

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

RE: Setting Work at the Start of Term 5

Firstly, I would like to thank all of you who have sent goodwill messages to school in the last few weeks. Through these unprecedented times, it is important that we, as the Furze Platt Senior School community, continue to work together and look out for each other. It is therefore heartening to have received your messages and likewise I hope that you and your families are keeping well. The purpose of this letter is to outline how work will be set at the start of Term 5. As I wrote in the last newsletter before Easter, we know that we have not got everything right when setting work. None of us have experienced home learning on this scale and we are all learning both at FPSS and across the country.

Alongside, the praise for the thought and effort that staff have put into setting work and contacting students, has come some constructive suggestions as students, parents and carers have tried to help us get this right. I would like to address some of the most commonly raised points before sharing with you what you can expect at the start of Term 5:

- The amount of work and the frequency it is being set. This is particularly the case in the younger years where parents have raised concerns about the emotional health of their youngsters as they try and prioritise tasks. Having listened to these concerns we intend to set work on a specific day for year groups the whole week thereby giving you the chance to plan the week ahead.
- The number of online tools we are using (and thereby the number of logins, passwords etc. students need to remember). This is far harder to solve. Our teachers, the experts, chose various online platforms because they best suit their courses and curriculum. We therefore will keep this under review and hope that as students become familiar with their logins and passwords this becomes easier.
- The lack of human interaction with teachers. Some parents and carers have expressed the view that their children are missing interaction with our staff and suggested that we run online lessons. We have looked in detail at this ideal. We have trialled seminars in Year 12 and intend to run one online seminar per subject per week for this year group. Unfortunately, there are concerns about younger years with regard to safeguarding as well as access to technology amongst all our community. While we continue to look at options in this area, I have encouraged our staff to generate a variety of learning that utilises technology to bring in that human dimension. Whether it be video lessons as Mr Harris has been doing in maths or audio commentaries on key concepts and ideas, we are looking to develop resources in this area. I also understand that we should have access to national recorded lessons soon.
- Supporting students (and I guess thereby parents and carers) with expectations and learning from home. To that end, we are ensuring that your child's tutor calls students at least fortnightly and more regularly for students in particular key year groups or who require further support.

From the responses above, I trust that you see we are responding to your feedback. The table below details when and what work students can expect to receive, along with frequency by which staff may contact you.

We will continue to review these arrangements each fortnight and are likely to refine them further should 'lockdown' continue.

Setting Work in Term 5	
Year(s)	Timing and Frequency of Work Set
7 & 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be set one piece of work per subject, per week (this will equate in time to the number of lessons students have per subject per week). • All work will be set on a Monday. This means that no extra work will be set during the week and students (along with parents and carers) can plan a timetable accordingly.
9 & 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be set one piece of work per subject, per week (this will equate in time to the number of lessons students have per subject per week). • All work will be set on a Tuesday. This means that no extra work will be set during the week and students (along with parents and carers) can plan a timetable accordingly.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Ofqual guidance of 3 April we will not be setting any further GCSE work. • Students should now be looking ahead to Year 12. • Students intending to study A Levels and BTECs should look at engaging with the Sixth Form Wider Reading lists found on the website, under the Sixth Form tab. https://www.furzeplatt.com/page/?title=Sixth+Form+Wider+Reading+Lists&pid=539 • Students can also effectively prepare for transition into an A-Level mindset by engaging with the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watching some TED talks on topics they are interested in academically - https://www.ted.com/talks ○ Familiarising and practising the Cornell method for how to take notes - http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/ Students will benefit from practising good note taking skills and this is one of the best methods. ○ The VESPA home study programme - https://www.vespamindset.co.uk/p/the-vespa-mindset-programme • Students moving on to vocational college courses should seek advice from the college/apprenticeship provider.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will be set as appropriate to the course. Assignments may be weekly tasks or longer projects. • All Year 12 will have one online seminar per subject per week (during one of their normal lesson slots). This will usually be 30-45 minutes and aimed at targeting common misunderstandings, clarifying work set and sharing experiences. Attendance is compulsory for seminars. • In preparation for future destinations and more general career preparation, students should ensure their Unifrog account is enhanced. They can focus work on adding to their Subject, Careers and Know-how Libraries. • Students can also use Unifrog to research and begin MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Some MOOC websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FutureLearn - https://www.futurelearn.com/ ○ Edx - https://www.edx.org/ ○ Coursera - https://www.coursera.org/ • Gresham College also share lectures - https://www.gresham.ac.uk/schools

13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Ofqual guidance of 3 April we will not be setting any further A Level work. • Students moving to university should be exploring their preferred university websites for indicative preparatory content. • Students may also benefit from exploring wider extra-curricular opportunities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oxford and Cambridge podcasts and lecturers https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/ https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news/podcast-gallery/ ○ Oxford's basic introductory textbooks to their courses called 'very short introductions': https://www.veryshortintroductions.com/ • If they have not done so already, UCAS students should be applying for finance. A full guide on how to do this was emailed to students on Monday 6th April.
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Contact Between Home and School

7-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Tutors will telephone each tutee once per fortnight. The aim of these conversations is to support with the pastoral care and learning of students. • Students in Y10 should expect at least fortnightly emails/phone calls from subject teachers to check on their GCSE progress. • Students are welcome to email subject teachers or tutors should they wish for further help and support. • We will review the Y12 seminars in two weeks to consider how small group work might extend to lower year groups. • Our Pastoral and Learning Support staff will continue to call key students.
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Additional/Optional Activities

7-13 (and staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that many students, staff, parents and carers have welcomed the additional activities (cooking, quizzes, fitness challenge) that we have been providing. These will still be offered but remain optional.
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Please contact your tutor should there be any issues or questions.

Finally, I send you and your families every best wish and I hope that you all stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morrison
Headteacher