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Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

The American novelist Jack London wrote, "I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time." This sentiment, that a life well lived is an active one, is something many of us can subscribe to. How we all define the best way to use our time is what's important. On the desk in my office, I keep a photo of my great uncle who for many years was a prison chaplain in Lincoln and who I have strong memories of, when I was a child, stressing to me the importance of using your time in the service of others, often those who have been more unfortunate than yourself. When he died hundreds of people came to pay their respects, to mark the fact that he had used his time to help them. His photo serves as a reminder to me that this should be the legacy I, and I feel everyone, should look to leave behind, confident that my time has been used well.

How we as a school equip our students to use their time well is at the core of our purpose. In the long term this means equipping them with a set of qualifications that allows them to access the right next steps for them. When I spoke to both Year 11 and Year 13 recently, I stressed that it's not the actual grades on the pieces of paper they'll receive in September that are important, it's the opportunities they open. I've been meeting with students during registration time this week to find out about what they see as the most positive aspects of the school, how we might improve from their perspective and what their hopes and aspirations are. In every group some children will talk about high profile careers but there will also be a certain proportion who don't know yet what they'd like to be to which I always respond, "that's normal." Our job then becomes to give them not only insight into what's out there but fundamentally the education that will allow them to make a choice when they're ready.

However, schools aren't just about grades and few parents or carers will make a school choice based solely on that. Many people will look, quite rightly, at what else the school offers beyond the classroom. Assemblies this week have focused on both character and how the taking part in extra-curricular activity can help students develop this. Our busiest students are often our best students, throwing themselves into every opportunity to try new things, work with others and at core become confident in who they are as people. When I asked students this week what they thought was the best thing about the school older students often spoke about the teaching and the support they receive; younger students were more likely to focus on sports teams and the food offer – I've yet to try the spicy chicken burger but Year 8 assure me it's "mint" - but the comment that probably gladdens my heart the most came from another Year 8 girl who simply said, "teachers' smiles." If all of us can use our time to make people feel special through simple actions such as this then I would suggest we won't have wasted our days, we shall have used our time.

Many thanks for your continued support of the school; I hope you all have a good weekend.



Michael Wright

Please find this week's key messages below.

Congratulations

Holly Burns in Year 9 hasn't been in school this week – usually a bad thing. However, she was competing for Team GB in Thailand at the IFMA youth world championships – Muaythai, a form of martial art. Holly won gold! Congratulations to Holly on a real achievement. She's clearly using her time.

Extra-curricular and lunchtime activities

The first draft of the extra-curricular programme was promoted to students in assemblies this week and will be on the website this week. This will be advertised again with their lunchtime options on the weekly slides (on Classcharts every Sunday). If they are participating in a sports activity (including the use of the 3G pitch) they will need to bring in a pair of trainers. The school is also part of a North East Youth pilot scheme called Project Extra to encourage students to participate in more activities. This hopefully will lead to both increased awareness of activities in the local area but also more opportunities in school this year.

Safeguarding

At Framwellgate, we are totally committed to the digital safety of our students and their wellbeing online. As part of our safeguarding culture, we would like to introduce you to our online safety hub that all parents and carers can access at <https://framdurham.onlinesafetyhub.uk/>. You can access articles, latest themes, online safety information and guides to parental controls, that will help you navigate your way around the online world. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Year Team in school.

6th Form Update

Year 12 students are receiving their training next week before they begin their roles as reading mentors and supporting in lower school lessons and clubs. Thanks to those who've volunteered to help our community in this way.

Year 13 are working hard on their university applications, with some students preparing to take their admissions tests for medicine and law and completing the early Oxford and Cambridge applications.

All 6th Form students are looking forward to volunteering as student guides and supporting in curriculum areas at the forthcoming open evening for Year 6. Year 13 Duke of Edinburgh students complete their Silver Award next week.

Key Year 11 Information

- Progress meetings

You will be receiving a progress meeting appointment time next week. This meeting is an opportunity for you and your child to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss current progress in Year 11 and how they can be preparing for the forthcoming mock exam series, commencing on **Monday 18th November**. Please note - due to the volume of appointments being conducted, we are unable to change appointments or reschedule. Your child will attend their appointment on their own should you be unable to attend. There will be another opportunity to attend a subsequent progress meeting in the New Year.

- Raising Achievement Sessions (RAS)

RAS will be starting on **Monday 30th September** and will run until the start of the November mock exam series. These are targeted sessions designed to intervene where students struggle with key concepts and/or have knowledge gaps. If students have been selected by their teachers to attend a session it will appear on their Class Charts timetable and you will be able to see if they have attended or not. Students may be selected to attend up to 3 sessions a week and the majority of the sessions take place at lunchtime, after your child has had a break and time to eat. Some maths, English and French sessions occur after school. Your support in getting your child to these sessions is crucial and much appreciated; last year there was a correlation between attendance at RAS and GCSE success. There are two more blocks of RAS, one in January in the build up to the February mock exam series and one in April in the run up to the GCSE exam period. If your child doesn't have a session appearing on their timetable for the first block, it is likely they will be selected for one of the subsequent RAS blocks. Students will be receiving an assembly next week in which this information will be shared with them.

Support with Independent Learning

Independent Learning provides students with the opportunity to consolidate and extend their learning. A wealth of support is available for students to help them complete their Independent Learning tasks to a good standard and in time for the deadline. The timetable below shows where students can access this support, and on what days.

Subject	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Maths	Lunch – B18				
English	KS4 – Lunch – A16	Drop in – English office	KS3 – Lunch– A2	Drop in – English office	Drop in – English office
Geography	KS4 – Lunch– D7		KS4 – Lunch – D7		
Science	Lunch – A12				
GCSE PE	Sports Hall Classroom 2				
OCR Sport					
OCR H&S					
Art	Lunch – D4 and D5	Lunch and after school – D4 and D5	Lunch – D4 and D5	Lunch and after school – D4 and D5	
Design Tech and Food		Lunch – B14			
	KS4 NEA support provided as needed at lunchtimes – speak to teacher				
History	Speak to teacher				
French				Lunch – B9	
Computer Science		KS3 – Lunch– D10 KS4 – Lunch – C3			
Reading			Lunch – A10		
Media Studies	Speak to teacher				
Drama	Speak to teacher				
RS	Lunch – C2				

Parent Information Evenings

A reminder of the dates and times of Parent Information Evenings. This will be an opportunity to hear in person from senior and key pastoral staff about the outline of the academic year for your children. The Year 10 and 11 events will also feature the Heads of English, Maths and Science giving specific guidance on how to support your child in these key subjects.

- Year 8 Monday 23rd September 5.30pm
- Year 9 Monday 23rd September 6.30pm
- Year 10 Wednesday 9th October 6.00pm
- Year 11 Monday 30th September 6.00pm

Year 6 Open Evening

In the next week your child may bring home a letter inviting them to represent our school at the Year 6 Open Evening on **Thursday 26th September**. This evening is a really important event and every year the feedback is that our students are excellent ambassadors for our school. If your child has been asked by a teacher to help in a subject area or to act as a student guide, then they should feel proud that they have been asked to represent the school in this way. Thank you in advance for supporting this by ensuring your child has travel arrangements to get to and from school for the evening and is in full uniform.