

RBE/JRA

October 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of the first term, I hope your child has settled in well to the academic year and is enjoying all that Northampton School *for Boys* has to offer. There has been a tremendous amount of student success to celebrate over the course of the term, not least the exceptional examination results which again saw NSB at the top of the 2018 GCSE Northamptonshire League tables.

This letter contains important information about procedures and expectations. Please keep the letter as a source of reference throughout the year. Much of the information reflects continuity from last year, however, there are some new aspects of provision.

Our website provides access to a host of information and is regularly updated with the latest news and press releases relevant to the school as well as providing access to key school policies such as the Behaviour Policy. The site also shows the whole range of activities on offer including fixtures, trips and visits, House activities, concerts, shows and term dates. The 'Secure Student Information' area of the site gives parents access to timetables, attendance, contact details, school reports, Home Learning set by the teachers and any detentions set by class teachers as a consequence of insufficient work or behaviour which is less than good. Parents will receive a text message if an after school detention is given, however all detentions (such as lunchtime detentions) are also listed on the 'Secure Student Information' section for your information.

Students have access to a Learning Platform to source learning materials and tasks set by their teachers. At present, parents do not have a login to this Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) so you may want to ask your child to log in themselves to show you what is available. As part of this facility, your child has a Gmail account and a Google Drive within our Google Apps for Education network. These are solely for use in conjunction with school work and are subject to scrutiny by the school if inappropriate use is suspected. A student's Home Learning task list will be emailed to this account, as will any tasks set by teachers within the VLE. The Google Drive will allow students to save work at school and then to access it from home. Students can download Microsoft Office via a link on the VLE for use on their own devices.

In light of the new changes to the GCSE grading system, where all letter grades have been replaced by numerical grades (9 to 1), the school has adjusted its target setting system accordingly for students in all Year Groups 7-11. All students in these Year Groups have been placed on a minimum target pathway in each of their subjects which leads to a corresponding minimum GCSE target grade in Year 11. For example, a student on Pathway 6 for Mathematics should be attaining a Grade 6 as a minimum target in Mathematics when they get to the end of Year 11. Because GCSE grades are now numerical, the Year 7/8 Target Grades are word descriptor levels in order to avoid confusion with the GCSE grades used in Years 9/10/11. It is important to note that the word descriptors are not representative of the same level of achievement in Year 7 and 8; for example an Advanced level in Year 8 represents greater depth of understanding than an Advanced level in Year 7. Minimum Achievement Grades (MAGs) as targets continue to represent national levels of expected

progress from a student's KS2 (Year 6) test scores. Each child will also have an Aspirational Target Grade (TAG) for each subject that can be adjusted upwards by the teacher according to the rate of student progress at any time in the year and this may be significantly in excess of the nationally expected minimum grade. 'A' Level targets continue to be set against the national 'A' Level grading structure of A*-E. The numerical grading system and the school's target setting pathway structure for students in Years 7-11 is attached to this letter for your information and should be read in conjunction with the Term 1 Data Report for your child. It is also available on the website.

Your child will sit a termly test / assessment task in each of their subjects and the termly reporting system will keep you fully updated with your child's performance in these tests and in regard to their general progress. Following the end of each term you can access their Data Report which will indicate to you the attainment mark and correlating grade that they have achieved in their end of term tests (for every subject). It will also detail your child's overall progress towards the Minimum and Aspirational Target Grades set for the year and numerical data related to attendance, House Points and detentions issued. These termly reports will be supported by an annual Form Tutor prose report which will focus on a student's engagement with all aspects of school life, their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, their approach to learning and their personal qualities and values which will enable success at school and in the wider community. There will also be opportunities to meet all of your child's teachers at relevant Parents' Evenings. The Data Report will be available through the website during the evening on the last day of each term via your private username and password and a hard copy will also be sent home with your child. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the termly report further, then you are encouraged to contact either relevant subject teachers or, for general issues, the Form Tutor.

Many parents have now got into the routine of using the link from our website to credit money onto their child's ParentPay account. This is an efficient and safe method which avoids students carrying large amounts of money to school. The money can be used to purchase the excellent food in the Restaurant and Bistro using our cashless system and you can also track exactly what your child is purchasing. ParentPay can also be used for other financial transactions such as purchasing uniform or paying for trips.

