Teacher, 2019-2020

Miss James joined us on a short-term contract and plans to return to Brighton to continue her teaching career.

Miss Roworth, Sports Assistant, 2019-2020

Miss Roworth is an ex-Junior School pupil, so this wasn't her first time in the school. She has successfully gained an NQT post in Milton Keynes.

Miss Kate Monks, Classics teacher, 2018-2020

Miss Monks joined us for her NQT training and quickly became involved in debating and public speaking. She is returning to her home in the North West and plans to continue her teaching career there.

Mrs Pauline Hawkins, School Nurse, 2018-2020

Mrs Hawkins cared for many in her time at Northampton High School, but is now moving on to a different 'NHS' as she takes up a role supporting people with diabetes in the community.

Señora Alicia Diez, Teacher of Spanish and MFL, 2017-2020

Señora Diez has made a significant impact on the languages faculty, the eTwinning project and Erasmus+. She is now moving to Thailand with her family and will take up a Head of Department role there.

Mr James Loveday, TP Teacher, 2017-2020

Mr Loveday joined us as an NQT and quickly became part of the school community, teaching TP and tutoring and mentoring Year 6 students. He is moving schools but not out of the GDST, so will remain in touch.

Mrs Natalie Williamson, Deputy Director of Sport, 2017-2020

Mrs Williamson will be remembered, amongst other things, for organising the fabulous hockey and netball tour to South Africa in 2018. She is moving to Saudi Arabia with her family and hopes to take up a teaching position there.

Mrs Catriona German, Teacher of Music, 2018-2020

Mrs German has taught across all age ranges within the school and leads the Ladies' Community Choir. She is retiring from classroom teaching but will be visible around school as a peripatetic teacher.

Mrs Gill Williams, Teacher of History, 2003-2020

Mrs Williams has contributed an inordinate amount of teaching material, influence and experience to the History department over the years and has also taught Geography, Classics and History of Art. She is now looking forward to time on her narrowboat and to returning to the High School when she can be of help.

No words of real warmth above, no way of splitting these colleagues in this or any other public forum, for they have all contributed so much to the school in their own unique way. Believe me, though, when I say that they have been applauded by their departments, faculties, students and the wider community for their individual contributions and for the mark that they have left upon the school. I thank them all sincerely; they will be sorely missed.

One member of 'staff' not included in the list above is, of course, Dr Helen Stringer, revered Head of Northampton High School from 2015. As a result of the current situation, Dr Stringer has, like others, been unable to visit us in Northampton but, regulations allowing, she will do so in the autumn and we will plan a 'proper goodbye' then. Again, more details to follow.

I have kept you long enough and there is much to assimilate below, so I will end by thanking you, the students and all my colleagues for your support, forbearance and tenacity in the face of adversity and by wishing you all a happy and restful summer break. Take care and stay well.

Very best wishes

Caroline Petryszak
Headmistress

Information for Parents

Parent Communications and Information Meetings

As legislation relating to COVID-19 and the reopening of schools is likely to be updated over the summer, we will communicate with you and keep you updated in a timely manner.

Additionally, we have scheduled two evening Zoom meetings which you are invited to join in order to ask questions of the senior team in a 'live' setting:

Tuesday 25 August, 7pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94428487377?pwd=NFBtTGxuZzRITX-hyVINmVFRhM1c4dz09>

Meeting ID: 944 2848 7377

Password: 0CYaBP

Tuesday 1 September, 7pm

<https://zoom.us/j/92808723664?pwd=MUxPQlNFcDEx-N2Ezc0FDY3hyb1BXQT09>

Meeting ID: 928 0872 3664

Password: 3fVQM0

If you have any non-urgent questions over the summer, please post them here (<https://cutt.ly/UppSRne>) and we will endeavour to address your queries, either directly or in a wider communication as appropriate.

Uniform update

We have previously communicated to you about our optional uniform arrangements in the autumn term. The government advice has been updated and although freshly laundered clothes daily are still the best option, this is not compulsory.

Our uniform supplier, School Blazer, have assured us that stock levels are good, but to allow you time to obtain all you need, we do not require full uniform to be worn until after October half term.

The exception to this is students returning to Upper Fifth in September. We are fully aware that pupils grow out of their uniform and only need it for approximately two more terms when they get to Upper Fifth. Therefore we are happy for Upper Fifth pupils to return either in uniform or in their own clothes and to keep this option for the remainder of the academic year. They must, however, adhere to the Sixth Form dress code (opposite):

Pupil lockers

If any pupil did not get the opportunity to empty their locker before lockdown or still has items in school, they can be collected over the Summer.

School Buses from September

We are now confident that the school transport network can be operational from the start of term. The recent bus survey sent to parents by Mrs Cox has provided some useful information for us regarding the demand for September. If you did not respond to that survey and would like a bus place for September 2020, or your

One-to-One Devices for Y5-Y13

Thank you to all parents who joined the Zoom meeting on Wednesday 8 July. Questions arising from this will be addressed in an FAQ document which will be sent out separately.

