

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parent / Carers,

## **Re: Remote Learning for Year 7, 8 and 9**

Thank you once again for both your continued support and for all that you are doing in supporting home learning with your child/children. It is much appreciated.

As a school, we have given a great deal of thought and planning in to the work we are setting for our students in Years 7, 8 and 9. As we know, these students will not return to us in school before September at the earliest.

We have been guided by four key principles:

1. The gap between students who can access work at home at those who cannot does not widen.
2. Any gaps in students' knowledge does not slow down later learning when we return to school.
3. Students do not feel alone or forgotten.
4. Home learning is sustainable for students, parents and teachers.

To achieve this, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be focusing on recall, consolidation and practice of previously-learned content in their lessons until the end of this academic year. We are calling this our 'consolidation curriculum'.

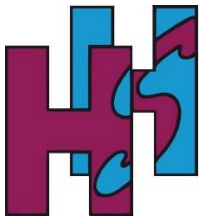
We want students to revisit and build upon concepts and ideas that are already familiar to them. As a result, the work set will contain a high ratio of practice. This will reduce the load on parents and carers as 'teachers' as well as lower the risk of students becoming disengaged with their learning. Of course, we will provide some stretch and challenge, but within concepts and ideas which are already familiar to them.

We know that many students find learning new things hard without support. It is also difficult to identify misconceptions that develop when learning new knowledge at home. However, we are also aware that your child may be feeling anxious about falling behind with learning. This is one of the main reasons for focusing on the consolidation of previous learning, so that any gaps in their knowledge do not slow down their learning of new content when we return to school. We are busy adapting our curriculum to take account of this approach.

After a great deal of thought, we have decided against offering online virtual 'lessons' to students in Years 7, 8 and 9. We acknowledge that this approach has some benefits, but there are many serious disadvantages.

Firstly, a significant number of our students do not have access to this technology, and so delivering lessons in this way would effectively widen the gap between students who can access it and those who cannot. It would lead to the students without the technology feeling even more alone. We have always been aware of the issue of digital poverty in our community, but it has never had the potential to have such a detrimental impact as now.

Secondly, introducing new technological platforms at an already challenging time for many families (including teachers) would be counter-productive. Students, parents and teachers are familiar with ClassCharts, and as a school, we can monitor and quality assure the lessons that are set on here by teachers. This would be impossible to do with virtual online lessons.



# Hellesdon High School & Sixth Form Centre

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Finally, the most useful and purposeful thing students can be doing in this half-term is practising previously-learned content, and receiving feedback on their work from their teachers. Virtual lessons do not make this any easier, and so offer little advantage when weighed against the disadvantages.

## Ongoing Pastoral Support

There are a number of ways to access pastoral support during this time. We have introduced a Wellbeing module on classcharts - in the parent app, there is an option to let school staff know how your child is feeling, under the 'wellbeing' tab. This feature is also available in the student app and on the [classcharts.com](https://www.classcharts.com) website. These alerts are monitored by your child's form tutor and they will make contact with your child should they raise a wellbeing concern.

Support is also available through the [pastoral@hellesdon.net](mailto:pastoral@hellesdon.net) email. The pastoral support officers can signpost students and their families to a range of support services and offer advice and guidance. A list of these services can also be found in the 'support and advice' section of the Hellesdon website under the 'Information' tab.

Parents can also call 'Just One Number' 0300 300 0123 or visit <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/> for a range of health and wellbeing advice.

To further improve our communication with students and to allow them to interact with each other, all students have been sent an email inviting them to join a Google Classroom. Google Classrooms will give tutors and heads of house the opportunity to share information and provide guidance and support to their tutees. They have been tasked to share assembly resources, offer pastoral support and provide some fun tasks and challenges for students to have a go at. It will also provide a safe, monitored platform for students to communicate with their peers.

Please can you ask your child to check their school email accounts and follow the invitation provided within. If your child does not have their school email address or password (or the Google Classroom link does not work), please contact your child's head of house who will provide it.

Heads of House are contactable on the following email addresses;

Olympus House: [vstevenson5nrd@nsix.org.uk](mailto:vstevenson5nrd@nsix.org.uk)

Nevis House: [asmith2xrb@nsix.org.uk](mailto:asmith2xrb@nsix.org.uk)

Everest House: [lperrywarn7hrl@nsix.org.uk](mailto:lperrywarn7hrl@nsix.org.uk)

Fuji House: [drayner7nre@nsix.org.uk](mailto:drayner7nre@nsix.org.uk)

Snowdon House: [sgray6yr9@nsix.org.uk](mailto:sgray6yr9@nsix.org.uk)

Please do get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. You can email us directly during this time at [principal@hellesdonhigh.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:principal@hellesdonhigh.norfolk.sch.uk) if you have any general questions or concerns.

We very much want to support you and your children as best we can at this difficult time and to continue to educate them as well and as safely as possible. Thank you for your understanding, patience and encouragement during this period. We really hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well, but recognise that we are all deeply affected by this ongoing pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Earl & Tom Rolfe  
Principals'