



April 24<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,

**Weekly update: April 24th**

I hope my letter finds you well, and that you are able to enjoy the sunshine with your family. There are a number of things I want you to be aware of this week.

**Mentor email**

This week, mentors have been in touch with students and have asked all students to reply to let us know they are well and are managing to do some school work at home. Although we have had contact from many of our students, we have not yet heard from everyone. Please encourage your children to reply by the end of Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, or at least over the weekend. If we don't hear from students, we shall be contacting you, as parents and carers, directly, by email, text or phone call. As staff may well ring you from their own homes and on their own phones, they will withhold the number, so if you do get a phone call from a withheld number, it may be from one of your child's teachers – please don't ignore the call.

**Learning from home - support**

As I have said in earlier letters to you, we do understand that it may be difficult to encourage your child to complete school work at home, so don't worry if you are finding it difficult – you are not alone. The Education Endowment Foundation has recently released some materials for parents that might help you to think about how to encourage a regular routine for children, including some learning from home. This video, "Supporting daily routine during school closures – a video to help discussions with your child", might help you to get started:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=22&v=MO9SDGRgi3c&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=22&v=MO9SDGRgi3c&feature=emb_logo)

There is an accompanying document that supports the video:

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19 Resources/Resources for parents/Supporting home learning routines - Planning the day.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19%20Resources/Resources%20for%20parents/Supporting%20home%20learning%20routines%20-%20Planning%20the%20day.pdf)

If you find these resources useful, please let me know and I shall link to further resources in future letters.



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If you or your child are finding the current situation is making you anxious or is causing you excessive worry, you might find this document useful, "Living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty":

[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty en-gb.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide%20to%20living%20with%20worry%20and%20anxiety%20amidst%20global%20uncertainty%20en-gb.pdf)

Again, please let me know if you find this useful.

To support learning from home, as you know, staff are providing work through Microsoft Teams. Children are entitled to download the Teams desktop app, and the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) for free. If your children have not done this, or don't know how to, they can get support from Mr Layton at college.

### **Staying safe online – e-safety**

Children are currently accessing a lot of material for college online, of course. The importance of keeping children safe online is of the utmost importance, and so we encourage parents and carers to set age-appropriate parental controls on digital devices and use internet filters to block malicious websites. These are usually free, but often need to be turned on.

Recommended resources to support parents and carers in keeping their children safe online are available on our website, along with guidance on reporting concerns. You can find the resources here:

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

### **Supporting the NHS**

I hope you have been able to join the others in your area to clap for NHS staff and other key workers on Thursday evenings. It is always a wonderful time on my road, as everyone comes to their front doors to clap, but also to say hello to neighbours whom we rarely see otherwise now that we are all keeping our social distance. The work of these key staff is so important, and so I want to remind you again that your children should not be out with other children, but should only be out once per day with members of the same household in order to keep everyone safe, and so save lives.

### **University applications and student finance**

If your child is in year 13 and is intending to go to university, now is the time to apply for student finance. All students involved will have received an email about this. The link below provides more information:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-student-support/undergraduate-student-finance-and-support>

and the link to the application form is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance>



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### **Refunds**

We are continuing to gather information and to work with ParentPay as to how we might process refunds for such items as cashless catering balances, private transport payments that have been paid in advance, and trips and visits that we know have been cancelled as opposed to postponed until further notice. At the moment we are only processing refunds that have been requested by parents. If you wish to request an item be refunded please send an e-mail to [admin@nortoncollege.net](mailto:admin@nortoncollege.net) and a member of the team will get back in touch with you to discuss the options.

### **Private Coastal Transport Applications for 2022/2021**

Application forms and further information for our private transport services from the coastal areas, for the academic year 2020/2021 will be distributed to parents and carers from the 18th May, 2020.

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

The national system in use to distribute weekly vouchers is working, albeit slowly and we have struggled to upload and download information from the website all week. We are also aware that parents have experienced access issues to the website. Please continue to persevere with the site; from our own experience we know it is very busy during the day but that it is easier to gain access early mornings and evenings. We can assure you that we have significant staff resources dedicated to this and are constantly working with the system to minimise delays for parents and carers.

We are aware that some vouchers that have not yet been accessed. Vouchers are valid for 1 month from the date of issue only, so please make sure you check your email, including your junk box, if you think you should have received vouchers.

We now have a process in place to deliver voucher codes to parents who do not have an e-mail address registered with us and these have been distributed today via text message. Please contact us if you have not received voucher codes and we will help wherever we can.

That's everything for this week. I shall write to you again at the end of next week. In the meantime, please do get in touch with any questions, or any feedback on learning from home – we have had some lovely emails from parents and carers over the last few weeks, and it is good to know that the hard of the staff is appreciated.

Stay safe,

Dr S R Carson  
Head teacher



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**STAY AT HOME**  **PROTECT THE NHS**  **save lives**

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