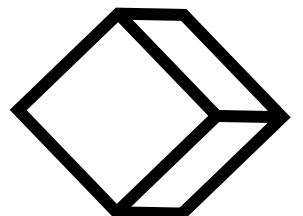


# ***PULP.***

**the 2018 premier**



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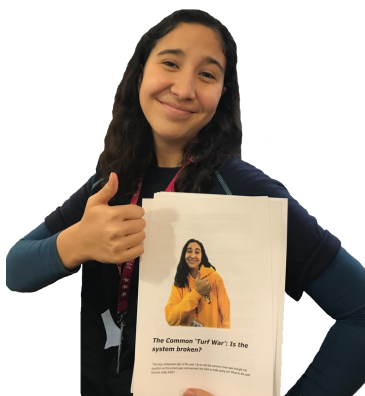
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# do we even care?

TEXT BY NATHALIA SANTANA-HERNANDEZ

The long undisputed right of the year 13s to rule the common room was brought into question as this school year commenced, but what is really going on? What do the sixth formers really think?



Year 13s who use the “common room” stated that for year 12s not having access to centre 6 is a “rite of passage” a long-standing unofficial initiation process, which they experienced themselves.

In previous years, more dominant year 13s threatened to “kick our faces in” making current events seem much more docile, and so questions surfaced about why teachers were taking action now, on something that has happened for so long.

We asked the opinions of the local residents on their input:

**Q: ‘What’re your thoughts on CentreSix?’**

*“There is limited space just for sixth formers around the school, we don’t want to be surrounded by younger years in the common room too”*

*“I’ve made more friends in C6 than anywhere else in school”*

*“It has a... nice vibe”*

**Q: ‘In a room that is so crowded already, is this “natural order” helping?’**

*“You can only fit in around 40 people max anyway”*

*“We need it more, because year 13 is a way more important year than year 12, and we’ll be off soon anyway, and the year 12s will get their turn”*

**Q: ‘How often do you use the room?’**

The room was described as “like home” and a place they visit every day.

**Q: ‘Where else would you go without the common room?’**

They didn’t believe there were any other apt spaces within the school, and already in their second year *“the novelty of being able to leave school has worn off”*

**Q: ‘Is your relationship with the year 12s hostile?’**

*“It’s not like we’re gonna beat them up”*

*“We have nothing against them we just prefer having the room to ourselves”*

From my personal experience in the room as a year 12 I felt intimidated at first, entering this “forbidden territory” but as soon as I started talking to the year 13s it became apparent that I had exaggerated the significance of the moment far too much. They were pleasant and amicable, more than willing to have a chat. The so called hostility, I believe, is just teen awkwardness.

I asked Year 13s who don’t use the common room the same questions

**Q: ‘Is this system broken?’**

*“It’s just the way things are”*

*“a lot of us don’t even go in there, it’s not worth fighting over”*

**Q: ‘How often do you use the room?’**

*“Never, really. We prefer the canteen”*

So it seems overall, year 13s felt that the room is rightfully theirs. Whether they actually decided to use it varied. The principal remained the same, they had earned a right to their own space (that means no year 12s) even if that space is a sweaty old corner in St Mary’s.

I also asked the year 12s for their take on the situation:

**Q: ‘Do you feel the so called “turf war” has been blown out of proportion?’**

*“I didn’t even know much about it, I don’t feel it’s a big issue”*

*“We’re gonna get it next year so it’s not a big deal”*

*“I prefer leaving school anyway”*

*It’s such a tiny room, there’s like 400 people”*

**Q: ‘Do you feel intimidated by the year 13s?’**

*“I feel awkward not intimidated”*

**Q: ‘If the room were to be made exclusively for 13s, how would you feel?’**

*“I think it’s fine because they need their space but it would have to be evened out — we need somewhere for year 12s too”*

Concerns were expressed about how the often crowded canteen and library- especially during library lessons- can become far from the productive space that sixth formers need, and with the common room off limits, there is no where to go.

Overall the true issue that arose from this questioning process is that the quality of the room itself is what needs addressing.

It is cramped, untidy — and the most well decorated aspect of the entire space is the coffee table in the far left corner, covered with an eclectic collection of student doodles. Barring this we have drab furniture stained carpets. “AN EMPTY VENDING MACHINE?” which students were instructed to quote “stock themselves”.

One student described centre six as *“One of those rooms from the febreze adverts where the person is blindfolded and then a disgusting room is revealed, except, without the ebreze”*.

Several students requested febreze.

One added that *“the only time it smells good in here is when they make garlic bread in the canteen”*. *Though perhaps finding a cure for teen stench is an entirely separate issue.*

Whether the students were year 12 or 13, frequent visitors, or those who prefer to avoid the space entirely, one point was completely agreed on:  
*the common room sucks.*

“It’s too small”

“It looks like crap/any and all synonyms for an ugly piece of trash”

All agree that more space is needed, but also, C6 is not satisfying the students of NDHS sixth form; those who do use it say it is purely because of the friends they will find there, because the room itself is *“disgusting”*.

#### **Some points of concern raised with me were:**

The lack of a microwave

The empty vending machine

The ugly furniture

The drab walls....

#### **They wanted:**

“new seats and new decoration”

“a total tidy up”

“get rid of the vending machine

...But the more surprising information is that the year 13s claim to have been shut down in their attempts to improve the quality of the room — *“the site team stopped us”*

In the name of journalistic fairness I felt it adequate to hear the opinion of a member of staff, none other than the legend himself **Anthony Fullam**.

Mr Fullam expressed how upholding the ethos of the school is of utmost importance, especially with year 12s and so these divisions, however insignificant done students may feel them to be, for the sake of those who are negatively affected must be dealt with seriously.

From my point of view it’s understandable as we are welcoming new students and making a lasting first impression on them, the school is all about integration and supporting our fellow students we shouldn’t be accepting these divides to begin, it’s like a gateway to more serious issues like bullying.

#### **Mr Fullam talked about how:**

“We don’t want a social apartheid”

We would appreciate the way

“The year groups at Notre Dame are fluid” and encourage this to continue.

On the topic of the room itself he commented:

#### **Students should consider how by**

*“Working with the sixth form council we can make improvements to the room”*

#### **And to always take into consideration that**

*“We don’t want any year 12s to feel excluded”*

*“The messages [ the infamous “year 12 are you lost???” posters] had never been left in previous years; it was something we had to deal with”*

— this is what led to banning all sixth formers for a short time from the room. The boundaries were pushed and threatened the peaceable nature of our sixth form.

