



Director's Letter

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

Welcome to our Spring news letter. Our second newsletter of the academic year gives us the opportunity to keep you informed of current news and events at the centre as well as changes that are happening in Post 16 education. Parents are also advised to visit the Centre website regularly to keep in contact with Centre arrangements, dates and important communications. This also includes a news section which provides reports on a range of student activities that have taken place.

As we see the last of the winter months and enjoy this lovely time of year, it's important to bear in mind that very soon students will be sitting down to undertake the most important exams of their lives. With so much riding on the Summer exam period, it is critical that all first and second year students prepare for the challenge. Whilst subject teachers will have advised classes on how to plan an effective revision schedule, please impress upon your son/daughter the importance of thorough preparation: in my experience, a good Easter revision period can add a grade to the final result.

There have been a variety of events that have taken place recently over both learning communities, ranging from music and drama productions, success through our Envision programme, as well as our Spanish and film and media event in London. Some of our other students at the centre have been busy fundraising for their True Adventures summer trip to Ecuador. The trip will involve a voluntary project in a local community and the funds they have raised this year will go towards this. Students have raised money by running a number of successful quiz nights, as well as selling refreshments at a number of Centre functions and support International World Food Day.

The Centre would also like to congratulate all of their students on their UCAS offers. I am delighted to report that 6 students have been offered places to study at Oxford and Cambridge for the 2017/18 academic year our congratulations goes to the students concerned, as well as to staff involved in supporting their applications. Students have also received offers for Medicine, Law and Veterinary Science as well as a variety of other competitive courses from a range of Universities. We also have a number of students who are applying for higher level apprenticeships. We will keep you updated on the successful destinations of our students which will include securing highly successful apprenticeships; employment opportunities and competitive university places.

The Terms Ahead

Year 12 students are now half way through A level courses and following the recent parents/carers consultation evenings, you should have a clear idea of the progress being made by your daughter/son and strategies for improvement.

After Easter all of our Year 13 students and some of our Year 12 students will be in the final preparations for their summer examinations. All students should have discussed with their tutor their recent progress grades and strategies to maintain or improve these grades. I am sure students need no reminders that time is running out, attendance to lessons during this time is vital, as well as prioritising and accessing the extra

Director's Letter continued.

support that is available. It is essential that attendance at lessons is a priority, especially considering the break in learning over Easter. Regular teacher feedback within these sessions can really make the difference in grades.

There will also be a number of specific workshops which will be run in UpGrade that will focus on effective revision strategies in the run up to examinations. The specific details of these workshops can be accessed through your daughter/son's tutor or through our academic mentors. I have also updated our Centre Blog on effective revision strategies.

The last day for A2 teaching will be on 26th May. Both learning communities will be having a farewell assembly for their Year 13 students. Some of our Year 12 students will have external exams in unreformed AS subjects. If a student has a morning exam they will be allowed to take student leave the afternoon before the exam; if a student has an afternoon exam, they will be able to take study leave the morning of the examination. All Year 12 students will have end of year mock examinations from Tuesday 27th of June until Friday the 30th of June. Students will be given study leave from Monday the 26th until Friday 30th of June.

During term 6, Year 12 parents/carers will be invited to an introduction to HE evening and students will start to receive higher education information, guidance and advice specifically designed for A level and Vocational students.

We hope you have a lovely Easter and enjoy planning and revising for your upcoming examinations.

Marian Curran

Key Dates

7 April 2017	End of Term 4 (INSET Day for Cotham & Redland Green)
24 April 2017	Beginning of Term 5 (INSET Day for Redland Green) NB If you are based at Redland Green Learning Community and have lessons at Cotham on this day you must still attend your lessons at Cotham
3 May 2017	Year 13 Parent Engagement Group
12 May 2017	AS/A Level Exams commence
26 May 2017	Last day of teaching for Year 13 End of Term 5
5 June 2017	Beginning of Term 6 (INSET Day for Cotham) NB If you are based at Cotham Learning Community and have lessons at Redland Green on this day you must still attend your lessons at Redland Green
5 July 2017	Year 12 Parent Engagement Group
21 July 2017	End of Term 6

Student ID Lanyards

Please can we remind all parents/ carers and students that ID lanyards **must** be worn at all times in both Learning Communities. We have had a number of students continually forgetting or losing their ID. If it has been lost a new one will need to be ordered via Wisepay at a cost of £5.

Congratulations NBP16C Football Team

NBP16C football team are through to semi finals of Bristol & South Gloucestershire schools competition.

