



April 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

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Learn from Home: <https://www.nortoncollege.net/learnfromhome>

Safeguarding: <https://www.nortoncollege.net/safeguarding>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Update – Summer Term**

The new term is almost upon us. I hope you have enjoyed the sunshine over the Easter break and that you are ready to support your children in their studies over the coming weeks. As you will no doubt be aware, schools remain closed for the time being, so we shall continue to support children with their studies online.

### **Learning from Home**

Helping your child to keep studying during the time of school closure is extremely important. Please check with them that they have completed the work set so that they do not get behind. It is crucial that you are aware of the work they are doing, as parents and carers. Studies have shown that when children take an extended break from their studies, they can go backwards in their learning. The college has now provided Chromebooks to many students without their own computer, and in some cases has been able to provide internet access, too. If, for any reason, you have been unable to access online learning, get in touch and we shall help make sure your children can join us in learning online.

From Monday, teachers will once again be putting work on Microsoft Teams for our students. The link is here:

<https://www.nortoncollege.net/learnfromhome>

Some staff may be using the new GCSE Bitesize lessons that the BBC is putting online from Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April. You can find more information here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h>

Even if teachers do not refer you to this, it is worth having a look.

The BBC is planning to offer more educational programmes on radio, tv and online, so do keep checking the BBC website. One programme beginning on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, is a series of history lessons for all the family on Radio 4. You can find more information here:



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<https://inews.co.uk/news/education/coronavirus-lockdown-bbc-radio-4-history-lessons-kids-horrible-histories-greg-jenner-2532449>

I know that you may be finding it difficult to support your children with their studies at this difficult time. Please do remember that we do not expect you to act as teachers – we are here for that and you and your children can email teaching staff for help when they need it. You might find it helpful to ask children to do their school work alongside you, perhaps at the same table or in the same room, if you are home working. You might want to ask them to turn off their phones and put them away whilst they are working to ensure they are using time wisely!

Once again, I would encourage students to keep to their school timetable as far as this is possible. I know it may not be feasible to spend five hours a day working in a busy family home, but it may be possible to do 5 half hour slots on the subjects your child would be studying, or even just 5 twenty minute slots. Whatever time your child is able to study at home, keeping to the school timetable means they will be sharing their time across their different subjects and making progress in all of them. Having a regular routine and keeping to regular hours – whether it's five hours a day, or three hours every morning, or whatever works for you - will help you and your children to make the most of your days.

### **Examination results, years 11 and 13**

The college has been working hard to ensure that we are able to provide the information the examination boards need to award grades this summer. I have had confirmation from Ofqual that these grades will be awarded on the usual results days. The dates this year are: A level – 13<sup>th</sup> August; GCSE – 20<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Staying safe online**

Today we received an email from North Yorkshire Community Messaging regarding an online scam. This is the information:

“Action Fraud has received several reports of a text message circulating purporting to be from Tesco giving out free vouchers due to COVID-19. The user is asked to click on a link which leads to a genuine looking website which is designed to steal login information as well as personal and financial details.”

Unfortunately, unscrupulous people are trying to take advantage of the current situation. Do be on the lookout for this sort of scam – if it looks too good to be true, it probably is!

Make sure you know what your children are doing online, too, because they too are vulnerable. You can find more information about staying safe online, and about safeguarding more generally, here:



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<https://www.nortoncollege.net/safeguarding>

### **National Voucher Scheme for Free School Meals**

As you may have heard in the national news, Edenred, the company providing supermarket vouchers to those entitled to Free School Meals, have struggled to cope with demand from Schools over the past fortnight and the system has been slow, resulting in delays to the issue of electronic vouchers to parents. However, we are now aware that vouchers links are coming through directly to parents.

Some parents have told us that the e-mail from Edenred has landed in their junk mail boxes, so please ensure you check this prior to enquiring about any missing e-mails. Furthermore, a small number of parents have reported access issues when trying to download the voucher codes; please persevere with the system as unprecedented numbers of parents are now starting to use this service.

Unfortunately, as of today, we have still not yet received the voucher codes for those parents who do not have an e-mail address registered with us. Once we have received these we will find an alternative way of ensuring you receive the vouchers as soon as possible.

### **Key workers and vulnerable children**

As you are aware, college remains open to the children of key workers, and to children who may be vulnerable in other ways. We asked you to contact us before the holidays if you felt you or your child fell into one of the categories who might need to access child care at college, but we know that your circumstances may have changed. The government's guidance is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Please remember that you should only consider sending your child to school as a last resort and only if there is absolutely no alternative. If either parent/carer is home working, for instance, or if there are older siblings or other relatives at home to look after younger children, or if children are old enough to look after themselves, then they should stay at home. Every child who comes to school increases the risk to other children who need to be there, and to the staff looking after them and to their families.

If you do feel you need to access child care in college, please contact us to discuss this further.

### **Ryedale Scrubs**

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you what one of our staff members has been doing to support the work of the NHS in these difficult times, with the support of students and staff, and many of you.



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During the Easter holidays, Miss Shipley and her family have been busy co-ordinating a new project which has been set up to make and supply protective wear for local key workers. The group is called **Ryedale Scrubs for the Community** and has so far raised £6 000 to buy material and patterns. There are currently 90 people signed up to sew, including staff, students, governors and parents. There are 25 delivery drivers and two 3-D print machines running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Ryedale Scrubs is supplying hats, bags, scrub uniforms, face shields and mask clips to our local doctors' surgeries, care homes and hospitals free of charge due to the generosity of our community.

If you would like to donate to the cause or want to help make some of these items, then the students have access to files in the PSHE and Wellbeing area of Teams. There will be a box outside the college main entrance where students are able to leave their finished goods. In the summer term, as and when we return to college, during mentor time, students will be looking at "living in the wider world and volunteering", and this would be a fantastic contribution to the topic!

If you wish to donate, visit:

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/material-for-scrubs>

### **Keeping in touch**

I would like to thank each and every parent and carer of our students at Norton College for the support you are giving to your children. We shall continue to do all we can to help them through these difficult times. I shall continue to write to you on a weekly basis and to update you on important developments.

If there are any questions you would like me to address in my weekly letter, do get in touch. Likewise, if you have any comments – good or bad – about the ways we are trying to support students, do please get in touch. We love to hear from our parents, and at this time it is more important than ever that we work together to support our young people. If we don't hear from you, we do not know whether what we are doing is working for our young people, and we have no way of knowing how we can improve what we are offering. Remember that this new way of working online is as novel and challenging for us as it is for you and your children, so do please let us have your feedback so that you can help us improve!

It is also important that your children keep in touch. Please make sure your children are checking their college email every day. Mentors will email them every week, on Wednesday; please read the mentor email with them, and encourage them to respond, even if only to say hello, and to let us know they are safe and well.

Whilst we are all getting used to this new way of life, and the daily bombardment of Coronavirus statistics and stories, we are mindful that your child may be struggling emotionally. As you are aware from previous letters, there are links on our website to online self-help resources and information which we hope can help. Please could I suggest that you regularly monitor your child



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for signs that they are overwhelmed? GPs are still available for consultations, albeit not in the usual way, but we, and they, encourage you to seek advice and support should the need arise.

Finally, I want to remind you about the government's instructions with regard to social distancing and staying at home. Children should not be out with their friends, and should, of course, be staying inside and only going out for exercise once per day with members of their household. This way, we reduce the transmission of the virus, protecting the NHS and saving lives.

Yours faithfully,

Dr S R Carson  
Head teacher



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