For a short period after the peak of the turf war, there was in fact, a kind of ceasefire, some year 12s inhabited the space at lunch, though soon after they would return to the canteen. They deemed the space too ugly and boring.

Apparently, the room itself is really not of great interest to many. Unlike the assemblies and warnings to “just get along” from teachers might have you believe.

What can we really take from this? the common room sucks, so it makes sense that only the year 13s use it, despite all its flaws it has one irresistible factor for the eldest in the school:

It is the only place on school grounds where they will find no lower year students.

All in all there is a commonly expressed desire to fix up the space, but it seems there is no real conflict, the year 13s light-heartedly refer to the *“keep out”* and *“year 12s, are you lost ?”* posters as a joke, most of year 12 didn’t even see these.

I conclude, that the people who want the room the most are already in there, and most of the sixth form would rather see it improved and enjoy it in year 13 than argue over what is currently an absolute mess. Looking to the future, it’s up to us students to focus on making the quality of the room better, and a more welcoming place for all.

After all isn’t that what Notre Dame should be all about?



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# exiled.

TEXT BY TONI LOCKYER

It has always been tradition at Notre Dame for the Sixth Form common room to belong almost dictatorially to the year 13s. In living memory, it has never been questioned that the ownership rights of that eagerly awaited (however debatably anticlimactic) room inevitably fall with the eldest students of the school. On the year 13s very first day back, C6 was found plastered with posters exiling the new year 12s, with slogans such as “Year 12s are you lost? The common room is for year 13s ONLY” to which the school responded during assembly to remind offenders that contrary to their pre held beliefs, it is open to the entire sixth form. Perhaps the name of the room being “common” is somewhat fitting for its new owners, given their recent behaviour.

Yet in spite of the room itself being somewhat insalubrious, it would appear there is some driving force compelling year 13 to defend the common room, and therefore banish any who would dare to break the ongoing cycle whereby C6 remains exclusive to year 13 only. Perhaps it is the primal urge to win this alleged “Turf war” as Mr. Harper speculated, in order to assert their new found dominance both over the area and at the top of the school. Or, more realistically they have waited their turn for the highly sought after C6 and thus do not want to lose this ‘privilege’.

So how have year 12 reacted to their banishment? Overall they are divided between those apathetic and those enraged. Many look upon the room adorned with peeling paint and canteen-food-entrenched-carpets and conclude that the year 13s have earned their place as the eldest in school, and subsequently the rights to this area.

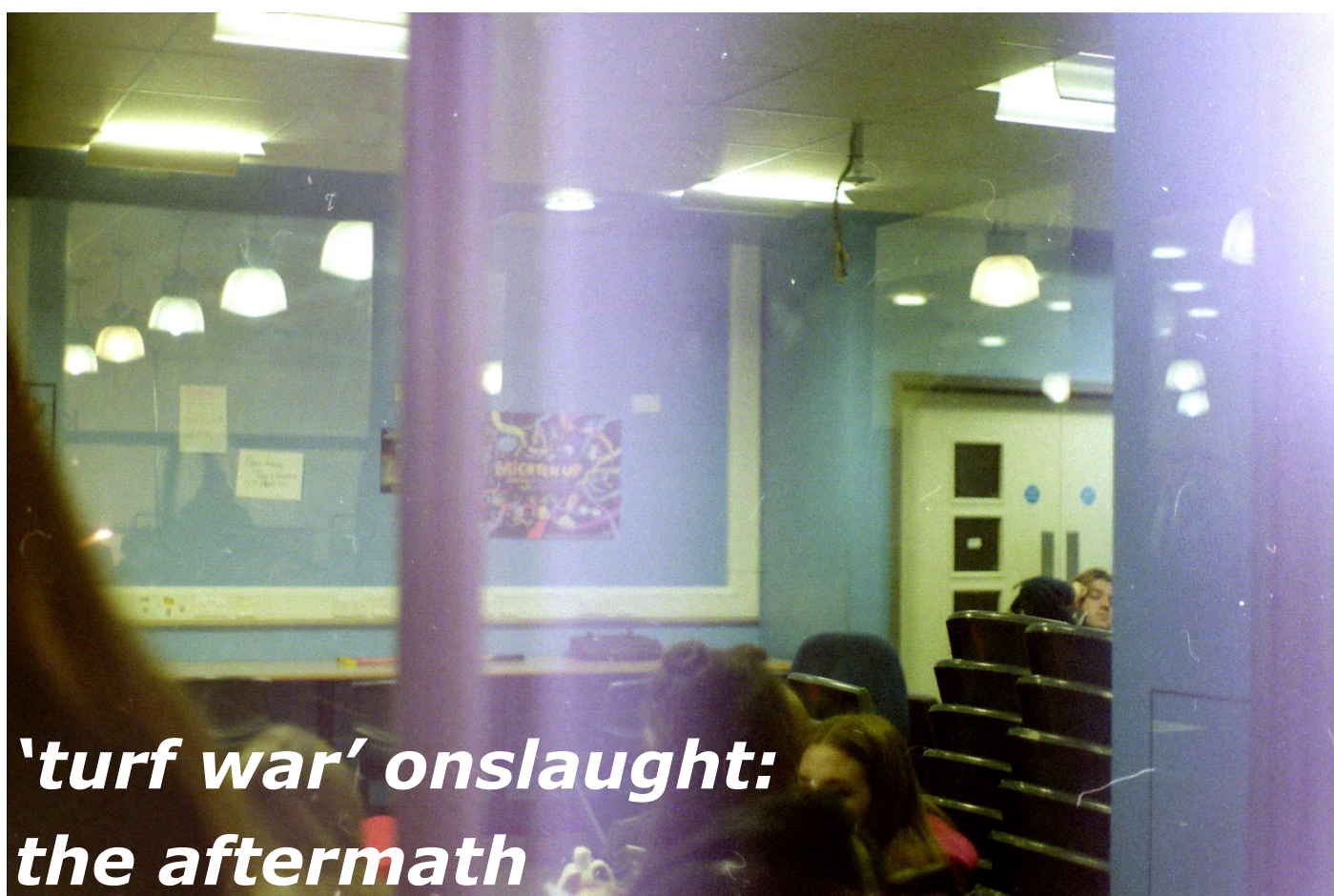
Having spoken to a range of year 12s, the majority share the view that “I don’t care. When we’re in year 13 we’ll be in that room and want to kick the year below out” suggesting this is part of the natural cycle occurring in school, and that this assertion of dominance will be repeated annually. Thus, in a sense can the year 13 be blamed for their aggressive approach? Instead this could reflect a reaction to how their predecessors treated them concerning the matter, and also the fear instilled into them at the idea of their territory being invaded. On the other side of the dispute sit students astounded at the unnecessarily angered tone conveyed by the year above them, some branding it “bullying” whilst others see the aforementioned rhetorical question asking whether the year 12s were “lost” as unnecessarily patronising, especially given some of them are merely days older than those they were banishing.

