



HT1 Autumn 2020

Introduction – Mrs Corbett:

I hope both you and your families continue to be healthy and well. At George Spencer Academy we know more than ever before the importance of our strong partnership with home and the need for clear and regular communication so that you feel fully informed on the school's response to COVID-19 and, even more importantly you feel secure and confident during these uncertain times in how we are continuing to look after your child and keep them as safe as possible whilst also challenging them to learn and develop. We are eager for you to be on this journey with us and would like for you to understand all that we do so you can continue to support us with your child at home. I will continue to provide regular updates of current developments with our processes linked to COVID-19. In addition, this half termly bulletin is designed to ensure you maintain an overview of other key information.

Communications:

As a school we are looking at the ways information is communicated to you as parents and carers, if you could spare 5 minutes to complete this short survey using Google Forms it would help us with our review. The form will close on **Monday November 2nd 2020**. It is only with your feedback that we will be able to make any necessary changes to improve our communication with you in the future. Thank you for your time.
Miss Stevens, Excellence Pioneer

Link to the form:

<https://forms.gle/Ty8wSKP8TwpXKKP9>

Update from the Principal – Mrs Corbett:

We are immensely proud of the excellent start our students have made since returning to George Spencer Academy in September. They are working extremely hard and are demonstrating unwavering commitment to catch up on any missed learning. Their resilience, energy and positivity are recognised and rewarded daily. Our Directors of Learning (Heads of Year) have written a year group specific update to give you a flavour of the 'Ethos of Excellence' this half term.

Our Parent Forum meetings are currently paused due to us being unable to invite visitors onto our site. We are exploring safe alternatives as an interim measure. If you would like to be part of the Parent Forum please contact Mr Dakers (Jdakers@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk). We hope you are able to get involved. Please follow us on Twitter to receive regular updates on what is happening within the academy.

As per normal routine, half term 2 (beginning on Monday 2nd November) will see the start of our Winter Routine which means that all students are confined to hard surfaces only and should keep off all grass areas. We provide outdoor spaces for each year group bubble/zone plus indoor areas for students to eat their lunch. As you start to consider winter outwear please may we remind you to refer to our Uniform Expectations which can be found on our website or in your child's Student Planner. Please consider purchasing an umbrella and a hooded black coat for your child for when they are outside.

Our Year 11 students will be sitting their first Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) from Monday 2 November to Friday 13 November. This is a very important time for our Year 11s and we have guided them towards spending time during the half term break revising for these exams. The outcomes of these exams will greatly support teacher predictions and suitable interventions to ensure all students are able to 'strive to be the best they can be' at George Spencer Academy.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all and wish you a peaceful half term break.



Remote Learning – Miss Gordon, Vice Principal:

I would like to inform you of the remote learning plans we have in place now and in the future. We have been, and continue to, use Google Classroom to set and assess work which is being delivered remotely. The following update outlines the expectations in place and where to go if you require support.

George Spencer Academies remote learning plan has the following aims in line with government guidance:

- set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects
- teach a planned and well-sequenced curriculum so that knowledge and skills are built incrementally, with a good level of clarity about what is intended to be taught and practised in each subject
- provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher in the school or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos
- gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, using questions and other suitable tasks and set a clear expectation on how regularly teachers will check work
- enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding
- plan a programme that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, ideally including daily contact with teachers

The level of remote learning in place depends on the individual circumstances of the learner or groups of learners. If you require paper-based learning materials please email me, Miss J Gordon (jgordon@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk) on the first day of the isolation period to request them. We are currently offering asynchronous learning where work is uploaded and staff respond to questions, comments and assess work when they are able. In the event of a full lockdown, we aim to offer synchronous (face-to-face) learning through Google Meet which will complement the asynchronous learning through Google Classroom. During this half term teaching staff have been trained on the use of Google Meet as a method of teaching remotely as well as ensuring our curriculum maps are linked to resources which students are able to access out of lesson time. Thus supporting any foreseeable absence issues in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns about remote learning, you should contact the following individuals:

- Queries about the processes involved with remote learning – Miss J Gordon (Vice Principal)
- Support with student engagement / well-being – the relevant Director of Learning and PSA
- Support with IT – fill in the remote learning IT log found on the student hub
- Concerns about safeguarding – Mr J Dakers (Assistant Principal / DSL)

Library Books:

We would be grateful if you could have a look at home for any library books that need returning to school after the half-term break. In each year group office there is box or trolley where books can be returned to. Thank you for your support in making sure that students look after their library books and return them on time for others to borrow.



Y11 Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) – Miss Jenkinson, Vice Principal:

When we return after half term, the Year 11 cohort will be sitting their first round of PPEs from Monday 2nd - Friday 13th November. This will be the first time experiencing a formal setting for their GCSE studies and they have been excellent in understanding the importance of 'striving to be the best they can be'.

They have been working hard to prepare in lessons and with their home learning tasks and we are confident that they will use the half term break to continue following their teacher's guidance in order to help fully prepare. The well-being team will continue to offer their services during the PPEs to ensure all our students are supported emotionally as well as academically. Lots of useful information and revision resources are available through the student hub and individual google classrooms.

<https://sites.google.com/george-spencer.notts.sch.uk/studenthub/home>

Y7 Photographs:

From the week beginning Monday 9th November all Y7 students will have their photograph taken. These photos are for internal use and will not be available for parents to purchase.

Y7 Testing:

In the week beginning Monday 2nd November all Y7 students will be taking CAT (Cognitive Ability Test) and Reading tests. These are to support our target setting and to help us to target intervention. No revision or preparation are required.

Y7 – Mr Smith:

Students have made an excellent start to life at George Spencer Academy, successfully managing the transition from primary school under the current circumstances which are far from ordinary, and adapting to the routines and expectations of secondary school exceptionally well. In this one half term, the level of resolve and resilience shown by the students has been extraordinary. Myself, Miss Sipson and the team of Learning Managers are immensely proud of the way students have started their journey at George Spencer Academy and we look forward to sharing that journey with them. Teachers of Year 7 often comment on the supportive atmosphere of classrooms, the continual strive for students to be the best they can be and a deep-rooted love of learning, with one member of staff describing Year 7 as "a privilege to teach" and it is clear how well students have embraced our Core Values and demonstrated a real love of learning - over 25,000 positive PARS points have been awarded to Year 7 over this half term for 'getting the basics right', 'excellent homework', 'teamwork', 'active listening', 'aiming high', 'staying positive' and an enormous 4544 positive PARS points have been awarded for 'excellent classwork'! The students have already shown themselves to be excellent ambassadors of the school in the recent filming for the Year 6 Virtual Open Evening, and I continue to be impressed with how polite, caring and considerate they are as a cohort. I am really pleased with, and proud of, the students' first half term at George Spencer Academy and look forward to welcoming them back after a well-earned break.



Y8 – Mr Richardson:

I would like to say a big thank you for the tremendous attitude demonstrated by the Year 8 cohort since their return in September.

We have made every effort to adhere to our Ethos of Excellence and the students have worked so hard to put an unprecedented Year 7 behind them and showcase their resilience and determination to move forward. It was pleasing to see that the teachers here at George Spencer Academy also shared my admiration, by awarding an amazing 21,615 positive points.

As parents of such fantastic students you should all give yourselves a massive pat on the back. Specific areas of praise included Excellent classwork, Active listening and Getting the basics right. Attributes you would agree, are the cornerstone to any success. However, the one that gave me the most pleasure was, Aiming high. This particular positive award links fittingly with the first of the school's core values, We strive to be the best we can be, and highlights the belief that the students have not only bought into our Ethos of Excellence but are applying it day in day out.