The centre football team are through to the semi final of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire schools football competition. A win against Chipping Sodbury will take us through to the final after the Easter break. We have been champions twice and are aiming for a third title this year.

Annual Oxford and Cambridge Student Conference

Following a visit to the centre in November from our link college at Oxford University (Lincoln), on Wednesday 29 March, a group of year 12 students visited Liberty stadium for the annual Oxford and Cambridge university student conference.

Students had the opportunity to attend a plethora of talks:

- Oxford and Cambridge explained
- Making a competitive application
- Undergraduate courses including English, mathematics, economics, PPE, modern and medieval languages and many more
- Student finance and careers

The conference provided up to date information on the application and admissions procedure as well as advice from admissions tutors, academic staff and current undergraduates.

One centre student commented 'I wasn't quite sure what to expect from the conference and was in two minds about whether I would apply. It's helped to dispel some of the myths you read about. Understanding the college system, meeting like minded people and finding out about specific courses and most importantly what I need to be doing beyond my A levels has inspired me to make an application'.

For further information go to www.cam.ac.uk and www.ox.ac.uk

Ex student returns to discuss FGM

We were delighted to welcome back Nasra recently who completed her A levels in summer 2016 and is now at Bristol university studying philosophy and politics. Nasra volunteers for Integrate UK, a youth led charity that empowers young people to take an active and positive role in transforming the society they live in. Nasra specifically spoke to year 12s about female genital mutilation (FGM) and how to integrate encourage young people to raise awareness of challenging issues, such as FGM through creative projects such as video, stage drama and music. Go to <http://integrateuk.org/> for further information.

British Mathematical Olympiad 2016/17 Success

Congratulations to Matt in year 13 who achieved a bronze medal (certificate of distinction) in round one of the UKMT British Mathematical Olympiad. Typically 1300 students sit this round and only the top 100 students receive prizes. Selection is based on performance in the [UK Senior Mathematical Challenge \(UKSMC\)](#). Matt is joint 31st in the country. Well done Matt!

Dr Emma Brennard talks about Planet Earth II

In November, BBC Wildlife Filmmaker Dr Emma Brennand came to speak to Y12 about her work on Planet Earth II. Emma inspired students with stories about warding off komodo dragons in Indonesia, and making sure drone cameras weren't taken out of the sky by eagles in Scandinavia! Several students were able to speak to Emma about her career path after the talk.

Fundraising for famine relief in East Africa

A group of nine brilliant girls have raised over £1300 for famine relief in East Africa. Led by Riyan Abib (Y12), the girls organised cake sales, a raffle and a non-uniform day to support this important cause which is particularly close to their hearts as many of them have East African heritage. The girls are also being interviewed about their project by the manager of a United

Students to lead tutorial sessions

Students Sean Smyth and Anna Goddard Jones have volunteered to lead tutorial sessions on projects they are working on outside school. Sean and a colleague spoke to Y12 about the importance of registering to vote, whilst Anna is discussing Childline's Tough to Talk campaign, which addresses boys' mental health.

Cotham Respect Ambassadors

The Cotham Respect Ambassadors scheme continues to go from strength to strength. This year, Y13 ambassadors led assemblies for every year group about what healthy relationships look like, and joined years 7 to 9 tutor groups to mentor younger students and answer their questions. The Respect Ambassadors also organised a cake sale which raised over £100 for Women's Aid. Recruitment for a new cohort of ambassadors begins in term 5.

Bristol Ideal Award

Cotham and Redland Green Schools are both now proud recipients of the Bristol Ideal, an award given to local schools in recognition of their work around healthy relationships and gender-based violence.

Bristol Scholars Programme

Nine students have been nominated for the Bristol Scholars programme. The scheme gives reduced offers, tutoring and bursaries to exceptional students who have overcome adversity on their journey to higher education. Congratulations to you all.

Ex-student discusses life as a BBC Apprentice

Candice Hayden, an ex-Cotham student who now is now a BBC apprentice, came in to speak about her experiences. She delivered a very positive message about the importance of hard work and resilience, and told students not to worry if they (like her aged 18) were unsure about their future plans.

KPMG and EY talk about Graduate Schemes

KPMG and EY have visited North Bristol Post 16 students to deliver talks and workshops on their school leavers' programmes and graduate schemes.

Kooth.com - free, safe and anonymous support

In November, our post 16 students heard about 'Kooth' - an online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desk top and free! Kooth is staffed by trained counsellors, emotional wellbeing practitioners, and media / content workers.

