

# Trafalgar Newsletter

4<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Welcome back to the Parent Bulletin, we hope you all had a restful half term break and are ready for the weeks ahead!

Good luck to our Year 11 students as they embark upon their mock exams from next week. We know you will work hard and give it your all! **#youvegotthis**

Next week our Year 8 RAP meetings will be taking place, tutors will be contacting parents to arrange mutually convenient appointments for these meetings. These meetings are an important part of the relationship between school and home and is a great way to keep students focused and discuss your child's progress, setting targets to help raise their achievement.

Inside this edition of the Parent Bulletin you will also find helpful advice on how to have supportive conversations with your child. This is full of useful guidance on how to create positive environments for conversations and is very helpful in today's age when there are multiple things distracting us and going on in the world at any one time!

Take care and stay safe,

**Team Trafalgar**

## Hot Chocolate with the Head

This week's Hot Chocolate with the Head goes to Layla!

Layla has demonstrated amazing community skills without any prompting which was witnessed by Mrs Crouch who has nominated her this week. Layla was seen at lunchtime one day picking up the rubbish from a bin that had fallen over and putting it back inside. She proceeded then to pick up any further litter she encountered on her walk to her next lesson. We are so impressed and proud of Layla's natural reaction to clean our environment and feel she is so deserving of this recognition. Massive well done, Layla!



## Key Dates

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> - Friday 11<sup>th</sup> Nov** - Year 8 RAP Meetings  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov** - Year 12 Certificate Evening  
**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> Nov** - Year 9 Parents Evening  
**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Nov** - INSET Day  
**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> Nov** - INSET Day

**A quick reminder - if you have not yet signed up to our parent portal, Class Charts, please do so immediately as this will be our only method of communication this year. To get your personalised log in details please email [studentservices@trafalgarschool.org.uk](mailto:studentservices@trafalgarschool.org.uk).**

## Lunch Queues and Toilets Update

Recently there have been some concerns over students having enough time to eat during their lunch break. We are constantly monitoring this here at Trafalgar and can report that with our 4 service points (3 indoor and our new food pod outside) there is an average queue time for students of 4-5 minutes.

Year 7 students receive an extra 10 minutes for their lunch break, being released from their period 4 lesson early to accommodate this. This ensures that students are not all going to get their food at the same time, and allows Years 8-11 the whole of official lunch time to get theirs, with Year 7 being the largest year group by count of students.



Our student leadership team are constantly working with the kitchen staff to help improve the menu for students, helping ensure students have a variety of food options to choose from.

To assist with rest breaks, we have more blocks of new toilets added recently which opened at the start of this half term. When added to the new toilets that launched in September, we now have around 56 cubicles for students to use at a variety of locations, reducing waiting times for the toilet at break and lunch time, also.

We are constantly monitoring and reviewing our lunch time routines, to help ensure students have enough time to eat and relax before their afternoon lessons.



# English Department Update

## Year 7

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Year 7 on settling in so well within English. We started the year with a transition unit, 'Growing Up', which explores a range of fiction extracts from a broad range of literature, tying in nicely with their transition to senior school. This half term, students will be starting their study of Morris Gleitzman's touching novel, 'Once', further exploring narrative voice throughout the study of the text.



## Year 8

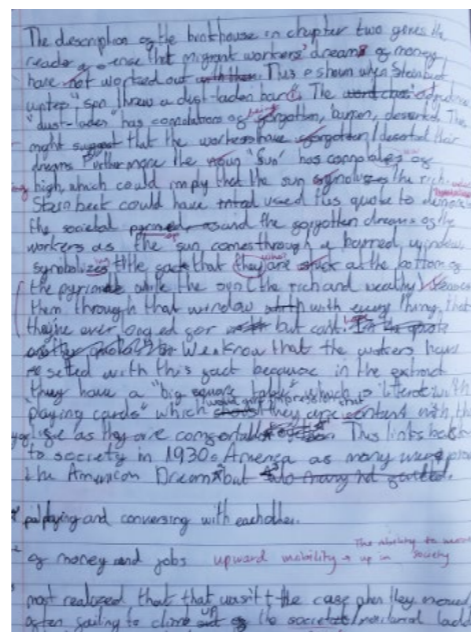
Year 8 have begun this term with the study of thought-provoking novel, 'Noughts and Crosses', through which they have explored some complex relationship dynamics. As well as exploring the language, characters and writer's choices, as part of this unit students will also have the chance to explore the themes of forbidden love (a key theme in some of our later GCSE texts) and participate in interesting philosophical discussions around this topic.

Well done Year 8, we look forward to all the success you are going to have this year!

## Year 9

Year 9 have been studying their first unit 'Symbolic Representation' through the classic novel, Of Mice and Men. Throughout the unit, students have been developing their reading skills, exploring how ideas are implied across a text through symbols used by a writer and how foreshadowing is embedded throughout. They have also been developing their skills of analysis through the unpicking of quotations from the text and linking implicit ideas to the contextual period of America's Great Depression.