The common room itself was supposed to be shared by both years, in an attempt to integrate the sixth form. “Much like Martin Luther King, I have a dream” Mr. Fullam told me, “that the year 12s and year 13s will play together”. Whether this dream is slightly naive, or merely disingenuous so staff can remain apathetic towards the issue, remains to be seen. Rumour has it that this is a cover up so the school do not have to make another common room.

Residents of the sixth form office also suggested a form group based rota for the room, however this idea would prove equally futile given year 12s and year 13s have not integrated sufficiently within their respective forms. Mr. Fullam also alluded to the childish nature of the situation, saying “Whenever my children can’t share their toys, they get taken away”; is this be a threat?

It seems the name of the “sixth form common room” will forever remain ironic; the current year 11s will inevitably suffer a similar fate as the current year 12 have. It appears unlikely year 12 will allow the room to be taken from them a second time, understandably given the trauma they have undergone in the recent exiling.





## 'turf war' onslaught: the aftermath

TEXT BY AMELIA BETTS

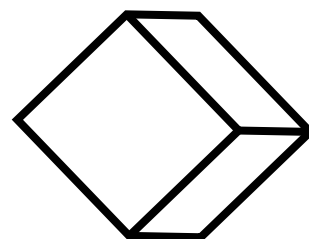
**T**he notorious turf war we're all sick of hearing about.

The whole point of the common room, (although some suggest it is the *only point*) is that it provides separation from the lower school. Both years 12 and 13 are fresh from the traumatic experience of having to share the same study space as these gremlins on sugar high, so no wonder why they want to escape from them. However having a common room that apparently is "only made use of by 5% of the entire sixth form" isn't exactly great, as you may have guessed. In this case, the main problem with this so-called 'common' room is that it's so dictatorial as to who can actually go in there. This excludes year 12s, no matter what 'excuse' they may have. Poor buggers.

Not that I insist on being sympathetic to year 12. From the perspective of the year 13s, year 12s are jumped up egotists- so no wonder why they want somewhere to further separate themselves from the rest of the school. I'd also add that this turf war effectively puts year 12 in their place; after an entire summer with less motivation and drive than the current state of Brexit, year 12 think they can do whatever they want, say whatever they want, without any sort of repercussions involved. Year 13 instantly prove them wrong by kicking them out of the common room. Hence, order is restored.

However, in this convoluted mess of a situation there is always the suggestion that there is simply not enough space for both years of the sixth form to actually get along peacefully. The canteen's average at best, the music tech room's really only for the select few who do a level music (plus half a dozen of their friends) and in the library's pretty Orwellian. Many argue why build that so-called "green monstrosity" (as in all honesty, no one knows what it's actually called), should've been built in the first place, when the money could've gone towards a new study space for the sixth form.

Personally, I can't see any changes should be made to prevent the 'turf war' from happening in the next few years; if alterations are made, the 'rite of passage', as some call it, will inevitably be denied to the year 13s who sat it out for a year in order to have the common room. Many people think that this would generally cause more harm than good, so if that's the case, then why change anything?



# friends with flags

Q: *What's your aim?*

R: *To make people aware of just how many different cultures there are in the school & how everyone, no matter what country they're from, should be accepted, & how it's not okay to make comments that are targeted at immigrants*

Q: *Why is this important to you?*

R: *A large percentage of the school, let alone the UK, is made up of immigrants, or children of those not from this country. Therefore people need to be aware how something they may perceive/say as a joke, can be very disrespectful and offensive.*

(cont.)

*A lot of the negative things you hear about immigrants is either false or courts for a small, unrepresentative percentage. Nevertheless, in our school community, we should embrace other cultures & move away from a negative perspective on people from other countries — as there is just no reason for it.*

Q: *So what should we do?*

R: *We should be proud of our culture — it makes us who we are. We shouldn't be ashamed! So, to show our pride, I encourage all of those who's hearts belong to another country to wear a patch or pin of your flag on your blazer or your lanyard, and wear it with pride!*

**Interviewer:**

Abby Sol Cruz

**Interviewee:**

Emma McNally

If you have any questions, etc.  
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# more harm than good?

TEXT BY LIESHA MAPIYE

Like much of year 12, I have been lucky enough to be part of the daunting experience which is moving schools – alone. On the first day, like many, I studied my timetable in search for free periods or study sessions to relieve me of any pent-up stress that could (and to my dismay, *would*) build up during the day.

I currently take four A-levels, and so, wasn't too surprised to find out that there were only a few blank spaces on my timetable. Instead, to my horror, I found that I have three hours on Wednesday afternoon, week A, which runs until *four-thirty after-school*.

Coming from a school which had five periods, I was rather confused; why bother adding an extra hour to the school day? Is it not long enough already?

Sixth formers are already up to their knees in work – whether that be notes that need writing up, revising for tests, reading ahead, or homework. Since the start of the year, we have all been coerced to do an hour or two of each subject we do at school, at home after school.

Speaking theoretically, on the Wednesday I have a sixth period, I need to do six hours of work after school – If I get home at around 5pm, I'll finish working by 11pm.

I guess I'll just have to grow accustomed to working out equations rather than socialising with my family.

It seems we already spend more time doing school related activities than we do with our friends, our families – why rob us of that extra hour? Everything adds up; we spend about 239 days, give or take, in school which leaves only 126 days for socialising. That's 65% of our year spent in school, not counting extra hours spent doing homework.



When interviewed, students complained that *"sixth period is unnecessary,"* or *"tiring"*. Some of them went as far as saying that they *"feel less focused in class,"* and thus, tend to not work as hard or perform worse than usual. What's the point of having an extra hour of school if we can't focus or be productive?

But really if you think about it, most people only have one sixth period every fortnight. We're already at school for five periods, one more isn't going to hurt – however tiring it may seem. In fact, one extra hour of school is probably going to benefit each of us massively; that extra hour of learning could be the difference between a grade B and a grade A – school has one resource that your home probably doesn't. Teachers.