On Kooth, young people can:

- Chat to friendly counsellors
- Read articles written by young people
- Get support from kooth community
- Write a daily journal.

There are live forums on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7.30 - 9.00 about various topics. Young people can access resources and information and also read and write articles for the online magazine.

One of our year 12 students who has accessed this service said 'Kooth is great tool - you can talk about anything that's

Money raised for Off The Record

Post 16 students have so far raised over £200 for local charity Off the Record through bucket collections and a cake sale. Off the Record provide free and confidential mental health support and information to young people (aged 11-25) in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. They run various services and projects - designed with the help of young people to promote and improve mental health and wellbeing, and all of them are delivered by a team of super friendly staff and volunteers. Over 1,000 young people access their services every year.

How Off the Record support young people?

Off the Record have visited the centre many times to talk to the students about the services they offer as well as opportunities for students to get involved in projects to raise awareness of mental health.

One of many initiatives is **The Resilience Lab** which has been delivered at the centre.

In a hectic and often stressful world, our ability to bounce back is really important for our health and happiness.

Off the Record offers a series of free and most importantly fun workshops to learn some new skills and ideas for how to cope with stress and deal with the challenges you face.

Making friends with stress: 3 May

Forget stress management, let's really get to know stress...and maybe even make friends with it.

Reach out: 19 April & 24 May

Building bridges and getting connected. Learn some important and overlooked skills in the art of being resilient.

Super me: 12 April & 17 May

What are strengths and why are they useful? Discover some of yours and how to use them for a real resilient boost.

Pressure proof: 26 April & 31 May

Tried and tested techniques for when things get tough. An intro to breathing techniques, mindfulness and other stress building techniques.

Thinking traps: 10 May

Ever caught in patterns of negative thinking. Us too. Let's learn how to challenge those pesky thoughts that can sometimes make life feel so difficult.

Want to book a place? Find out more? Booking not essential but recommended as places are limited.

Email RESILIENCELAB@OTRBRISTOL.ORG.UK

OTR BRISTOL.ORG.UK

Meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccination for all

Year 13 students are currently being offered a vaccine to protect them against meningococcal disease. It is being offered in response to a rapidly growing increase in cases of a highly aggressive strain of meningococcal W. This disease can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning) Both diseases are very serious and can kill.

GPs are inviting all year 13 students for MenACWY vaccination and we have been asked to support our students by encouraging them to get vaccinated. If you'd like any further information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/meningococcal-acwy-menacwy-vaccination-programme> or <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/men-acwy-vaccine.aspx> or contact the South West Screening and Immunisations Team by email to: england.bnsssg.imms@nhs.net

University Offers

Another bumper UCAS year for year 13 students across the centre holding university offers. Students are now carefully thinking about their firm and insurance choices before the deadline which for most is early May (4th). 6 students are currently holding offers for Oxford / Cambridge university, medicine and vet science. We continue to be delighted with students receiving offers for competitive health care courses ranging from physiotherapy and optometry to nursing and midwifery. More information on replying to offers, go to <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/track-your-application/replying-your-ucas-undergraduate-offers>

Don't forget to apply for student finance at <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>. To get your money in time for the start of your course in September 2017 you must apply by 27 May 2017.

RIFE: The ultimate guide to what's happening in Bristol for 13-24 year olds

We recently welcomed RIFE to the centre who spoke to students about...

What's on:

Discover things to do in Bristol. Find regular youth clubs, creative courses, training programmes, one off events, activities and more.

Some of our students have booked on to the BFI film academy 'inside film' event on Saturday 8 April. For £4.50 you get an all day (11am - 7pm) pass giving you access to masterclasses, industry panels, short film programmes and networking events. <http://wshd.to/insidefilm>

Jobs and opportunities

This is the place to discover valuable and worthwhile work experience, internships and volunteering opportunities.

Get advice

Discover youth services, organisations and charities. Get support and advice or develop skills and knowledge.

RIFE magazine

Rife magazine is made by young people in Bristol for the young people of Bristol. It covers art, culture, social issues, politics, music and film. They are always looking for content creators, vloggers, bloggers, filmmakers, photographers and designers.

Go to www.rifeguide.co.uk for further information

Year 13 Spanish Exchange - IES Pintor Antonio Lopez, Madrid / Cotham

Following our very successful visit to Spain in November, our Spanish Exchange partners came over to Bristol in early March to stay with families. In 5 days we gave them the full Bristol Experience; immersing them in English culture and language, including local landmarks such as the suspension bridge and slidy rock, museums, a graffiti tour & workshop, Bath for a cream tea, a London trip for some, and miles of walking in the sunshine, which luckily came with them! It was a very positive experience and many of the students have plans to return in the summer holidays to see their Spanish families again.