I expect all students to aim for a 100% attendance and Year Team Leaders and Form Tutors are tasked with rigorously monitoring attendance rates for all students and implementing intervention where necessary. Many research studies have emphasised the crucial link that attendance has with academic excellence. Parents need to be aware that any request for holidays during term time will be rejected. Any students taking holidays during term time will be marked in the register as an unauthorised absence. If your child will be unavoidably absent due to illness, please remember to call our absence reporting line on 01604 258691 where you should leave your child's name, form, reason for absence and your contact details. The term time dates for this year and the next can be found on the website. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Amendment 2013 set out the procedures for issuing fixed penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Although we seek to provide as much opportunity as possible for your child to enjoy the provision at NSB we cannot have students on site when we are not able to supervise them. The concourse opens at 7.50am which is the earliest that your child should be arriving at school. From this time there are staff around the site, breakfasts are available and the library

is open at 8am. In the afternoons, school officially finishes at 3.35pm and students are expected to leave the site by 3.45pm unless they are participating in an organised activity with a member of staff. From 3.45pm onwards significant areas of the school are unsupervised and therefore students should leave school promptly either directly at the end of school or after a planned after-school activity or library session. We are mindful of our responsibility for safeguarding young people and we are unable to meet these responsibilities if students are on site without planned supervision.

The school has outstanding expectations of behaviour which the vast majority of students adhere to. Outstanding attitudes to learning are rewarded by outstanding achievement and recognition. Where standards slip for a student there are a range of sanctions that may be imposed including detentions. Parents should note that schools are entitled to give detentions and it is not for parents to decide whether or not to agree! Parents will be alerted by text if their child is given an after-school detention. The School Behaviour Policy is on our website (www.nsb.northants.sch.uk) and a hard copy will be supplied upon request.

One of the huge strengths of the school is the exceptional facilities available to support lessons and extra-curricular activities. Again, the vast majority of students respect the fabric of the building as they realise just how crucial the resources are to their achievement levels. The recently constructed multi-million pound Human Performance Centre has proven to be an outstanding addition to the school as have the newly renovated Theatre, Music Suite and Sports Hall. Students who damage any aspect of the school site deliberately or carelessly will receive an invoice for repair or replacement.

Communication with parents is important to us. I write to you all on a weekly basis through the Headmaster's Bulletin which is posted on the school website every Friday. At the end of this year I will invite you to complete a parent questionnaire to feed back on the provision that the school provides. As well as texts about detentions, we find texting parents is extremely useful to be able to notify you quickly in situations such as school closures due to extremes of weather or to remind you of significant events relevant to your child such as Parents' Evenings. Please let us know well in advance if you have special access needs, before attending a function at the school.

For safety reasons I have not banned mobile phones from being brought to school, however, they must not be used during or between lessons (other than with the express permission of the teacher) or for calls at any time. Inappropriate mobile phone use distracts from learning and can be the source of significant behaviour incidents and theft. Parents should contact the school office if they wish to communicate a message to their child and students should go to Student Services if they need to phone home.

There are many opportunities for parents to support the school. Our School Development Fund was launched ten years ago and helps us to ensure that we not only maintain the ethos and opportunities available but also can continue to develop the school over the coming years. Details of how to help are on the School Development Fund section of the website.

We have an extensive and very active 'former student' network with many activities available to members. The school website allows a former student to register into this network. Joining our database means that we can alert members to events, but also, of course, members will be able to get in touch with fellow students with whom they have lost

contact. The School Development Director, Mr Lee, can provide further information and is contactable at the school.

The success of NSB is founded upon the highest expectations of its students and staff and its inclusive environment. We have a clear ethos in relation to equality and the celebration of diversity which directly relates to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. An important aspect of each student's education is their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development including British values, delivered through curriculum subjects including Citizenship and Guidance, our extensive extra-curricular programme, our Enterprise Week provision and various awareness campaigns throughout the year. At NSB we aim to prepare students for life in modern Britain and actively promote all forms of equality, challenging discrimination and prejudice and fostering greater understanding of and respect for people of all faiths or no faith, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community.

Appearance rules are clear and non-negotiable:

- Ties and top buttons done up at all times.
- Hair clean and tidy – not less than a “number two grade” or classified by senior staff as unkempt. If shoulder length or longer it must be tied back at all times for health and safety reasons.
- Hair must not be dyed an unnatural colour nor have significant areas in a second colour, nor shapes cut into the hair.
- No visible piercings other than a single plain stud in one or both earlobes.
- Regularly polished shoes, not trainers or canvas! Girls' footwear should be appropriate for treading the corridors. High heels and backless shoes are not appropriate.
- No 'hoodies' to be worn to, in, or from school.

For full details refer to the Appearance Policy on our website and if in doubt consult with Mr Kneeshaw, Mr Armstrong or Mrs Bradley-Brophy at the school. Our Sixth Form Policy requires a blazer or jacket for both boys and girls. The Sixth Form students are required to be professionally smart and business-like as they must set an outstanding example for the school!