That extra hour of learning could help get you into university to study medicine, or engineering, or technology. Let's not lie to ourselves, who can honestly put their right hand on the Bible and swear that they do the amount of revision we're told to do outside school? During sixth period, we can do work that we most likely would not do outside school for that subject. I'm not trying to expose anyone – I'm just stating facts.

Despite all the negatives previously stated, I don't think many people actually mind. I mean, having to stay behind school for an extra hour isn't really what anyone wants to do with their time, but what's the worst that could *really happen*? *A lot of us don't have active social lives that could be potentially ruined anyway. So maybe we should stop whining about sixth period, we're already months into the school year; one sixth period a fortnight is not too terrible and frankly, we can't do anything about it – it's an inevitable part of the Notre Dame High School experience.*



# "what do you mean there's now sixth periods?"

TEXT BY AMELIA BETTS



Perhaps one of the biggest things causing a stir at the beginning of the school year was undoubtedly the addition of sixth periods for sixth form into the school timetable. Which, for several reasons, caused a lot of controversy amongst both years 12 and 13.

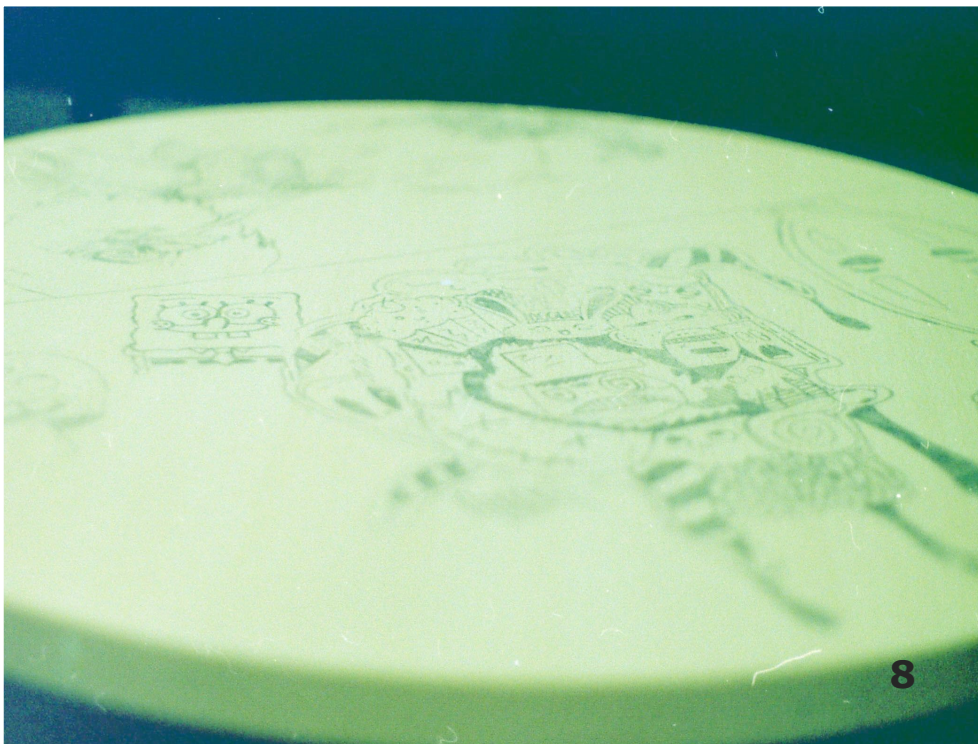
The change has taken place due to the massive intake of year 12 students this year, which in turn means that due to the extra classes that now have to be in session a sixth period has been added into the school day. Subsequently, this has affected students in both years 12 and 13, who have had lessons moved into the period six slot- and as a result of this, have become angered at the change. People from both years have called sixth periods "useless and unnecessary" and a "waste of both teachers' and students' time". Some are angry that there are notable subjects which seem to be more affected than others: sciences, product design and art seem to be the victims in this scenario. Others are just annoyed that the school have to put in this measure without considering any alternatives, such as setting the work on Google Classroom for it to be done at home for a later date.

Obviously, there was going to be complaint when this was first announced. Seeing a sixth period lesson on your timetable, getting told you *have to go to it*, followed by the cold realisation that you can't go home at 15:30 but have to wait it out for an hour is definitely not going to make most people's days. However, whenever complaints do surface, they are always met with the same response: the sixth periods have to be there so that all nine hours of a subject per fortnight are fulfilled. But does adding on a sixth period to the school day really solve any problems for the sixth form? Lengthening the school day for the sixth form who arguably are worked harder than any other year group. Besides, studying for a longer time will definitely tire students out faster, and if the school's leadership team are encouraging years 12 and 13 to have decent breaks from studying during holidays and weekends, then surely they shouldn't be adding extra hours to the day.

Furthermore, some people simply can't go to sixth periods, whether that is because of travel arrangements or other commitments outside of school, which they have had previously to the introduction of sixth periods. It's argued by many people, including myself, that forcing students to reschedule all at the cost of one lesson is highly inconsiderate of the school, when other options as to fitting in all timetabled lessons- as stated before- are at hand.

Of course, there is always the possibility of reducing the amount of 'study periods' students have in order to fit all timetabled lessons in. Therein lies the dilemma: would you rather have more study periods and have a few sixth periods in the timetable, or have no sixth periods, just a few less study periods? The answer's more complicated than you'd think.

No one knows whether sixth periods are here to stay. Many share the view that sixth periods should be dumped on the steaming pile of 'school ideas that never actually worked'. Whether this is actually what happens remains to be seen.



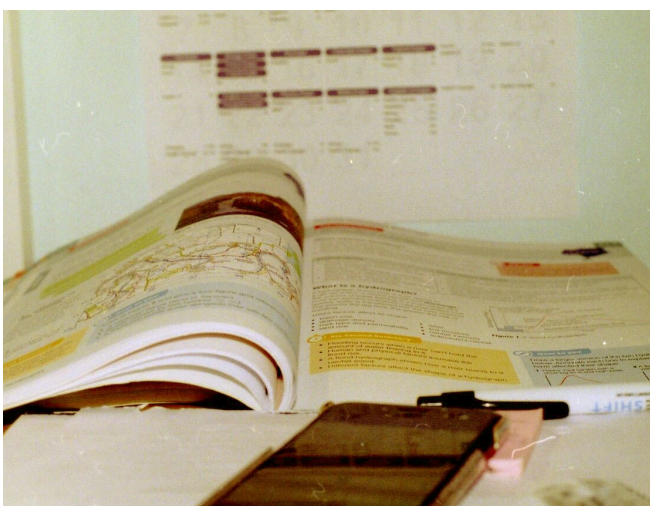


# ***academic aid or a punishment?***

TEXT BY JESS CREEDON

**T**here is no better feeling than 3.30pm when the bell rings and the gates open and freedom is granted. To know that you've slogged your way through five hours of work and that now, you're free to go home, relax and unwind. However, for many unlucky sixth formers and, a couple of GCSE students, the day doesn't end when the bell rings. It ends one hour later when other students and teacher alike are long gone. The dreaded sixth period. Are they really necessary?

