

22 January 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

We have now completed our third week of lockdown and I hope you are all safe and well. Over the past few weeks we have received many, many messages of support from you and I cannot thank you enough for this; I share these with staff each time and it really does mean a lot to all of us – thank you.

Our remote learning offer certainly feels very different the second time round: our teachers learned so much about teaching and learning in a 'virtual' environment in the first period from March until July that they, and the students, have been able to draw on the techniques they developed to truly hit the ground running. We do miss seeing our students face-to-face but our 'remote' attendance remains excellent. Teachers have fed back that they are very pleased with the way most children are now able to engage with them, which really does help them keep everyone on track and focused. Now that we are, once again, settled into remote learning routines, we are keen to gather your feedback and we will shortly be inviting you to share your views through a brief online questionnaire. This will help us to understand, more fully, the experiences of all our students.

Students in Year 11 and Year 13

Teachers have provided very positive feedback about how Year 11 and 13 students are engaging in lessons while they are awaiting clarification on the arrangements for assessments. Thank you to parents and carers that joined me for the Year 11 and Year 13 Headteacher briefings on Wednesday 13th January and Thursday 14th January, respectively. I will be holding further briefings once more details have been confirmed about the procedures for the awarding of grades this year.

Last Friday afternoon, Ofqual launched its joint consultation with the Department for Education to seek the views of all stakeholders regarding the arrangements for the 'teacher assessments' that will replace this year's GCSE and A level examinations, as outlined by Gavin Williamson on Wednesday 6th January. The consultation covers general and vocational qualifications and, in brief, Ofqual and the Department for Education propose that:

- students would continue with their education during this academic year
- students would be assessed by their teachers in a period beginning in May into early June
- teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid-June
- external quality assurance by the exam boards would be ongoing throughout June
- results would be issued to students once the QA process is complete, most likely in early July
- student appeals could be submitted immediately following the issue of results and would first be considered by schools and colleges



In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the following statement in the consultation: *'we propose that teachers should make final assessments of the standard of their students' performance during late May and early June'*. Therefore, **it is extremely important that all students continue to engage with all their lessons as this will positively influence their grades** regardless of the assessment model used.

We will be responding to the consultation next week; if you too would like to respond, you can do so online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>

Inevitably, students and parents will have lots of questions and are having to be very patient while this consultation unfolds, ahead of the finalised guidance being released. However, we have asked that teachers do not engage in any communication relating, specifically, to how GCSEs and A level 'teacher assessments' will be awarded this year, as the details of this process have not yet been confirmed - of course, all staff at the school will continue to remain reassuring to students and parents and we will share further information as soon as we are able to do so. To support this, we have set up a dedicated email address for parents and students to use for any questions related to the awarding of this year's examinations so that assigned members of the senior leadership team can respond. This is as follows: examinations2021@nsg.northants.sch.uk. In the meantime, we will continue teaching all courses and **students must continue proactively engaging with new learning and consolidating what they have covered**. This will be crucial.

To clarify, it is not our intention to run mock examinations, however **these will be replaced by a range of internal assessments which will support teachers' evidence-based decisions in the future**. We will be sharing more details about this directly with students, parents and carers next week.

Sixth Form applications

We have received a record breaking number of applications for places in our Sixth Form for September 2021 and I would like to remind all students in Year 11 that the deadline for submitting applications is **Monday 1st February 2021**. If you have any questions about the courses on offer, or need any further details, please do contact Mrs Green, Director of Sixth form on: cgreen@nsg.northants.sch.uk.

Creative Earth competition

We remain committed to raising awareness of environmental issues and climate change and, Yesterday, Miss Oldham launched a 'Creative Earth' Competition for students in Years 7 to 11 and shared detail with students in each of those year groups. Creative Earth is an art competition for people aged 16 and under from across the UK, run by the UN COP26 Climate Change Conference in collaboration with WWF.

As part of the Together for Our Planet campaign, students are invited to join in, get creative and show global leaders the world they want to live in. Whether it is green forests and garden cities, clear skies and wind turbines or oceans teeming with life – we are hoping our students will join in by painting, drawing or designing a piece of art that shows how they want our planet to look in the future. Further details about this competition can be found here [Creative Earth Competition - Together For Our Planet \(ukcop26.org\)](http://ukcop26.org) and Miss Oldham can be contacted on the following email address if you have any additional questions: eoldham@nsg.northants.sch.uk

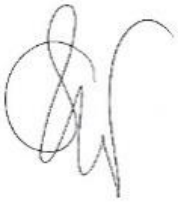


Northamptonshire Lockdown League

Once again, we are taking part in Northamptonshire Sport's 'Lockdown Challenge' and we would encourage all our students to get active and take part. Mrs Tarlton has already shared information with students and has been busy keeping us on our toes to ensure we all contribute as much as possible. More information can be found here: <https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/lockdown-league>. The League involves schools competing with each other in a series of group fixtures, logging as much physical activity as they can throughout each week to build up league points – our staff are also doing a terrific job at contributing!

Thank you again for all your support.

My very best wishes to you all,



Cristina Taboada-Naya | Headteacher
Northampton School for Girls