The visit comes just before our Year 13 students take their final exams with renewed confidence and a far deeper understanding of Spanish culture as a result of this partnership. We look forward to offering this often life-changing opportunity to more students in the future and would like to thank all students and families who took part in our first Spanish adventure - they made us very proud!

Clare Swayne, Teacher of Spanish

Top Tips for Revision

Do you struggle with revision? Unsure where to begin? Here are some top tips from current post 16 students:

Get organised

Structure your time and make a revision timetable early on. Don't panic if you don't stick to it but factor in time for changes.

Make sure that you get enough sleep.

Spend some time every day organising all of your notes and have clear sections for each unit / topic.

Create check lists of everything you need to revise for each unit / topic and tick it off as you go, noting down who you should see / what you need to do for any areas you are struggling with.

Blank timetables, checklists and revision planners are available in 'Upgrade'.

Create a positive environment: Find a space away from distractions such as Facebook, your phone, consoles, the tv and friends unless you know you can work well together.

Make it manageable

Set yourself small, manageable targets to break your revision down.

Work in focussed bursts and then have a break to relax and do something fun.

Give yourself rewards for each target completed, e.g. half an hour of Facebook time.

Active revision = the best revision, it's about more than just reading your notes! Try a variety of the following methods:

Make summary notes – write, condense, write, test

Mindmaps

Flash cards – keep them simple

Mnemonics

Posters – the more colourful the better!

Post-it notes – on your bedroom wall, the bathroom mirror, the fridge....

Pod casts / you tube clips

Record yourself

Past papers

Make use of technology – apps and revision websites

Use internet resources such as 'get revising', BBC Bitesize and SAM Learning

Teach others and test yourself

Get somebody to test you or teach a friend or family member. You will then be going over your knowledge and it will be much more likely that you remember it. We remember 90% of what we teach to others compared to 10% of what we read!

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it – from each other, your teachers or an Academic Mentor via 'Upgrade'.

RGS Workshop calendar 2016/17: Every Wednesday at 12:05 and Thursday at 1:30 in 2F1

April

26 & 27 **Revision strategies:** Exam planning, timetables and strategies

May

3 & 4 **Revision strategies:** Exam planning, timetables and strategies

10 & 11 **Exam technique:** Preparing for exams, how to plan, break down questions and how to answer questions e.g. essay writing

17 & 18 **Essay writing skills:** Improving planning, structure and academic literacy

24 & 25 **Exam technique:** Preparing for exams, how to plan, break down questions and how to answer questions e.g. essay writing

June

7 & 8 **Revision strategies –** Developing your skills and finding new ways to revise

14 & 15 **Exam technique -** Preparing for exams, how to plan, break down questions and how to answer questions e.g. essay writing

21 & 22 **Revision clinic -** Drop in with questions about revision for your mocks

28 & 29 **Revision clinic -** Drop in with questions about revision for your mocks

July

5 **Employability –** How to make yourself stand out from the crowd

12 & 13 **Organisation –** Time management, study timetables, procrastination busters!

19 & 20 **Essay writing skills -** Improving planning, structure and academic literacy

Cotham Workshop Calendar 2016/17:

Every Tuesday at 12:05 and Thursday 11:05 in G001

April

26 & 27 **Revision strategies:** Revision TT and revision cards—get prepared!

May

2 & 4 **Exam technique:** Preparing for exams, how to plan and break down questions

9 & 11 **Time management in exams:** how much time to spend on each section

16 & 18 **Essay writing skills:** How to write excellent essays under pressure

23 & 25 **Revision strategies:** Revision TT and revision cards—get prepared!

30 **Exam stress:** How best to avoid it

June

1 **Exam stress:** How best to avoid it

6 & 8 **Exam technique -** Preparing for exams, how to plan, break down questions

13 & 15 **Revision clinic:** Come and let us test you on your knowledge

20 & 22 **Revision clinic:** Come and let us test you on your knowledge

27 & 29 **Revision clinic:** Past papers

July

4 & 6 **Employability:** How to make yourself stand out from the crowd

11 & 13 **Organisation:** Time management, study timetables, procrastination busters

18 & 20 **Essay writing skills:** - Improving planning, structure and academic literacy