Excitingly, we have also made our independent reading time at the start of the lesson more structured to ensure a wide breadth of reading throughout our KS3 curriculum, whereby all students will spend the first ten minutes of each lesson reading the same novel through a class reader approach. The text we have been reading this term is 'The Great Gatsby'



set in the Roaring 20's right before the Great Depression. This means that students have been able to see how America changed when exploring the studied text, 'Of Mice and Men'.

This half term, students will be using their skills of recognising and analysing symbolic symbols through a study of a range of poetry.



## Year 10

During last half term, students have been studying for English Language Paper 2. The study of Paper 2 has been centred around the theme of Crime and Punishment where students have been exploring a range of non-fiction texts from both modern day and the 19th century and have been making comparative links between them. We have also been exploring the work of Charles Dickens and his article detailing a visit to Newgate Prison, whereby students have been making comparative links between the presentation of a 19th Century and modern-day prison. As well as this, Year 10 have been reading articles about the notorious Kray twins and looking into the reasons why society idolises such figures, leading to larger questions and discussions about the effectiveness of the justice system in this country.

We have been very impressed by the level of maturity we have seen throughout Year 10 during the the study of this unit. Well done.

This half term, students will begin the unit of 'Academic Writing' centred around the study of 'An Inspector Calls'.

## Year 11

Year 11 have risen to the standards of their final year at Trafalgar and have shown real maturity and positivity in the early weeks of term. We kick-started the year with some intense 'Romeo and Juliet' revision to solidify knowledge from their last unit of Year 10- this has also been the focus for their Speaking and Listening assessment whereby students delivered a five-minute presentation arguing their point of view on a topic related to Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'. We have been very impressed by some of the work produced by our Year 11's and have been blown away by some of the fantastic speeches!

As well as this, Year 11 students have also been preparing for their first round of mock examinations. They have been specifically studying for Language Paper 1 as well as some intense revision for their upcoming mock Literature examination. Good luck Year 11!

## Year 11 - College Application Deadlines

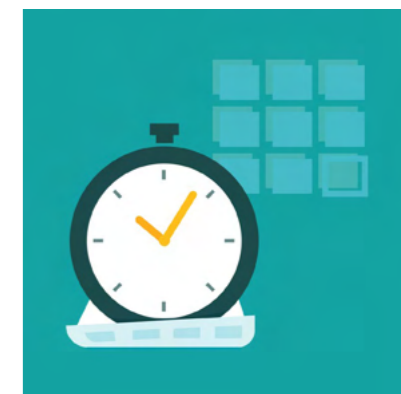
Applications to apply to the college of your choice are open - to avoid disappointment, if applying to a local college, we would encourage you to submit your application in the Autumn term which runs up till the 16<sup>th</sup> December. Once submitted, you will be invited to an informal interview to discuss your study programme.

We are planning an 'application workshop' from the week beginning 21<sup>st</sup> November. HSDC, Portsmouth and Highbury College, The UTC and Fareham College will be on site in the library to answer any questions about courses and assist students who are yet to submit an application.

If you feel you would benefit from further assistance with an application, please contact Miss Passmore on [careers@trafalgarschool.org.uk](mailto:careers@trafalgarschool.org.uk) who will arrange a time slot with your preferred college to complete this.

Students in Year 11 can also access an independent interview with our Careers advisor, Mandy Haddigan, who will be on site every Thursday to discuss career options and college applications. If students are uncertain on what to do next, an appointment with Mandy would be a great start to get them thinking about their future. Students can arrange an interview via Miss Passmore, or parents, if you feel you would like to discuss this on behalf of your child, you can email Mandy Haddigan on [mandy.haddigan@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:mandy.haddigan@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

Please visit the [Year 11 section](#) and the [careers hub](#) on our website for more information!



# Having Supportive Conversations

Having supportive conversations about sensitive topics with children and young people can be difficult, but it is so important! A key part of a child's emotional development is being able to understand and express how they feel. This way they can learn to process, cope, and manage other difficult feelings and situations as they grow.

Every child is different. Their ability to process information will depend on age, ability, and resilience.

## Remember – you will know them best.

This toolkit is designed to help you make the right decisions on when and how to have a supportive conversation.

### WHAT to say

- 1 Decide what you want to share.
- 2 Consider what they might already know.
- 3 Stick to simple, honest facts.
- 4 Be prepared to discuss difficult questions or feelings.

### HOW to say it

- 1 Tailor your approach to your child or young person's age and capacity.
- 2 Use clear, simple language and avoid alarming terms.
- 3 Actively listen and be honest in your responses.
- 4 Ask neutral, open questions.
- 5 Stay calm, reassuring, and interested in the conversation.

### WHEN to say it

- 1 Timing is everything.
- 2 Choose a nurturing environment if possible.
- 3 Make sure that needs are met (not tired, hungry, cold, upset, or distracted).
- 4 Watch for visual cues that your child or young person is looking to talk to you.
- 5 Create moments for undistracted conversation.