As a sixth former, I know that we are given a surplus of free periods, most of which are used for work and a small minority which can be taken as a free. This means that there are plenty of time in which these sixth periods could be actual periods. In a way, it can be seen as poor planning on the school's front, because people have to stay in school for longer. Many people travel huge amounts of distance, waking up before the sun, just to get to school on time. As the days shrink and the light fades, it's becoming increasingly harder for many students to make it home before it's pitch black- and that's with five period days! Additionally, the transport gets much more irregular as the day goes on, meaning students who live far distances may not get home before 6 or even 7 in the evening. As a school, we should be prioritising the welfare and safety of the students instead of trying to squeeze in extra classes on to an already full day.



Poppy Williams, a sixth former at the school agrees with this, citing that 'As it gets colder and darker, we are less enthusiastic about staying at school, focusing on our want to go home, rather than the actual lesson itself.' Many of us know how focus and enthusiasm for learning easily drifts as the day drags by so we can only imagine how demotivating it must feel to see other students leave school, whilst you stay cooped up in a cold, dismal classroom, awaiting another lengthy hour. In fact, the teenage concentration span is already only ten to fifteen minutes and has been proven to get shorter and shorter as what is known as 'concentrating hours' go on. How is this helping our learning? An hour after school is the sentence served to those who have misbehaved in class; an ASD. Now it is the mandatory time students have to give, just because they have chosen to do certain subjects. Why should students be punished for choosing the subjects that they want to do?

Despite the seemingly negative effect it can have on a student, from a teacher's point of view, the sixth period might be a constructive hour which is necessary to a student's learning. Although many students don't like to admit that their teachers have their best interest at heart, many also forget that the teacher's themselves have to give up an hour of their precious time, to teach them. This suggests that the sixth period is in fact useful because, contrary to many students belief, teachers don't just spend their life teaching and do actually have a life outside of the school. Why would they sacrifice an hour of this if they believed the task to be trivial? Additionally, some statistics prove that students are more receptive in the later part of the day, compared to the morning, where they are slow and groggy. Perhaps this shows that sixth periods are actually a good thing because students will be more likely to work harder.

Overall, Sixth Periods can be viewed in different ways by the teachers. However, no matter how inconvenient or boring they are, it cannot be denied that they are an extra hour of learning, which could potentially be the help a student needs to get the grades to take the next step in their life.



If you're interested in joining the PULP team,  
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# PANTO2018

## a review

TEXT BY NATHALIA SANTANA-HERNANDEZ

One classic christmas tradition highly anticipated by most of us drama loving Notre Dame students is the annual Pantomime. Lovingly hand-crafted by our current year 13's. Who somehow, while already burdened with a workload suited best to a small army of masochistic office workers, find the time to organise the play.

The perfect panto is a seamless blend of pop culture references, the school's inside jokes, and of course: sexual innuendo. Watching the pantomime feels like a rare moment where teachers and students join together to have a laugh at their own expense. What better way to feel bonded as a community than to watch our soon-to-be school leavers parade around stage topless and rope a few unfortunate souls into an amateur lap dance? It's an indispensable escape from what can only be referred to as the 'winter term blues'.

Despite previous controversy on what the Pantomime should or should not be and whether that thin line marking what may be just "too far" for a modest Catholic school environment has been crossed, the tradition survives. The main aim, as always, continues to be for the school to mess around and revel in some nonsensical christmas madness as the season is approaching.

Now, 2018's panto has come and gone, but will it go down as one to remember?

...though a tone of surprise was echoed by many interviewees:

-“Considering my opinion and the fact that I was at the front, it was pretty good!” says one long time Notre Dame student.

-“Good- jokes were funny” short, but to the point.

-“Better than the last couple of years, bit too much water” says another, his opinion not seeming to have dampened despite a thorough soaking by our wonderful water gun girls.

-“The jokes went into more areas than just out of date current trends, pretty hilar overall”, a shocking response from a usually pessimistic regular.

**Feedback suggests that the production seemed to be enjoyed most by our newcomers...**

-“So funny omg”, “Absolutely bangin’”, “Awesome!” praised some newly joined yr12's

-“OH HELL YEAH LOVED IT, though poor Mr Harper...” exclaimed a particularly excited yr12, also new to Notre Dame.

Considering that most of the positivity is coming from those newly experiencing the panto, is it that a lack of enjoyment is due to, maybe, students being worn out by it since year 7 rather than the quality of the production itself worsening over the years?

**I asked ND natives on what they thought:**

-“It had an okay storyline however it felt really forced at some points, but I think that's just because it's a panto... either that or because I couldn't hear most of it”, “It also could've been longer.”

-“Quite short but still hilarious”

-“There have been way better and some of the jokes were like ehh but it was definitely fun lol”, -“‘Twas a bit short also”

It seems that generally it is agreed that the surely cringey and sometimes 'janky' script of the pantomime, is part of the charm. However the enjoyment is tarnished by the overall brevity of the performance.

... Could this be because of certain censorship beginning some years previous?

My personal view of the production is like that of the majority, in that the production *intends* to be a silly and enjoyable experience, and overall, it achieved this. Yet unavoidably, not everyone was amused, most of those who felt this way complained that it was cringey, and whilst I agree that some parts can be cringeworthy, it is, undeniably, meant to be so. It is a *pantomime* after all. It will be very difficult to establish a script that will make younger years, older years, AND teachers alike all perfectly happy. You simply cannot please everyone. When seeing the development process itself, whilst taking photographs for this article during rehearsals, I developed an appreciation for how the cast managed to put together such a fun show, whilst they themselves had fun, because as much as we think it's for us, it is first and foremost a goodbye gift for our beloved year 13s; soon-to-be graduates.



I had a chat with some of the team who made this year's panto happen, and asked them what it meant to *them*.

