



NORTON COLLEGE

Beyond Expectations

Our Ref: TJ/JJA

4 March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

It is good to be back. I hope that you had a good half term break. The lengthening daylight hours and improving temperatures always bring a sense of optimism during the spring term. Linked to this, the government's 'Living with Covid' plan allows us to move back to a greater sense of normality within school.

As you are aware, Mentor Groups are no longer situated within 'bubble' areas of the school, which has created a wider sense of community across year groups this week. We have also been able to run face-to-face assemblies for the first time this year, focusing upon student conduct around school. These assemblies play a crucial part in creating a sense of year group identity, in establishing our high expectations of students and in sharing key central messages across the school.

The vast majority of students at Norton College are very compliant in following our rules and expectations. However, it is important that we draw a line in the sand in terms of student conduct, as we move to the new normal under 'Living with Covid'. One aspect that falls under this area is school uniform and, as I have explained in previous letters, Mrs Edwards is currently leading on a consultation about this. A very small number of students sometimes attend school without a blazer or a tie and we ask for your support in ensuring that children attend school in full uniform. Information about uniform expectations is available [here](#).

Clearly, the situation in The Ukraine is creating a new layer of uncertainty across society at present. We acknowledge that this might be a particularly anxious time for students and families, especially for those who have links with Russia, the Ukraine, Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. We have encouraged students to discuss any concerns with their Mentors or the Pastoral Team. There are also many organisations that young people can talk to confidentially about any anxieties they might be feeling, details of which can be found on our website [here](#). I would like to thank the History department for creating a lesson which has been delivered to all students studying the subject, which has offered an un-alarmist, objective and impartial outline of the current situation.

Assessment and Examinations for Students in Years 11 and 13

There are now only 39 school days until the final examinations begin in May. Year 13 students have been sitting their second cycle of mock examinations this week and Year 11 students begin this second cycle on Monday. Students have been provided with a wide range of support and resources to help them to prepare for these mock examinations and it is vital that they make the most of these.

We have created a dedicated page on our school website to share advance information about adaptations to examinations, as well as a range of key documents. These include a copy of the Year 11 and Year 13 mock examination timetables for March and a copy of the respective study guides for each year group. You can access this page [here](#).

Access to Tutoring

As you may be aware, the school has received additional funding for the 2021 to 2022 academic year to support education recovery following COVID-19. This funding allows us to provide students with an opportunity to access additional tutoring to complement and support learning.

We have planned to use this funding in two ways. Firstly, we would like to run an Easter revision school targeted at students in Year 11. Mr Stones (Assistant Headteacher) will shortly contact all parents and carers of students in this year group to establish demand for this tutoring. We anticipate being able to offer one day of tuition to all students in Year 11 and this will link to a range of subjects including English, Maths, Science, History or Geography and French or Spanish (if appropriate). This event will take place during the Easter holidays, beginning on Tuesday 19th April and running through until Thursday 21st April. As with other college events and activities, this schedule remains provisional, and the final event will run subject to sufficient student demand. We hope to be able to offer transport should this be required in order for students to attend the event. Please look out for more information and thank you for completing the survey when you are asked to do so. This survey will be used to determine demand and make appropriate allocations. A link to the survey will be sent to all parents and carers of students in Year 11 using the College's text messaging system.

In addition, we will continue to offer a range of opportunities to students in Years 7 to 10. One of these is the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). The NTP enables students to access one 15-hour block of external tuition which is delivered for one hour per week for a period of 15 weeks. We have received sufficient funding to offer this tutoring to approximately 36 students per year group and our teaching staff are currently nominating students to receive invitations for this provision based on their sustained engagement with learning and positive behaviour within lessons. We will share invitations on a staggered basis through until April 2022.

Extra-Curricular Provision

In an earlier letter to you, I outlined that our staff are proud to offer a rich and diverse range of clubs and activities for students from across the school. We know that these experiences are an essential part of any successful school, and we are delighted to be able to offer students so many of these additional opportunities. A significant number of our students engaged with one or more extra-curricular activities in the first half of the spring term, and we continue to develop and expand our extra-curricular offer as we move forward.

You can find more information on each of these clubs and activities in our extra-curricular menu. You can find a digital copy of the menu and a timetable of events [here](#).

Comic Relief Fundraising

The **Community** group of the Student Leadership Team will be continuing with their fundraising efforts over the coming weeks in supporting Comic Relief. We will be selling red noses from Friday 11th March at £1.50 each, along with a cake stall on Thursday 17th March and a non-uniform day on Friday 18th March. Please ensure that students bring in cash to buy red noses and to buy cakes on the 17th. ParentPay is open for you to make your £1 non-uniform donation. We are extremely grateful for your support with our fundraising and are getting close to our fundraising target total!

Consultation on the Length of the School Day

As outlined in my previous letter, with effect from 1st September 2022, we will no longer be closing early on alternate Mondays to facilitate staff training. This will put Norton College in line with the majority of schools in delivering 50 one-hour lessons per fortnight.

Alongside this, we are opening a consultation with stakeholders on a proposed change to the length of the school day. Under the revised schedule, we would continue to stagger both break and lunchtimes. Although a staggered break and lunchtime allows us to serve students much more quickly than we were able to in the past, unfortunately it is not possible to sit all students in Year 7 to 11 in the canteen simultaneously.

Under the proposal, break would be 20 minutes long and lunch would be 30 minutes long. The school day would continue to start at 8:45am but it would end at 3:00pm rather than 3:15pm. We would continue to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, with students who participate in these allowed early access to the catering facilities.

If you would like to contribute your views on this consultation, please email Lynne Stokoe, PA to the Headteacher, at ls@nortoncollege.net by Friday 18th March. All responses will be carried forward to a Trust Board discussion and decision about this proposal which will take place on Wednesday 6th April 2022.

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. Have a good weekend.

Yours faithfully



Mr T Johnson
Headteacher