

Trafalgar Newsletter

26th May 2023

Welcome to the latest edition of our parent bulletin!

It has been a busy fortnight, with Year 11 well and truly into the midst of their final exams and Year 10 students completing their two weeks of work experience! Year 11 have done themselves and us proud with their attitude and approach to these exams. Whilst half term will bring an all-important reprieve, there will be some booster revision sessions available for Year 11 to attend. These focused sessions, with the help and support of their teachers, can make the world of difference to those that attend, so make sure that they are making the most of the support available to them!

Thank you to all who attended our Year 7 Parents' Evening last night. These events are vital for maintaining that link between school and home and helps keep aspirations high.

Take care, stay safe and have a great half term.

Team Trafalgar

Pre-loved Uniform Request

We are after donations of any pre-loved uniform that no longer fits so we can recycle them for use by other students.



If you have any items you are able to donate, please take them to our Student Services team.

#community



Key Dates

29th May - 2nd June - Half Term

Monday 5th June - Students start back

Friday 23rd June - Year 11 Leavers BBQ/Years 7-10 finish at 2pm

26th June - 30th June - Activities Week 2023

Mobile Phones in School

Please remember that students are not allowed to use their mobile phone in school for safeguarding reasons. Whilst we understand that students use their mobile phones to communicate safe arrival at school etc, please remind your child that on arrival to school, mobile phones should be turned off or on silent.



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How to encourage productive learning

Information for parents and carers

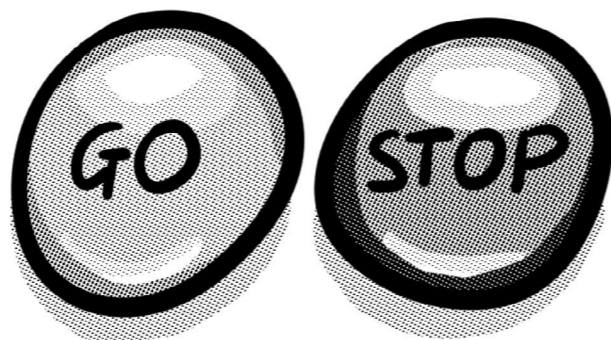
Did you know?



Having a tidy space can reduce stress and improve productivity. Another way to maximise opportunities for work and reduce distractions is to ensure the space is organised with everything needed for studying: laptop, books, pens and any other equipment. If you want to go a step further, plants are shown to not only create a calm space but also aid concentration.

Many people find approaches like the Pomodoro technique help to increase their levels of productivity as it allows for focused 'work' time for 25 minutes, and then a 5-minute reward break. It is often surprising how much we can actually achieve in short bursts of time when we are fully focused, with no distractions, and know that there is a clear end when we'll get to do something we want to.

Experts in nutrition stress the importance of healthy diets for ensuring the most effective working of our brains. For example, although caffeine and sugar can provide bursts of energy, consuming these can lead to significant dips in focus and energy. We also know that easy swaps can lead to more balanced nutrition and energy levels, like using wholegrains, nuts and berries.



What can you do?

Help your child to create a productive learning environment, a quiet space where they can work at a clear surface with as few distractions as possible. Encourage this to be a social media-free space.

Sit down with your child and offer to help them create a timetable of study. Work with them to map out the free time they could use to study and the free time that should be 'work-free' so they can do things they enjoy. Plan out the subjects and units they know they need to work on and schedule these into their 'work' slots. If your child is receptive to doing this together, it can help them to see that they aren't expected to use

all of their 'free' time to study, and that taking breaks and investing time in their hobbies and friends is important and valuable for them and their wellbeing. If possible, when your child is studying, bring them some snacks and a drink to help sustain them.

Here @ Trafalgar

We are pleased to share that next half term we are trialling having a cafe/ working space open for students and staff every day after school from 3-4pm in our school canteen.

Hot and cold drinks as well as snacks will be available to buy via students normal school accounts.

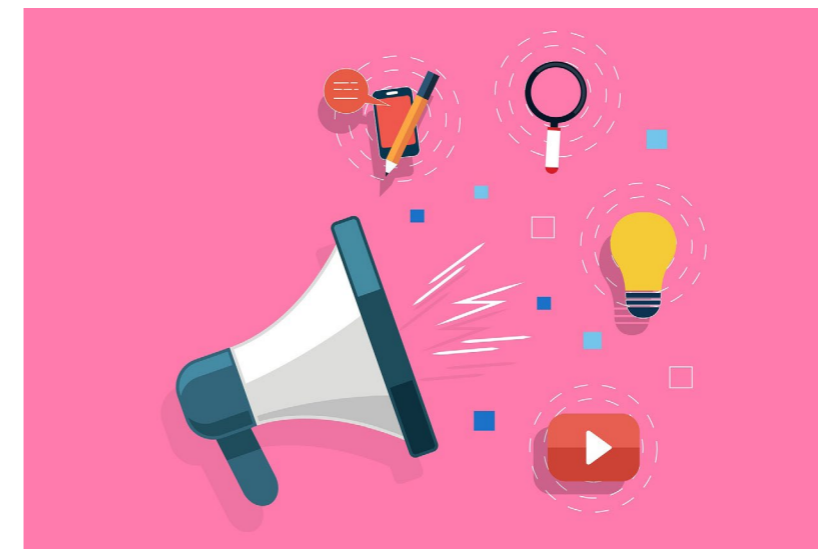
This will be an excellent space for students to make use of to stay and complete any home learning or revision after school.

Communication with home

At the end of 2021 we changed our primary way of communicating with parents from sending emails to using 'Class Charts'- a brilliant software where you can receive instant messages, view your child's attendance and behaviour in real time and check many more things such as home learning.