Director and head student Niamh Farrell commented:

"The panto time of year is meant to be a time of joy for everyone with the exception of those who do the panto themselves. While writing and directing panto alongside Madi Chase was amazing and I won't ever forget that experience it definitely came with it's struggles. I have definitely grown in confidence while directing the panto and made myself look at how to approach certain situations with a level of maturity rather than rushing into them. To any current year 12s looking to be involved in the panto I would say it is an incredible experience however when deciding to participate remember there is a certain level of commitment required."

So it is clear that taking the reins of the panto is no easy feat but for those hard working drama loving students like Niamh, worthy of the responsibility, it will all pay off.

Our very own huntsman Isaac Morton commented:

"The Panto was a blast, it was a ton of fun hanging out with new people and experimenting with what works and what's funny. Props to Niamh and Maddie for making it come together so well."

Knowing Isaac from last year's (very much, *'hit'*) production of 'Totally Over You', I'm very familiar with Isaac's passion for the dramatics. He showcased his talents this December, getting all the laughs with the perfect amount of raunchy chemistry with our Princess, head student, Joe Oram.

It has been somewhat common knowledge that the standards of the pantomime productions have waned year by year. It's been thought by many that nothing can top the 'Aladdin' showcase of 2017, but is it the high expectations created by that show that results in the possible decrease in enjoyment by NDHS students? Or maybe, it's less about not knowing what will be fun for us, and more to do with what is potentially ***prohibiting*** the students from bringing their full artistic visions to life.

All in all the pantomime remains at the heart of Notre Dame culture. For the lower school something to look forward to yearly and for those joining us in year twelve it serves as a great Ice-breaker introducing them to the unique comedy the Notre Dame community possesses. Now it is all in the hands of us future sixth formers to continue this time-honoured tradition.



***IF I MAY...***

# ***If I may...morning reg: (re)form time***

TEXT BY EMMA HUNTER

Sixth formers of Notre Dame, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! And by chains, I mean those grim, dark mornings when you force yourself out of bed at a painful hour, only to stumble around getting ready in a trance, eyes glazed with sleep deprivation, muscles aching with lethargy, throat parched from the hangover that is not enough morning shut-eye. This is our harsh reality.

We've accepted this. We have no other option. Right?

Apparently not. Although for us it may simply be a mere fantasy, the concept of actual lie-ins on school days is literally a reality for practically every other sixth former in the Norwich. Unlike almost all other sixth forms in the area, NDHS policy is that sixth formers must be at registration at 8:45 every morning, even when they don't have a lesson until the afternoon. So why force us? Where's the law requiring all sixth formers to attend form time?

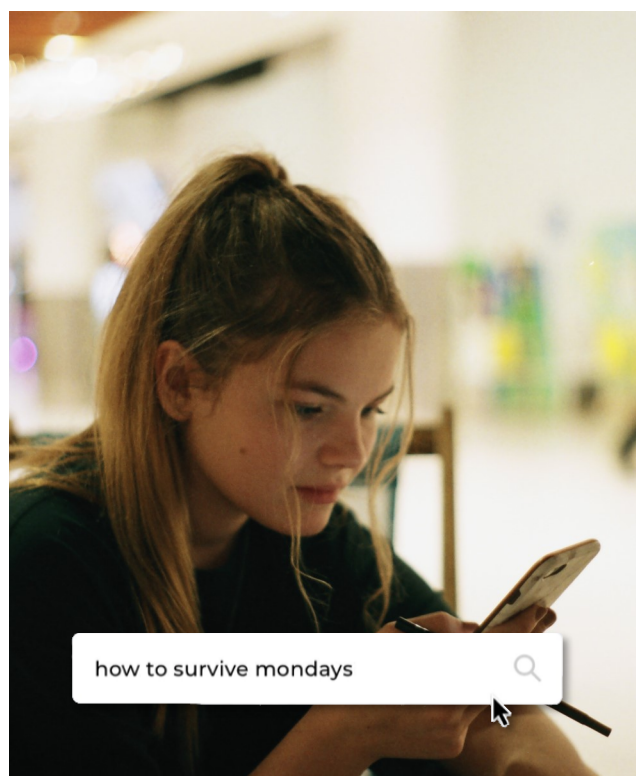
And the reasoning behind required registration? 'Being in school encourages hard work and revision where students at home will slack off' (To paraphrase). Well, this myth is easily debunked; Jane Austen College, for example, which takes the more pragmatic approach of not having a mandatory registration policy, achieved 88% A\*-C at A level last year. Not bad, huh? This serves as proof that compulsory registration does not affect performance whatsoever.

"It's so frustrating. If it were up to me, I'd come in at the time of my first lesson. That would make mornings much more enjoyable" declares a sixth former. "It's crazy! I mean, why not just let us go home?" says another. But don't just take the students' word for it, let the science speak for itself: Teenagers' natural body clocks prevent them from falling asleep early (roughly before 23:00). But they still need 8-10 hours of sleep per night, to optimise health, happiness and wellbeing, as well as studying capacity. But if we still have to get up so early for form time, surely we're not getting enough sleep? I hear you ask. Good question. The answer is, we're not. This is why we should scrap compulsory morning registration.

Time is also an important issue; a substantial number of students reported having to take the bus into school for registration only, then go back home, then return to school, hours later, for afternoon lessons. The time spent travelling to school (often on expensive public transport, or polluting vehicles) simply for form time, then straight back home again could surely be spent doing something much more productive instead. So why bother?

Notre Dame teachers have the answer. "It is important for students to have a structured, productive start to the school day, in order to make the most out of their sixth form experience and to study at their greatest possible capacity" says one. Even some students claim to be relatively impartial: "It doesn't make much of a difference to me because most days in I need to be in school early for lessons anyway" affirms a Year 12. Others tell me they just don't mind getting up early. This is all well and good, but just close your eyes and imagine the sweet joys of relaxing in bed for a little longer in the mornings, be it twenty minutes or three hours extra. Yes, it's a school day, no, it's not a holiday, and no, you're not skiving. And neither is this just an impossible dream.

So, the jury's out. Do we deserve the blissful serenity of a school day lie-in, or are we destined to forever labour in the burning fields of getting up early? Some are adamant that they would scrap the policy, others are staunchly in favour of it, and the rest are simply ambivalent. It's true that the question of whether to have form times is, in the grand scheme of things, not the most important problem of our sixth form careers, but still, I know what I'd rather choose.



# If I may...

## Remembrance Day needs to respond to the ongoing conflicts of today

TEXT BY RHIANNON SMITH-MEEK



The war in Yemen gets barely any coverage when 22.2 million people are in desperate need of basic resources, such as food and shelter. This is all too often swept under the rug as human rights are abused on all sides. By tuning the public attention onto conflicts like these more, a space would open for potentially safeguarding the lives of those in danger by encouraging campaigns and charity donations. We cannot give life to those soldiers who have already died, but here there is a chance to save lives.

