



HT3 Spring 2021

Message from the Principal: Mrs Corbett

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope both you and your families continue to be healthy and well.

At George Spencer Academy we would all like to thank you for your support, communication and warmth as we have navigated our way through the latest national lockdown. We firmly believe that the strength of our partnership will positively impact on your child's educational experience during the lockdown and with this in mind I personally thank you for contacting us directly this half term with your kind words, worries or concerns. Your feedback has been invaluable as we plan our response to each government announcement. This half term bulletin will focus on two key areas. The first, keeping you informed of the current landscape regarding the pandemic and our plans at George Spencer Academy. The second, to provide you with an insight into the life of the school during this unique half term. As always, there has been a lot taking place and despite the school site being 'closed' to the majority of our students it has not stopped our staff and students from keeping our ethos of excellence active. We are very proud of our students' engagement, achievements and resilience since returning to school in September. They truly are amazing young people.

I wish you and your families a peaceful and relaxing half term break.

Kindest regards.

In-School Offer Students: COVID-19 Track and Trace during the half term break

If your child has been attending our in-school offer and they receive a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result please inform the school via our info@george-spencer.com email address. In the email, please provide your child's name, when they first developed symptoms and your contact number. A member of our leadership team will then get in touch with you to start our track and trace process.

Once we have completed our track and trace process, we will inform parents if their child has been identified as a 'close contact' to the positive case via text and email. The text will ask that the email is read to gain details from Public Health England on the actions you would need to take and the date for the end of the self-isolation period for your child.



Supporting Your Child with Remote Education:

Miss Gordon, Vice Principal

During the past year the majority of our students have had to adapt to learning at home, often working independently, and while some have risen to the challenge, we are sure there have been discussions in every household regarding the work on Google Classroom. Research informs us of the three essential components which assist students with self-regulation of their remote learning, these all feature in our Learning2Learn or Growth curriculum students study when they are in Year 7 and 8. These are:

- **Cognition** - the mental process involved in knowing, understanding, and learning;
- **Metacognition** - often defined as 'learning to learn';
- **Motivation** - willingness to engage our metacognitive and cognitive skills.

Here are some discussion points you can use to increase student confidence in these 3 components:

- Are they following their school timetable as teachers are available at the time of their lesson?
- Do they write out checklists or a daily plan at the start of each day so they know what to achieve and set small achievable tasks which separate work time from social time?
- Do they know what strategies to use if they get stuck?
- Are they rushing to complete tasks? Can they return to it later?
- Can they think about their Learning to Learn / Growth lessons on how does their brain work?
- Are their emotions taking over, do they need time to reflect and regroup?
- With half term approaching, are there tasks they can hand in to clear any work which is outstanding and start after half term on a 'clean sheet'?

Further support for students can be found on the Student Hub

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

Year 11 and 13 Exam Update: Miss Jenkinson, Vice Principal

The consultation into the grading process for how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded this summer closed on the 29th January. We are now waiting to hear the outcome and are expecting a Government update during the week beginning 22nd February. We know that this uncertainty is hard when so much is still unknown, however, what we do know is that the focus has been to keep students motivated and engaged in their studies and we are supporting this by continuing our assessments as normal. The Year 11 PPEs scheduled for March have been pushed back and there will be structured tests taking place for Year 11 students in all GCSE subjects with exam elements. After the half term break, subject teachers will be giving specific detailed information about which topics to revise and will support students through lessons. Year 13 will continue to cover the content of their course and follow the assessment pattern set by the individual subjects. If any students are worried about this or have any questions, please email student-support@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk



Futures – Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG): Mr Burrows, Director of Futures

Welcome to the first Futures input. Hopefully you have enjoyed being able to interact with the materials shared for National Apprenticeship Week. Materials are being shared with students via Year Group and Subject Google Classrooms. Our aim is to strengthen our current provision and to raise aspirations within all our learners, through all they do at GSA and in every year of their journey. The current global picture has highlighted the changing nature of workplaces. Learning is a lifelong process where we can build strong employability skills through the curriculum areas and bespoke events, so watch this space. Currently Year 11 and Year 13 are working to ensure appropriate applications have been made to secure exciting opportunities at these key transition points in their learning. Year 9 are focused on choices for KS4 with the aid of staff support and the UNIFROG platform. If your child is in Year 7, 8, 10 or 12 please encourage them to use all available resources on UNIFROG and continue asking questions of their friends, family and teachers about the world of opportunities their learning can lead towards.

