



NORTON COLLEGE

Beyond Expectations

Our Ref: TJ/JJ

4 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Although we are still receiving notifications about positive Covid-19 cases, these have reduced significantly over the past couple of weeks. Nevertheless, we know that this can change in the blink of an eye, and we continue to operate a number of measures to mitigate the risk of infection.

As I explained earlier in the year, we retained the year group zones in September as a contingency to which we could quickly default across the whole timetable if necessary. We now appear to be at a point where there is little or no chance that we will return to a 'bubble' system across the school. Consequently, from Monday 28th February onwards, mentor groups will be re-roomed so that they are located in teachers' main teaching rooms.

Although there is a sense that we are coming out of the worst of the pandemic, in many ways we are only at the beginning of the recovery programme within schools. The readjustment to the high levels of expectation that we have of students, both within and outside of lessons, has been seamless for many but more difficult for others.

Students have had two years of significant disruption to their education, and we have seen this manifested in a number of very different ways. We have a wide range of mechanisms through which to support this readjustment at the college, including adaptations to the curriculum and programmes of study, targeted one-to-one interventions, enrolment in the National Tutoring Programme and employing a professional counsellor. We have already seen a significant positive impact as a consequence of these strategies, and we appreciate the way in which you are working alongside us to ensure that this is maintained. Linked to this, Mrs Edwards chaired the first Parent Consultation Group meeting on Wednesday and I would like to thank those of you who gave up your time to join us for this meeting.

This week we have introduced some positive changes to social time for both Key Stages. These changes have mainly been around the canteen queuing system and they have already helped to improve the efficiency of break and lunchtime systems. To ensure that these changes can be applied consistently, all students have been reminded of our expectations in an assembly led by Mr Fryirs this week. This assembly also explained how students can achieve through the rewards system by displaying positive behaviour at social time.

Covid-19 Vaccinations

We have been notified by the School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) that they will be visiting the college on Tuesday 1st March to offer first and second Covid-19 vaccinations. Please note that there has been a change to the original guidance and that the Covid-19 vaccination is now being offered to all children in Year 7 to Year 13 who are aged 12 to 17 on 28th February 2022 (the day before the visit).

You will shortly receive a link to a letter from SAIS which explains how to give consent for your child to be vaccinated. This letter will also be available via the college website.

As I have explained in my previous letters, Norton College does not hold a view on whether or not children should be vaccinated. No pressure or comment will be made around the decision to take part or not to take part in the vaccination programme. No school staff will be involved in delivering vaccinations.

Sixth Form Options

Year 11 Sixth Form options deadline is Friday 11th February. Students are in the process of having their one-to-one meetings with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss their options. The link for the options submission is [here](#).

Year 9 Parents' Evening – Thursday 10th February

Year 9 Parents' Evening will take place on Thursday 10th February from 4.30pm – 7:00pm. Appointments can be made through Insight. The booking system opened on Thursday 3rd February at 9:00am and will close on Tuesday 8th February at 3:00pm.

Year 9 Options Update

As you will be aware, students in Year 9 recently completed a straw poll activity to outline which subjects they would like to study in Key Stage 4 (Year 10 and 11). We will use this information to determine the final option blocks which in turn will enable students to make their final choices. The options form for students to confirm these decisions will be shared on Monday 7th February and the deadline to submit these is 17th February. One-to-one meetings with a member of the senior leadership team will then take place between 28th February and 11th March and we will contact you from 14th March to confirm your child's confirmed options.

As in previous years, we will always try to maximise the choices available to students and ensure that as many students as possible are able to study their preferred combination of subjects. Please remember that all the courses we offer are subject to student demand and in a very small number of cases we may not be able to meet the preferences of all students.

Attendance

The importance of good attendance at school is now more important than ever. Clearly, where a student is too unwell to attend, s/he should remain at home. Similarly, where a student tests positive for Covid-19, s/he should self-isolate in accordance with government guidelines. However, it is crucial that students' absence is as limited as possible. For example, where a student has a medical appointment, we would only expect him/her to be absent for a part of the day. We continue to celebrate good attendance through a range of different systems including half termly inter-form competitions and prize raffle draws for students who achieve 100% attendance.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully



Mr T Johnson
Headteacher