All bleakness about the doom of the human race aside, there is evidence that we have in fact learnt from the crippling World Wars. Germany are recovering after their sickening acts in WWII. They were the country in Europe that let in the most refugees, at around 1.1 million in 2016, which was a great deal more than Britain. There have been no further wars in Western Europe since 1945. It is clear we have been treading cautiously since the desolation the Great Wars brought about. A united push for change is underway. The Cold War never escalated to a full scale nuclear

war as the atomic bomb dropped in Japan was a warning that the effects would be far too unimaginable: leading to complete annihilation of human life. The Remembrance movement is ingrained into the very policies and actions countries have made as the past carves out the future. By never forgetting, it also means the soldiers did not die in vain.

The road to peace is the windiest, most potholed one we will ever walk. I genuinely believe that it's in our nature to strive to do better and the most effective way to do this is if we take notes from the terrible blunders we have previously made, working collectively to prevent them. We should forever look to those who have fallen so that peace is one step closer. Both past and present conflicts can be remembered together and draw us into a movement that pushes for a safer world. In Remembrance Days to come, ongoing conflicts should be put side by side with the World Wars for it will remind us why we remember and will channel the unimaginable hardships the soldiers faced into a greater cause; that of preventing future devastation. They will always be relevant as figureheads for a world that provides sanctuary for all.

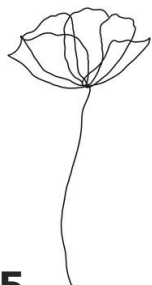
History should be our greatest learning tool. While it is crucial not to spend too much time 'looking back' for the present will suffer, our past is a means for bettering ourselves. By never forgetting, it's not only a way to extend the lives of those soldiers in our thoughts but it's also hoped we'll less readily engage in


other wars. WWI was supposed to be "the war to end all wars". Yet it was shortly followed by the Second and an article in the 'Independent' stated that unbelievably there were only 11 countries that were completely free from conflict in 2014. Can we really learn from our ancestors so that we change our ways? Or is the phrase 'history always repeats itself' ultimately true? Some have likened recent negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities to a watered down version of the extremism in 1930s Europe. In an age of heightening tensions and nuclear weaponry we need to take extra care to prevent any future war that would pose a threat to humanity.

Should we not be trying harder to bring about resolution in the countries that are, to this day, sickened with war? It's pivotal that we focus more on remembering soldiers and civilians who are dying currently rather than on those we have remembered every year for the past century. Syrian refugees are continually forced to flee their homes, many dying in unsafe boats not far from the shores of sanctuary we take for granted every day.

Remembrance Day this November marked a 100 years since the armistice of WWI. In light of this, I feel a discussion should be opened up on how it needs to focus more on preventing conflicts: we can't change the past but we *can alter the course of the future.*

Humanity has never faced conflicts of such gruelling nature as the World Wars. They surpass all prior wars in their destructiveness. Most nations across the world were shaken to the core by the death tolls and by hearing stories of the horrors the surviving soldiers had faced; horrors that no human being should ever have to be shadowed by every day. In the obligatory minute's silence we've all experienced every Remembrance Day, it's easy for the mind to slip from the enormity of shells and suffering into what we're having for dinner. It should be reshaped so that it isn't just another mandatory event but a relevant time for us to mourn the dead while reaching out to those whose countries are still ridden with conflict.





# ***If I may...*** The world around us is decaying, and you are happy to sit and watch?

TEXT BY IMOGEN UNGLESS

**F**ollowing the UN's recent statement on the topic of global warming - that we have only 12 years left to stop the onset of international destruction of ecosystems and society that climate change would provide - the United Nation's Secretary António Guterres has called for a worldwide effort to bring climate change to a final standstill. The news has been filled with 'end-of-days' style headlines, with the *UN News attempting an 'ear-splitting wake-up call'* and the *BBC calling out that 'Warming drives 'escalator to extinction'*. And yet, according to *co2.earth*, the current carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in parts per million is over four parts higher than this time last year. Just last year, America battled thirteen named storms, seven of which were hurricanes severe enough to wipe out villages and livelihoods. And yet, less than 1% of all large charitable donations were to environmental charities. In 2017, London exceeded their yearly emissions limit in just five days. The 35°C summer we all just shrivelled in was one of the hottest on record since before our grandparents were born.

The world around us is annihilating itself and we are happy to sit back, relax and watch.

Empathy is learned by children at the age of seven. It develops from self-awareness, as five- and six-year-olds become aware of their own emotions, recognising them in others. It is what separates humans from animals, the kind from the cruel - the caring from the painfully nonchalant. Families revolve around empathy, with children and parents thriving off of a mutual understanding of each other's happiness and grief. I have to wonder, however, if empathy is this treasure which we divvy out like playing cards to everyone we meet, how can we not extend it to the generations to come? All living things are affected by global warming, whether it be the pets fleeing the Californian wildfires in blind, perilous search of an escape from the choking air, or the children in Manchester ailed with acute lower respiratory infections and coughs that shake their bodies. Those who can, should feel the natural, *human obligation to help. We must do something to make a change, or leave our future children to clean up a mess that is already festering beyond repair.*

You will of course be doubting the effect that you, an East-Anglian high schooler, can make to destruction on such an international scale. One man's good actions cannot make up for another eight billion's. However, if we all make the slightest effort, we *can help*. We can, bit by bit and paper by paper, scratch at the surface of the chaos that mankind has been shovelling under the carpet since the Industrial Revolution. Email work into teachers instead of printing it out. Refill your water bottle for free in cafés instead of buying a new one. Walk, cycle, run, even scooter your way around. My advice is not new, of course, and I am aware how easy it is to ignore any pleas in the pursuit of convenience. Yet, I plead with you, do not allow yourself to turn a blind eye anymore. *Our world is ending. We are all responsible.*

**We must all make a change.**

# ***If I may...***

## ***how useful is PSHE today?***

TEXT BY SHANNON ELLIS

PSHE is something everyone has had to go through one way or another — whether it was in Primary or High school, most have had to partake in this subject whether they liked it or not.

Although classes are only once every two weeks, the lessons can still sometimes be tedious and boring, and some of the things that are taught (or more, *not taught*) are crucial to everyday life -- yet what do we actually learn?

