

1. Parent/Carer Consultation Evenings Thursday 12 and Wednesday 18 January

Our Consultation Evenings take place remotely with short 5-10 minute appointments using Googlemeet. Should you wish to meet your child's teachers, please ask them to discuss with the teachers involved to make an appointment. Alternatively, you can email your child's teacher directly to request an appointment using the email addresses provided in the progress report part of this newsletter. Please note, an email address will be needed in order for you to join the Googlemeet.

We are keen to hear the views of parents and carers about how we can make Franklin even better, and to this end we will soon be sending you a short questionnaire. Please do make sure we have your most up to date mobile and email details so that information like this gets to you effectively.

2. January is Wellbeing Month

January is traditionally a difficult period for many of us for all kinds of reasons, so we're planning a range of activities designed to support students who might need that little extra.

The range of events, include:

- Thrive Award launched in ASPIRE
- Launch of Peer Wellbeing Champions
- Guest speakers
- Brew Monday – a cuppa and a chat on Monday 16th January
- Thrive Thursdays with a variety of external agencies coming into College.



3. Adverse Weather Arrangements

Students have been asked to update mobile numbers on the student-portal. Please check they've done this. We've also asked them to ensure they've logged details of which College bus they get.

Information about College closure or transport issues due to adverse weather will be notified by text, on local radio and on the College website. Students will be set work on their Google Classroom in order to minimise the loss of learning. In the event of closure, please do encourage them to do their best in work set.

4. Enrichment Programmes and Work Experience Promotion Week: w/c 6 February

Through the ASPIRE Programme, students are being introduced to a Personal Development programme this term on our Grofar platform. This is designed to help them develop a range of skills including how to develop a personal branding profile on LinkedIn. The programme includes a promotion of work experience activity for students to enhance their progression opportunities – whether in Higher Education or Employment.

National Apprenticeship Week takes place Monday 6th - Friday 10th February. Throughout the week we will be welcoming a number of employers into College and promoting apprenticeships options so that students understand what apprenticeships are and can consider if they might be worth exploring further, how to find them and how to apply.

5. An update on Digital Developments at the College

Digital Developments at Franklin:

- We have invested heavily in the College hardware and have equipped three new classrooms with new desktops and also a new Mac suite in the Art Department.
- We have had delivered 11 new Smartboard screens to replace some of the older screens around College.
- New industry leading Wi-fi will be installed during the Spring term. This is eagerly anticipated by students and staff.
- The new Digital Learning Centre is currently on schedule to be completed in April, which will bring a university-style learning environment to Franklin Sixth Form College.
- A digital journey timeline will soon be displayed around College to keep you up to date with all future digital developments.

6. Our approach to Holiday absence in term time

I have been asked by some parents to clarify and explain our response and approach to term-time holidays. Whilst it is perfectly understandable why parents/carers would want to take advantage of cheaper holidays during term time and take their children with them, I urge parents to consider carefully the wider negative impacts, some of them potentially significant, on your child of taking them out of their educational routines in term time, especially given they already have over 12 weeks of holiday in place. I know that in schools, it is commonplace to simply issue a small fine, which in my view is inappropriate and completely unrelated to the impact upon the child.

What we know, increasingly following our covid return, is that taking students out of their educational routines is damaging to their education and wellbeing. Not only does it impact grades and so can reduce future opportunities for progression, it often also heightens their anxiety on return, negatively impacts their confidence and makes them very much more likely to subsequently drop out of education completely or need a restart. In reality, unlike lockdown, the fact that the rest of their groups & friends move on in class and in College

whilst they are away on holiday seems to have even greater negative effect on their ability to settle back to work.

We know very clearly that 'catching up with work', however well-meant, is never anywhere near as effective as being in classes and in College. The experience of education is far beyond 'reading the notes', and I often compare this to the difference between actually being at the World Cup final in an executive box compared with watching the highlights on a small TV the following day - the experience is incomparable.

Clearly then, for families there is a balance to consider of the benefits anticipated in taking a term time holiday against the level of damage done to the child's education, grades, future opportunities, and wellbeing. The College, in making it clear that we do not authorise holidays in term time, will also review overall attendance and study commitment and, in line with our Behaviour Management Policy, will issue a Final Written Warning related to poor attendance.

The link here takes you to some research that might be of interest.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/just-one-day-off-can-hamper-childrens-life-chances>