There's a lot going on in the world right now. What do you know about it?

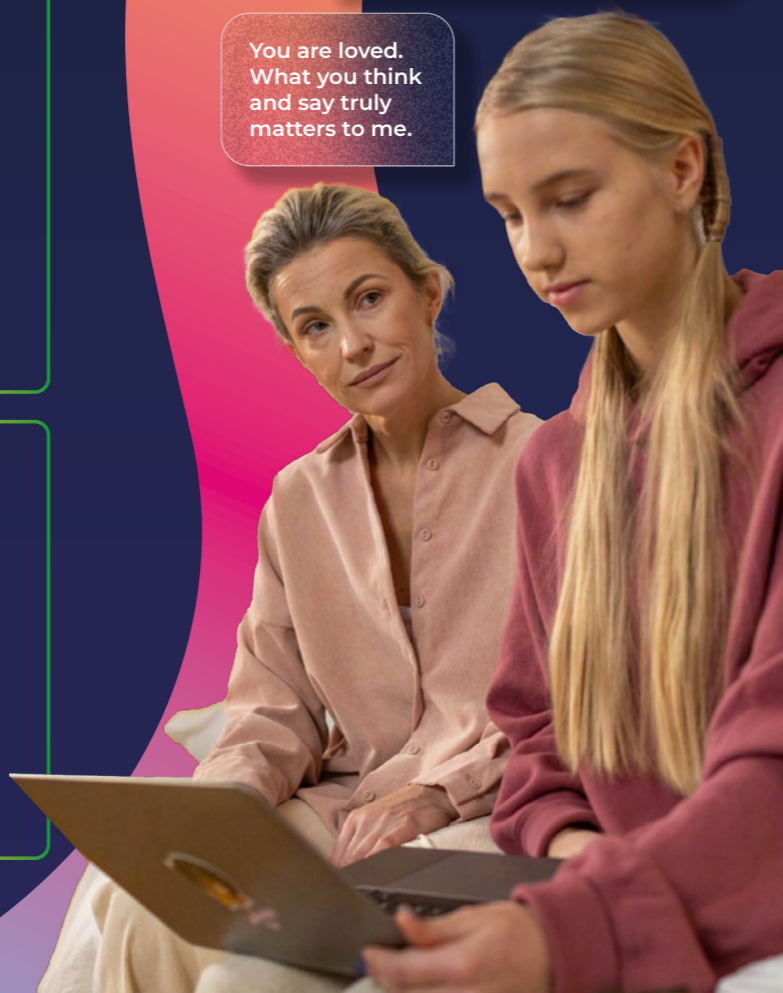
You can always come to me, no matter how small the worry or issue is.

Thank you for being so honest with me. I really appreciate it.

Thank you for coming to talk to me. I care about you so much, and I want to listen and help where I can.

There are no silly questions. You can ask me anything, and I will do my best to answer you. If I don't know the answer, I'd love to figure it out together.

You are loved. What you think and say truly matters to me.



## What to say?

When considering global issues, it's important to **decide what you want to share**. This can be tricky to determine with the sheer volume of news sources and outlets available on phones, tablets, and televisions.

**Consider what they might already know.** Your child or young person may have already formed thoughts or opinions on what is happening. **Stick to simple, honest facts** about a situation to make any responses or questions easier – you don't need to know all the answers! You should also **be prepared to discuss difficult questions or feelings** with those in your care. This is a natural and appropriate response to sensitive topics.

## How to say it?

**Tailor your approach to your child or young person's age and capacity.** Some will be more equipped than others to have mature conversations.

Use **clear, simple language** to avoid overwhelming or confusing them and if possible, **avoid alarming terms** (i.e. 'nuclear threat' or 'mass murder'). If they have questions or concerns, make sure to **actively listen and be honest in your responses**. Seek answers with them if needed.

Meet them where they are at by **asking neutral, open questions** using a calm tone of voice. Your reaction to their reaction is important. **Stay calm, reassuring, and interested in the conversation.**

They will be looking to you for guidance, so speaking clearly and without excessive emotion will help them feel safe and heard.

By modelling the behaviour and responses expected of your child or young person, it will help them learn how to manage their own reactions and responses in the future.

### Remember:

This type of conversation should not be a one-off, but rather a line of discussion that grows with them.

## When to say it?

**Timing is everything.** The best place to start a conversation around sensitive topics is **in a nurturing environment** free of interruption.

**Make sure needs are met** by ensuring your child or young person is not tired, hungry, cold, upset, or distracted when you try to begin a conversation. However, your child may approach you first.

**Watch for visual cues that your child or young person is looking to talk to you** (i.e. lingering in the kitchen while you prepare dinner). They may choose a time when *you* are busy to distract from any nerves or worries they are carrying.

If necessary, **create moments for undistracted conversation** by setting aside your task to listen to them. If you are unable to do this, ask if you can set a specific time to talk with them before the end of the day.

Remind them that you care about their thoughts and want to devote your complete attention to what is on their mind.