Efforts outside of the classroom included collaboration with the library and a student receiving a National certificate for creative writing. We will continue to strive for excellence and I am extremely proud, as their Director of Learning to share this journey with them.

Y9 – Miss Johnson:

It has been wonderful to welcome the Year 9 students back into school and to see their high levels of focus, enthusiasm and drive to achieve in lessons. The cohort has collectively earned a total of 23,358 positive PARs points so far this year, with 70 students achieving 100+ points individually already, which is an excellent achievement! The most common categories selected by teaching staff for our cohort are: excellent classwork; active listening and aiming high. The Year 9 team have been nominating 'excellence champions' throughout this half term to recognise the students who are displaying excellence both within lessons and around the school site. Some examples of recent nominations include: for having an excellent attitude in Form Time Learning sessions; always working hard and giving thoughtful contributions; displaying enthusiasm; and for being kind, helpful and thoughtful to others. Well done to all of our students for a positive start to Year 9 and to those who have been nominated as Excellence Champions thus far.

Y10 – Mr O'Toole:

This half term has been a hugely positive one for Year 10 and it has been an absolute pleasure working with such a fantastic cohort. To see the students adapt so quickly and effortlessly with the 'new normal' has been brilliant and they really have been a credit to themselves and to the school. Walking around lessons has been a particular highlight. Observing the focused environment of Year 10 classes has been fantastic, as our year groups love of learning has been clearly evident. Over the half term Year 10 have been awarded a total of 22,855 positive PARs points by teaching staff, with the most common category selected for positive points being for excellent classwork. This is hugely pleasing and demonstrates the consistent efforts of Year 10 to achieve excellence in their studies. It was also fantastic to see so many students take part in the 'Hello Yellow' campaign, to show support for World Mental Health day. Congratulations Year 10 for an excellent return to school.



Y11 – Ms Wilkinson:

Students in Year 11 have returned to their studies with excellent commitment and focus. Many members of staff have commented on the positive attitude and hard work that is completed within their lessons, as well as through remote and home learning. Revision is well under way for the PPE exams, and students are exceptionally organised and prepared, wanting to demonstrate that they are striving to be the best they can be. Engagement with Strive sessions is also very impressive and I know that students value the extra time given to support their learning. We are recognising students who are taking part in sporting fixtures at very high levels and students who are continuing to complete their Duke of Edinburgh award, as well as other impressive extra-curricular achievements. 20,259 positive Pars points have been awarded to Year 11 students in the last six weeks, with our top student achieving 108. The Year 11 team continue to be proud of all of our Year 11 students.

Y12 – Mr Spears:

Year 12 has made an excellent start to the new year, after the GCSE exams being swept from under their feet they have returned with great determination to learn and succeed over the next 2 years! Staff have commented on their engagement in lessons, conduct and how smartly they are presenting themselves. They continually look at different ways they can add more 'flavour' into their personal statements and CV's to make sure they stand out from the crowd. Whether that be through their outstanding delivery of their presentations from their transition work, wanting to do the EPQ, or signing up and showing interest for the many other opportunities that have been coming their way. Great work Year 12, onwards and (further) upwards!

Y13 – Mrs Fawcett:

Year 13 came back in September with renewed vigour and keen to take on the challenges of Year 13. The atmosphere within lessons has been one of focussed determination and a willingness to make every moment count. Plans Post-18 have been going well with students working on their UCAS applications and career searches. We have already sent a number of UCAS applications and it is great to see staff and students working again in a face to face situation. Our EPQ students have submitted their projects and I had the pleasure of listening to some very interesting presentations, illustrating their enthusiasm in areas beyond the curriculum. This year has started well and now it is time to take a break and plan for next half term. Great work Year 12, onwards and (further) upwards!



OUR CORE VALUES



We strive to be the best we can be.

We show resilience.

We are supportive.

We respect individuality.

We are polite, fair and honest.

We have a love of learning.

ETHOS OF EXCELLENCE