We are currently seeking support from alumni and businesses/employers to support our offer to students. Contact: pburrows@george-spencer.notts.sch.uk if you are interested in finding out more.

Revised Inset Date:

Following the information shared with parents/carers last week regarding the postponement of our INSET day that was set to take place on Monday 22nd February we can now confirm that the INSET day will be on Monday 12th July.

Thank you for your understanding with this change as we aim to support our key worker and vulnerable families during the lockdown.



Y7: Mr Smith

This half term, the level of resilience shown by students in Year 7 and the determination to learn, participate, develop and strive to be the best that they can be has been phenomenal. Myself, Miss Sipson and the team of Learning Managers are hugely impressed with the way that students have adapted to Remote Learning, developing an understanding and a fluency with Google Classroom and a confidence to communicate so positively and effectively with their teachers. Teachers of Year 7 have been incredibly complimentary about the level of effort shown in work submitted on Google Classroom and the conduct and contributions of students on live lessons through Google Meet, and I know that Learning Managers have particularly enjoyed and looked forward to the opportunity to see their tutees each Thursday morning for their Form Time Google Meets. To date over 230 postcards have been sent home for students nominated as "Lockdown Learning Legends" in Year 7 and, as Director of Year 7, I am particularly proud of the way that students have built on the foundations of their first term, continuing to be positive, polite, and take an enormous amount of pride in their work. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank parents and carers of Year 7 for their support and encouragement of students during this time, and encourage all to ensure that this half term break is a restful one.

Y8: Mr Richardson

I would like to say thank you to Year 8 parents and carers. Thank you for your understanding and the support you have given the school, thank you for the example you have set your children and thank you for your resilience and resolve during these difficult times. You have my utmost admiration. After the lockdown of 2020, I think none of us expected to find ourselves back here. We often find out a little bit more about ourselves when faced with adversity, so we should now know ourselves inside out. One thing that shines like a beacon, is how amazing the students have been. They themselves I hope realised from last year, the key attributes needed to get them through these trying times. That inner resolve that perhaps they didn't realise they had, has seen their engagement levels surpass that of last year. We have reduced the number of students accessing paper copies by offering IT where possible. As thanks for all their endeavours, we have sent home nearly 200, 'Lockdown Learning Legends' postcards. Individual successes have seen one of our Year 8 students reach the semi-final of a CyberFirst girls' competition run by the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). It is without doubt a time that we will remember for generations to come but sometimes you have to respect what's gone, appreciate what still remains and look forward to what's coming next. Thank you and stay safe.



Y9: Miss Johnson

I want to start this message by sincerely thanking all of our families for their ongoing support during this period of Remote Learning. The positive attitude, dedication, resilience and high level of engagement displayed by the Year 9 students during this time makes me very proud to be their Director. I am thrilled that 300+ 'Lockdown Learning Legends' postcards have been sent home already to the cohort and these are very much deserved. I have really enjoyed looking at examples of students work from across their subjects and discussing their potential GCSE options with them in the last six weeks. After half term, the Year 9 team will continue to support students through our live Form Time sessions, pastoral phone calls and online communication. This week, the Year 9 students have been reflecting on what they are proudest of during this period thus far and I will end this message by sharing a selection of these. Well done Year 9 and enjoy a well-deserved rest this half term.

"I am proud that I have kept on track even when I have found the work hard."

"My main aim this time was to be more independent with the work I deliver".

"I was struggling with Maths, but I got through it and got 100%."

"I have had lovely comments from all of my teachers and I am very proud of myself."

"I am pleased with all of the work I have done during Remote Learning."