All students in Years 5-13 are required to bring their own device to school from September.

'Students should dress in a smart and appropriate way, but are free to do so in their own inimitable style, with some specific exceptions (see below).

Visible tattoos, facial rings or other piercings (apart from ear piercings)

Blue denim (any clothing made of blue denim or denim in appearance)

Casual items of clothing that are dominated by logos or slogans

Excessively short skirts or dresses. Vest tops and tops with spaghetti straps, as well as tops that are revealing (low-cut or see-through)

Baggy tracksuit bottoms. Hoodies or other hooded tops, as well as excessively baggy shirts, T-shirts or jumpers
Outdoor scarves, blanket scarves and wraps, when indoors'

Please contact nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net to arrange a time to come in and do this. The deadline for emptying lockers will be 14 August 2020 to allow the cleaning team time to sanitise all the lockers before the start of term.

decision has changed, please contact nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net by the 31 July, as the routes and exact timings are currently being put together.

More information will be published in August along with details of COVID-19 safety procedures applicable to school transport. If you have any queries in the meantime please get in touch with the school office.

School Lunches

From September, we will be in a position to offer the full catering service and all pupils will have a school lunch. There will, by necessity, be some changes for safety reasons, which will be explained to the pupils on their return, but we will be offering breakfast, tuck shop and lunch. The salad bar will be replaced by pre-packed salad boxes, the sandwich room will offer a pre-packed 'grab and go' option and hot lunches will be served to pupils (rather than self service). Timings of lunch will be staggered to allow for social distancing in the Dining Room.

Trips

We have taken the difficult decision of cancelling all trips in the autumn term and keeping trips for the remainder of the year under review. There are many reasons for this decision, which I am sure you will understand:

We are currently unable to book trips (day or residential) under the DfE guidance and we have to have a reasonable lead-in time to allow parents and staff to make arrangements and payments.

We also want to ensure that pupils get back into the school routine as normally as possible and whilst educational visits are an important part of our curriculum we want to maximise their time in front of teachers after a long absence from physical school.

It is likely that our whole year group trips for U3, L4 and U4 will not take place at all next year; we would normally have booked and paid deposits on these by now and feel it is too much to ask parents for payment in a short space of time. However, once we are able to, we will resume educational visits off-site where possible.

Trips which had been booked and had deposits paid already are also cancelled. We are currently in the process of recovering refunds for these and will be in touch separately with families affected as soon as we have more information.

Equipment

The pupils will not be able to share equipment in school when we return, and whilst we have made adjustments to take this into account, there are some items that we need parents to ensure their daughters have. These are:

For all students in Year 3 to Year 6:

A small pencil case
Blue handwriting pen
2 HB pencils
Small selection of coloured pencils
Highlighter pen
30cm ruler (may not fit in pencil case)
Glue Stick
Rubber
Pencil sharpener
Small headphones or earphones
Maths set - protractor, compass, set square (Years 5 & 6)
Fineliner set (Years 5 and 6)
NB. All items must be named.

For all students from U3 to U5 and A Level Art Students in 6.1 only:

Shading pencils 2B, 4B, 6B
Scissors
Black biro pen
Black fineliner pen for line and wash techniques
Small tin of watercolours
Small pack of blendable soft chalk pastels
Small pack of oil pastels
2 small paint brushes - nylon bristles are strong
Glue Stick
Plastic eraser
Coloured pencils
NB. There is no specified brand for any of these items and most are in the normal kit list.

For all students from U3-U5 plus A Level students taking any Science subject:

A lab coat - the school has sourced these on your behalf to ensure they are appropriate quality to protect clothing.

Students will be issued these in September and we ask parents to name them. Pupils should bring them home to be washed each week. Parents will be charged £20.00 via ParentPay for these.

A pair of plastic glasses. These do not need to be goggles or to a safety level required in industrial settings. Here is an example of the type of thing and we leave you to source a set to fit your daughter - <https://cutt.ly/6ppS2fo>

Health and Safety

Please kindly remember that all pupils, staff and parents must follow the latest government guidelines on social distancing at all times both in and out of school.

Family Holidays

The situation regarding overseas travel and quarantine is currently changing on an almost daily basis. If you are travelling, therefore, we suggest that you consult the most up-to-date Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice here - <https://cutt.ly/EppDu80>. The FCO advises against all but essential travel, but from 4 July travel to some countries became exempt from this advice and today, 10 July, restrictions have eased further. However, the FCO advises that no travel is risk free and disruption is still possible, cautioning that national control measures may be brought in with little notice.

If you have a pre-booked holiday (i.e. before COVID-19 restrictions were known) or you book a holiday from this point forward please ensure that you are fully aware of the possible quarantine requirements on re-entering the UK and abide by the advice in order to keep yourselves safe and avoid risking the health of others.

We kindly ask that you avoid taking an overseas holiday at the end of the summer if this would impact on a return to school on 7 September. If this is unavoidable, please contact nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net at your earliest convenience to advise them that your daughter(s) will not be returning to school immediately.