We would like to take this opportunity to remind anyone who has not yet signed up to Class Charts to please ensure they do so. Every parent will have their own login which links to their child's account. If you need your child's login code, please contact the school either by phone on 02392 693521 or by email to studentservices@trafalgarschool.org.uk



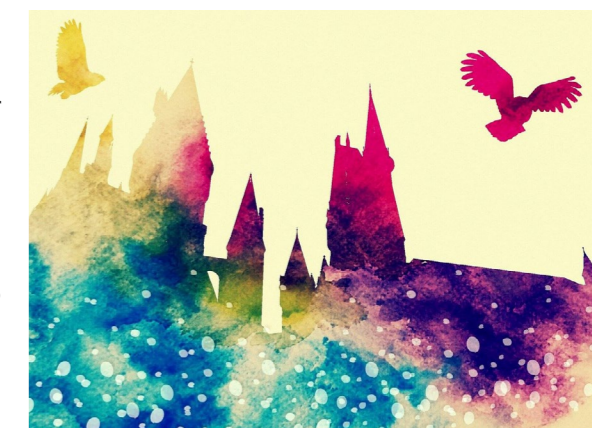
Please note that we send all our communications via this service. This includes letters about parents evenings, RAP meetings, Headteacher letters and trips. So make sure you have notifications turned on to stay up to date!

If you have any issues with signing up to Class Charts, please contact us via the same channels noted above.

Music Department Update

This half term, Year 8 have been learning about the power of film music. They have been learning key techniques used within film music, analysing scenes from films and composing their own pieces of music to a scene.

Students have fully embraced the creative opportunity to rewrite the music used in a scene from Harry Potter, using their prior knowledge to create an effective and engaging piece of music for the scene.



10 top tips for safely using SMARTWATCHES

Kids love gadgets, and smartwatches – available to buy from as little as £20 online – make a tempting gift. As with any type of mobile technology, though, smartwatches can pose risks to children unless they're used safely. Receiving unwanted calls, cyber-stalking and distracting a young person when they're crossing the road are all known risks associated with smartwatches. However, these devices can bring plenty of benefits for children and parents alike – so let's examine the pros and cons of smartwatches.

AVOID CHEAP OPTIONS

A quick search online yields a torrent of cheap smartwatches for kids, costing as little as £20. It's wise to avoid this bargain basement tech: it tends to deliver a poor experience with inferior battery life, and it's hard to have faith in the software's safety. There have been cases of smartwatches being hacked to track or contact children; stick to known brands who have a reputation to protect.

CONTROL CALLING

Many smartwatches have the facility to make or take calls. As with a phone, you may want to restrict who your child can call – or be called by. On Apple Watches, you can select trusted contacts who are allowed to ring your child, while other watches' controls vary hugely. Some need to connect to a linked phone for calls, so you may be able to block unknown contacts via that device instead.

BEWARE HIDDEN COSTS

For a smartwatch to allow calls independently (that is, without being connected to a phone via Bluetooth), it will need its own mobile data plan. This might take the form of a tiny SIM card that you slot into the watch – or an eSIM, where the physical card is replaced by software settings. Either way, this will incur an additional monthly cost that you'll need to factor into any buying decision.

ENABLE FAMILY SHARING

Apple Watches aren't cheap, but they do offer superb safety features – allowing parents to control calls, messages and emails on the device, as well as a location tracking system that can send alerts if kids wander beyond pre-set boundaries. Their SOS function enables children to contact emergency services instantly if they're in trouble, which simultaneously also alerts parents and carers.

MAKE THEM COOL FOR SCHOOL

Some schools have banned smartwatches, as pupils have been using them as substitute phones. If your child's school does permit them, some devices can be set to prevent distractions in class. For example, Apple's Schooltime feature turns their watches into ordinary time-keeping devices during school hours. The display changes in this mode, showing teachers that it isn't being used for other purposes.

BE MINDFUL OF BEDTIME

Many smartwatches offer sleep tracking, which some (usually older) children use to justify wearing them to bed. However, that also presents a temptation to message friends or check social media late at night, even if their phone is downstairs. Unless there's a valid reason not to, you could encourage your child to remove the watch in the evenings and ensure the charger stays in a different room.

TRACK ITS LOCATION

Both Apple and Android devices have apps which allow you to track a smartwatch's location. They can also initiate an audio alert – avoiding those cushion-hurling panics when a treasured device can't be found at home. If you're planning to track your child's location via their watch, make them aware of that in advance. You could even make it a condition of them getting the watch in the first place.

THINK 'SAFETY FIRST'

Smartwatches are often worth hundreds of pounds, which can make young people wearing one a target for thieves. Advise your child to keep the watch hidden in public (when possible) and not to resist if muggers demand their watch. If you manage to track a stolen device, pass that information to the police: location data isn't always accurate, so you could end up wrongly accusing someone.

STORE MEDICAL INFO

Devices including the Samsung Galaxy Watch and Apple Watch can store the owner's medical details (such as their blood group and any pre-existing medical conditions), potentially giving emergency services access to vital information in a crisis. These devices also have 'hard fall' detection, which sends a text message to selected contacts along with a map showing the wearer's location.

USE THEM AS MOTIVATION

If you're worried your child's spending too much time slumped on the sofa staring at screens, smartwatches are great fitness trackers and can be a powerful incentive to get moving. Some devices will alert the wearer if they've been inactive for a long time and encourage them to do some exercise. Many watches record the user's daily step count and measure other health metrics.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on BBC Newsnight, Radio 5 Live and the ITV News at Ten. He has two children and writes regularly about internet safety issues.



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