For most, PSHE is generally known as a lesson to relax, to watch some videos; filling an hour with content that is both pointless and forgettable. Or, alternately for some, the time is used to sleep or daydream because it seems these subjects aren't being taught in a stimulating or informative way for them to engage.

There are some undeniably useful things taught in PSHE that seemingly go *straight in one ear and out the other* — wasting both the teachers' and students' time. Considering this information is only taught probably once every two weeks and probably not looked over again, by missing these lessons, students are missing out on a potential life skill...

A few examples of subjects of significance taught are things like: possible interests concerning career paths, how to handle your money, a basic overview of the governmental system, relationships, health, etc. You would think that these lessons seem essential to our lives, yet, are often taught in dull or monotonous ways. The list above may not even ring a bell; its impact, if taught at all, lost.

Is there a need for change in the way these subjects are to be taught to us, not only make PSHE more engaging but *essential*?

I feel that, especially for the younger years, the activities are not as fun and stimulating as they could be to keep them engaged. This, however, is more understandable as they may only need to be given a basic overview of the topic, a starting point for what can be expanded on; progressing through the years. However, even though the younger years are only beginning to learn about these topics, it doesn't necessarily mean they aren't able to understand more complex themes and, more importantly, they need to be able to understand them as a base understanding to progress throughout the lessons.

Moreover, it seems that, as you progress up the school, the lessons start to become more tedious, and you start to have the same basic things repeated again and again throughout the lessons, and yet aren't taken in as they are never expanded.

Therefore, we can never learn more than what we already know.

That is not to say what is discussed is any less important, but people are more likely to switch off if they know they've seen something before.

I think that the lessons should focus significantly more on what we will need in the foreseeable future (for example: how to write a personal statement, or a cv for a job, or alternatively expand more on subjects like mental health — to confront the taboo that surrounds it despite its undeniable influence in all our lives, and its influence especially in student's lives)

Yes, these subjects may be taught, but not to the degree that would actually be beneficial. Moreover, the pressure we put on young people today is astronomical compared to years prior, and so, being taught valuable life skills instead of having to find these things out for ourselves would be a huge weight off of their shoulders. And so, PSHE teachers... keep teaching valuable life skills to children that will definitely help them in the long run, however, change the way it is taught and expand on topics that only give minimal detail.

# Pass notes

## – Boris Johnson

TEXT BY EMMA HUNTER

Age: 54

Appearance: Grainy

I've heard many descriptions of the man, but this is new. What's he done now, ran through a grain field?

Well, ignoring the fact that he did actually run through a field of wheat in the week leading up to the Tory party conference, just to play passive-aggressive mind games with Theresa May, the answer to your question is that a few weeks ago a pixelated, grainy picture of him appeared of him on the board projector during assemblies in St. John's Hall.

So you're saying we need a new projector now?

The projector isn't a problem. The use of Johnson's image in assemblies in front of impressionable students, however, could be.

Ah, I remember. The leader of the assembly credited his "passionate, emotive speeches" and his "powerful, well-considered rhetoric".

Jokes were also made about his political ineptitude and lack of consideration, so the assembly wasn't a complete Johnson-glorifier. But, the point still stands that it is morally and politically dubious on the school's part to endorse him in this way.

**\*\*I'm assuming that's because he's an often incompetent and insensitive politician, who has made more unforgivable political blunders than he earns per annum (which, unbelievably, is £141,000).**

Correct. Examples include saying Libya would be a great holiday resort if only they "cleared the dead bodies away", likening Muslim women to "letterboxes", and reciting an offensive colonial-era poem in a sacred Myanmar temple.

Don't forget the time when he told his Ruislip constituency he would "lie in front of the bulldozers to stop the construction [of the third Heathrow runway]" but on the night of the vote he wimped out and let the building go ahead instead.

How cowardly. Should the school really be advocating this man? It's not exactly setting a good example to the students.

**Do say:**  
*Let's stop the school from praising this objectionable man in assemblies.*

**Don't say:**  
*We need a new projector to look at his ridiculous hair and facial expressions in more detail.*

**\*\*I'm assuming that's because he's not - to put it lightly - a universally admired politician, and has made more calamitous political mistakes than he earns per annum (which...)**

Correct. Examples include making mistaken claims about a British mother (who, as foreign secretary, he should have been helping free) detained in Iran, causing her prison sentence to be lengthened to ten years, describing Africa as "that country", and talking about whisky exports in a Sikh temple in India - despite alcohol being forbidden in the Sikh faith.

△ Disclaimer: the views expressed in this message do not reflect those of Pulp or its affiliates △



# ***If I may...***

## ***The past and the present — which one speaks louder?***

TEXT BY AMELIA BETTS

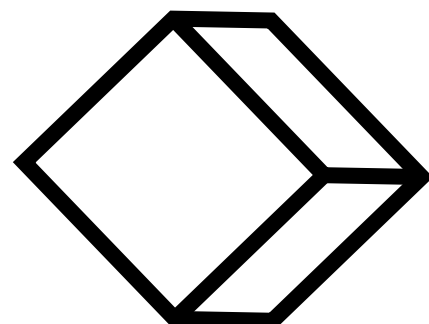
**I**n this world that swings between the extremities of the political spectrum, it's very easy to say something that can be taken the wrong way. Or misunderstood. Or whatever. Nowadays, everyone seems either stuck up in their own thoughts or hypersensitive. In other words, there's absolutely no balance whatsoever.

Which is why we get all these storms on the news, of people saying something they thought would appear a different way to the public- but it doesn't, so controversy ensues.

But how accountable can our words actually be?

Words, although they may last forever, are only snapshots of us at a certain time. Yes, they reflect how we acted towards others- perhaps from a time that we personally are not proud of- but as to here and now, how much does that say about us? If we're so different from the words we've said in the past, it doesn't necessarily mark us out as a good or bad person, still for what has been said years ago. It's gotten to a stage in society where we really should accept that people don't all have the same views, and that sometimes people will say something they'll regret- but instead, we should be able to separate people's good qualities from their bad qualities and learn to accept them for who they are.

We get it. People can be idiots, say stupid things, and generally cause an uproar. But should that really stop us from acknowledging the good things that person has previously said/done? Definitely not. People can change- for the better or the worse. However, that shouldn't tarnish or glorify how they have previously acted.



# your writers



**amelia** **betts**



**emma** **hunter**



**imogen** **ungless**



**jessica** **creedon**



**liesha** **mapiye**



**rhiannon** **smith-meek**



**shannon** **ellis**



**toni** **lockyer**

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