As parents, please check your child on their way out in the morning. If bringing them by car, make sure ties, top buttons and shirt tails are appropriate before they get in and as they get out! It is a source of great pride to me that the public often comment on how smart the boys and girls appear when travelling to and from school; however it only takes one student dressed shabbily to change public perception.

Parents are reminded that all school uniform must now be purchased through our on-line supplier SWI schoolwear at www.swidtp.co.uk. The only exceptions to this are the old design PE T-shirts (for Years 8, 9, 10 and 11), school ties, blazer badges and House T-shirts, which can be purchased via ParentPay. Further information on school uniform, including a full price list, can be obtained on the school website under the parents' section.

The House system and the outstanding extra-curricular programme are the principal ways of getting students involved in the school. We have over 290 clubs and activities running at lunchtime and after school every week and a huge array of competitive House Events that

students can choose to engage in. The expectation is that all students engage in at least one activity a week. The House Directors, Student Leadership Team and House Seniors are actively participating in discussions which will feed into the strategic direction of the school. We now have termly House assemblies and the older students take responsibility for mentoring younger students in their House. Each House has a section in the Student Voice area of the school website. In summary, the House system provides a superb opportunity for students to get involved with the whole life of the school. The wider programme of extra-curricular activities can be found on the website which lists details of training sessions for our sports teams, recreational sport clubs, dance, drama, music, subject support sessions and a vast array of other activities as far reaching as Harry Potter, Philosophy and Film Clubs.

The school nurse and school based counsellors are a source of support for the school advising on many areas including sexual health and mental wellbeing as well as a range of other health related matters. We also have a good working relationship with the Police and have regular visits from our community officer. Please contact Mr Kneeshaw at the school if you would like further advice on accessing this additional range of services or if you have any safeguarding concerns.

We have exceptional Careers Advice and Guidance at the school through our Careers co-ordinator, Ms Shaeffer. All students have access to Careers advice and we encourage parents who would like further career pathway guidance for their child to contact Ms Shaeffer to arrange a suitable time for an appointment.

From time to time we have major issues with traffic directly outside of the school. Please do not drop off or pick up your child in the immediate environs of the school – the crescent is only to be utilised by taxis or where there has been prior agreement by the school due to exceptional circumstances. The Highway Code should be obeyed regarding safe places to park. Please do not park on double yellow lines or on the corners opposite the school. Please do not park on pavements or block cycle lanes. Please do not undertake illegal or dangerous manoeuvres such as U-Turns around the bollards at the T-Junction opposite the school which is unfortunately becoming a common sight at the end of school. In short, please do not put the lives of other people's children in danger purely for parking convenience. Students must also use either of the pedestrian crossings situated at each end of the school when crossing the Billing Road and must not ride bicycles on the pavement. You are also requested not to use the entrance to St Andrew's Hospital as a turning point. Please also discourage your child from using the grounds of St. Andrew's Hospital as a cut-through to the Cliftonville area as these grounds are private property.

We are working closely with the Police and the Traffic Warden Unit and they will make regular visits to ensure that children can arrive at and depart from the school safely. Where cars park on the double yellow lined areas of roads surrounding the school, inclusive of the junction of Ardington and Billing Road, I would like to take this opportunity to assure parents and carers that the number plates of offending cars will be passed to the Police in order to help minimise the risk to students and the general public going forward. Finally, on the subject of safety, the Police have asked that I pass on the following advice to young people:

'Students should walk or cycle with friends (particularly in the surrounding Parks), not alone, and they should take bright open routes and avoid alleyways and dark roads. Please walk your bicycles on pavements or use cycle routes where available. Always be aware of safe places to seek help or shelter. Never accept gifts from a stranger. Never get into a car

with a stranger, and if approached, don't speak. It is important to remind our children of these key points at regular intervals!

We had an exceptionally successful 2017/18 borne out by outstanding GCSE and A Level results which were far above the national average for attainment and progress as well as fantastic success in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In addition we achieved the prestigious accolade of being the number one ranked state school in the country for competitive sport. The quality of teaching, the thriving extra-curricular programme, the outstanding facilities, the levels of pride in the school, the fully committed staff, the constant reinforcement of positive British values and the outstanding ethos allows all students the opportunity to maximise their potential both academically and practically within and beyond the classroom. The school also provides tremendous professional development support for teachers all over the region through the Teaching School.

Such is the demand for an NSB style education, coupled with the Local Authority identifying the need for a new eight form entry secondary school by 2021, we are considering making an application to set up an 11-16 mixed gender comprehensive Free School, on the edge of Northampton, with feeder school links into the NSB Sixth Form. Please see the school website for more information and to access a short preliminary consultation questionnaire.

I hope this letter has been informative and I thoroughly look forward to working with you in partnership throughout the academic year.

Richard Bernard
Headmaster