Y10: Mr O'Toole

In what has no doubt been a challenging half term for a number of reasons, I feel immensely proud of the positivity and dedication shown by Year 10. The engagement with remote learning and attendance to live lessons has been fantastic. In total over 100,000 documents have been edited by Year 10 students. This hard work has been recognised with an impressive 298 "Lockdown Learning Legends" cards having been sent home to Year 10 students by members of staff this half term. The weekly Form Time sessions have also proved popular amongst the cohort, and have allowed Learning Managers and their forms the opportunity to spend valuable time together and importantly, enabled the students to interact with their friends. Through the many conversations myself and Mr Kerry have had with the students and their families, it has been pleasing to hear from so many the positive feedback on the learning which have been on offer. Finally, I would like to say thank you to the Year 10 parents and carers for your continued support with remote learning, and for all your communication with the Year 10 team. Please have a restful half term and a well-deserved break.



Y11: Ms Wilkinson

It has been yet another very different learning experience for our Year 11 students this half term, but - as I knew they would - they have risen to the challenge. This 'can do' approach is something that I feel very strongly about and try to instil through our weekly assemblies and briefings and remote Form Times with Learning Managers. Year 11 students have continued to engage and persevere with lessons and content, as well as assessments and reflection tasks. They appreciate the importance of their studies and are striving to be the best they can be with every opportunity. We are ever hopeful that they will be returning to classrooms very soon and they are in an excellent position to do so. It has been impressive to see applications to sixth form, colleges and apprenticeships, as students look to the future and also the exceptional standard of work being submitted over 250 postcards, recognising outstanding work, have been sent to Year 11 students this half term so far and I am regularly getting emails from teachers telling me about how much they enjoy the face-to-face sessions with students. We see that on average, around 20,000 documents are being viewed, created and edited by Year 11 students on a weekly basis. So much hard work is taking place and we are so proud of all that the students are achieving. Our Year 11 Student Leadership Team have also been thinking of ways to offer support to students and I am really proud of their commitment to these positions of responsibility. Keep working hard, Year 11. We will see you soon.

Y12: Mr Spears

Well this year group has continually amazed me at their ability to adapt to change and meet the new demands of remote learning.

Students have made fantastic progress towards their A-Level and Vocational qualifications. As a year group, they have logged on to a Google Meet live lesson over 5000 times. 104 students from the year group have been identified by their teachers as 'Lockdown Learning Legends'. As part of our celebrating excellence assembly for this half term, teachers had the opportunity to nominate members of the year group for showing excellence in their subject or the Sixth Form community, 131 e-Certificates were sent out earlier this half term, several students receiving nominations from each of their subjects, well done.

Whatever happens, you know where we are - we are, for now, 'an email away' and we can discuss things further from there, over the phone or over Google Meet.

Year 12, have been amazing. As we look forward to the future, in times where our lives are being affected by Covid-19 in the way it is now, or beyond that, I have absolutely no doubt of their continued success, as the years progress and we look back on this period as a defining moment for who they have become.

Can't wait to see Year 12 back in the Sixth Form, when we are allowed to welcome you back.



Y13: Mrs Fawcett, Head of Sixth Form

My message is one of congratulations. It has been great to see students rising to the challenges and dealing with the changes in a positive way but also recognising when support is needed and keeping in contact with us. Students and Learning Managers have worked tirelessly to complete the UCAS applications and meet the deadline of 29th January. Over 75% of our students have submitted an application covering a wide variety of courses and universities. Offers are starting to come in, and of course students are still able to apply. National Apprenticeship week with the theme 'Build the Future' is being used to launch many higher degree apprenticeships, there are some great opportunities out there and we are here to support anyone wishing to apply.

Each week students receive an assembly via Loom along with resources relating to career planning, finance, preparation for the future. This week a live assembly was held on Monday at 11.30 am which was a fabulous opportunity to celebrate and get together. Throughout the course of this half term many have received 'Lock Down Legends' postcards celebrating commitment, focus to studies, engagement and supporting others. Finally, through the use of technology we were able to hold our Progress Evening, the first of its kind to be held at George Spencer Academy. Thank you for attending and your support, together we are stronger, and I am looking forward to seeing our amazing Year 13 return in the near future.

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