



NORTON COLLEGE

Beyond Expectations

Our Ref: TJ/JJ

11 March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you are well.

Since joining Norton College, I have often been told about the very positive impact of the school farm before it was closed in 2011. The building itself remains largely intact and I am pleased to say that we are currently beginning a project to renovate and restart the farm. Initially, this will be on an extra-curricular and more recreational basis but phase 2 of the project will include the potential introduction of land-based qualifications as part of the curriculum itself.

We are currently working with a group of 8 students to plan and implement phase 1 of the project. We are enormously excited at the potential of this and, in the near future, we will share more details with you. At that stage, we will be asking for support and potential sponsorship from parents and the local community.

Assessments and Examinations for Students in Years 11 and 13

There are now only 34 school days until the first public examinations take place. In last week's letter I outlined the schedule for Year 11 and 13 mock examinations taking place in March. All of our Year 13 mock examinations have now taken place and a significant number of year 11 mock examinations have also been completed. On behalf of the wider staff, I would like to congratulate students for approaching these examinations with a clear sense of maturity, resilience and independence. All students have been engaged and focused throughout the examinations process which we know is a significantly demanding week for all involved. Subject teachers will use this assessment data carefully to determine how best to support students in the final weeks ahead prior to the summer examination series beginning. Students in Year 13 will receive the results of their mock examinations on Friday 18th March and students in Year 11 will receive theirs on 1st April.

Year 11 Prom

A prom has become, in many ways, a rite of passage for students over recent years and we are hoping that we will be able to run the Year 11 prom this year, now that Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. The provisional date for this is Friday 15th July. It has been made clear to students that this remains subject to change and to students meeting all of our conduct expectations of them over the coming weeks.

Student Conduct on Buses

As you know, many students at Norton College travel on school buses. The conduct of the vast majority of students on these buses is excellent. However, a small number of students have consistently failed to meet our expectations of conduct. Where a student's behaviour is unsafe or does not comply with our expectations, we will always issue sanctions as appropriate. Where these transgressions are repeated or where a single incident is of significant concern, we reserve the right to issue a permanent bus ban.

A copy of our expectations of student conduct on buses is shared with parents when they sign up to school transportation. A copy is available upon request. Please would you support us in emphasising to your children the need for safe and appropriate conduct on school transport and that any issues of concern should be passed on to the Pastoral Team immediately.

Year 9 Options Information

In previous letters to you I have provided an update on the Year 9 options process. We are now approaching the end of this process and most students have submitted their final options application. As a result, 1 to 1 meetings are now taking place between students and members of the Senior Leadership Team. These meetings will continue through until the end of the month. We will write to you once all meetings have taken place. In this letter we will confirm your child's final options choices for courses which will begin in September 2022.

Year 7 and Year 9 Progress Breakfasts

Celebration breakfasts have taken place for 10 students in each of Years 7 and 9 who have achieved outstanding progress over the course of the past term. We would like to congratulate these students upon their respective achievements as well as all other students who have received excellent grades on their reports.



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 allow 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