



NORTON COLLEGE

Beyond Expectations

January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Happy New Year! Welcome to the new term. After a very long Autumn term – 15 weeks! – we have a shorter Spring term ahead, but with a great deal to do, especially for students in years 11 and 13. Their exams begin very soon after the Easter holiday, so staff will be working hard with students to ensure that they have been taught all the content they need and that enough time is given to revision. Of course, passing exams is down to the students themselves and how much work they are prepared to do – more on this below.

Ready, Respectful, Safe

You'll remember from my Autumn update me discussing "Ready, Respectful, Safe", our way of summarising our vision for Norton College, underpinned by our ASPIRE values. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of what these values mean.

When students and teachers are **READY** to learn and to teach – in the correct uniform or dress code, punctual to lessons, properly equipped, lessons prepared, home learning completed – teachers can focus on their teaching and students can make the most of every minute in lessons.

At the start of every new academic year, students are always very smartly dressed. We shall be renewing our focus on uniform this term, and we know you will support us with this. Please do check that your children have the correct uniform at the start of the day before they leave home, especially ties, blazers and the correct shoes. When students fail to meet our expectations, we shall be in touch to see how we can help. We shall also be working with students to ensure they are punctual both for school and for lessons, and we shall be using the behaviour points system to track and address lateness.

When students and staff are **RESPECTFUL** of each other, then all students can be properly supported in making brilliant progress. At Norton College, we expect all our students to support one another in the classroom and to follow the instructions of our staff.

If we keep each other – and ourselves – **SAFE**, looking out for any signs of anxiety or worry or stress, we can ensure that all our students can be confident and feel pride in the progress they are making. We expect students to look out for one another, and to be kind and considerate of all those around them.

Parents and carers are reminded that they can check the recognition and behaviour points that students are given by staff on the Insight app. If you can't access the app, please let us know. Using the app means you can check the progress of your child in real time on your mobile phone! We hope you will want to do this and to discuss what you see with your children.

Attendance

A very important aspect of being **READY** is that students are in school and learning. Attendance matters! Our analysis of examination results shows that students' results are very strongly connected to attendance. Students with the highest grades are also students with the highest attendance and all students should aim to be in school. An attendance of 90% might sound high, but in fact it means that a student has missed a school day every two weeks. Our analysis shows that results suffer significantly once attendance falls below 95%.

Cashless Catering

As you may be aware, the College is introducing a cashless system to remove the need to use cash in the college canteen. The 'go live' day will be Thursday 23rd January and prior to this we will be undertaking biometric registration on the 21st and 22nd of January. More details about biometric identification is contained in the two page document at

the end of this newsletter and this document includes an opt-in slip which must be completed and returned to the main office no later than **Monday 20th January 2020**. We must point out that if you do not complete and return the opt-in slip we cannot collect and create an identity via biometric identification for your child to be able to use the cashless system in College after the 22nd January 2020. As of 23rd January 2020 the only form of payment, at the point of sale, will be by using the new system. Whilst pin-code ID is an available feature this is less secure and more unreliable than the new system.

The majority of parents already have a ParentPay account and we have already created the option to enable you to load monies onto your account. To save on processing charges we are setting the minimum upload for school meals as £12.50 per child. You can start to upload monies to the system as soon as you wish. Free school meal allowances will be automatically uploaded each day from the 23rd January and will be available to use from 8.00 am.

For the small number of parents who have not yet set up a ParentPay account, we will be writing to you separately to help you get this process started.

The students will be briefed via their mentor groups starting on Thursday 16th January; we will make sure the presentation slides are made available to parents and carers, too.

We have set up a dedicated e-mail address to handle parental queries about the cashless system itself, the biometric process, and ParentPay. Please route all your queries initially through this and a member of the implementation team will respond as soon as possible. The address for this is cashlesscatering@nortoncollege.net

We have received a GDPR statement from the company we are purchasing the system from and this will act as an addendum to our own GDPR Policy.

Y11 and Y13 exam preparation

Both year 11 and year 13 students have PPEs (mock exams) this term: year 13 students begin PPEs on January 20th, and year 11 on January 27th. Sometimes students do not take these exams as seriously as they need to. Research shows that students need to revise material at least three times before they know it well enough to apply it as they need to in exams. Year 11 have had one opportunity to revise in the November PPEs, and a second opportunity is provided in the January PPEs. The third time through material for students will be when they revise for the summer exams. Don't let your children get away with claiming that they don't need to revise because they want to find out what they can do without revision! This is a very common strategy that students like to use – it doesn't work and will reduce the grades they get in the summer!

Parents and carers can support their children in a number of ways:

- encourage children to start revising now: little and often is much better than last minute cramming;
- provide a quiet space with a desk and chair where students can work;
- encourage students to put away phones, consoles and computers when revising; they don't need the internet to revise, whatever they may claim, and it only provides distractions;
- encourage them to stick to a regular schedule: set regular times for home learning and revision and support students in sticking to it;
- help children to create a revision timetable, planning out what work they will do when, and including leisure time;
- test them on what they have learned: students can make 'flashcards', with key words on one side and corresponding definitions and information on the other, and parents and carers can test them using these;
- encourage children to put up posters of key information around the house, and test them on these;
- ensure students have the relevant revision guides – please get in touch with subject staff for more information about these.

To support students and parents who don't know how to revise, the college is offering a revision support evening on 16th January

Year 11 – 6th form applications

It's a very exciting time for year 11 as they begin to think about their options at post 16 level. Having already had a chance to try some 6th form lessons they may already have an idea. Some students, however, will still be very undecided. If you would like any more information regarding options at post 16 please contact Mrs McDonald, head of 6th form, who is happy to meet with you to discuss what we have to offer.

Applications for 6th form will be open on **Monday 20th January**; more details can be found on our website in the sixth form section

Year 9 options

This term is a very important one for Y9 students, who will begin the process of choosing their GCSE options. The college works hard to ensure that students have the right information and guidance, and parents are fully involved in the process. Please check the key dates below and put them in your diary.

Staffing changes

Since the September update, two staff have taken up new posts in college.

Mr Nathan Garbutt-Moore has joined as a pastoral leader and careers adviser. Students can make appointments if they wish to discuss careers.

Ms Claire Atkinson-Spragg has been appointed to the role of pastoral leader, sixth form.

Important dates

9-01-2020	-	Y7 Parents' Evening
16-01-2020	-	Y11/13 revision support evening
23-01-2020	-	Y9 options evening
24-01-2020	-	Y9 reports go home
30-01-2020	-	Y9 parents' evening
7-02-2020	-	Y13 PPE results day – Y13 (and Y12) reports go home
10-02-2020	-	School Show week – Billy Elliott
14-02-2020	-	Y11 PPE results day – Y11 reports go home with PPE grades
17-02-2020	-	Half term holiday begins
24-02-2020	-	Second half term begins
27-02-2020	-	Y11 parents' evening
3 and 4/03/2020	-	Y5 taster days
5-03-2020	-	Y12/13 parents' evening
19-03-2020	-	Y10 parents' evening
25-03-2020	-	Spring concert
2-04-2020	-	Friendship afternoon 1
6-04-2020	-	Easter holiday begins
20-04-2020	-	Summer term begins

We look forward to seeing you at our events this term. Have a great term!

Dr S Carson
Head Teacher