



21<sup>st</sup> April 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well. There are a number of important items that I need to communicate with you, some of which we would like you to discuss with your child.

**Changes to the School Day**

Thank you for your feedback about the proposed changes to the school day. The feedback from parents and students has been particularly positive about this and we will be making the following change **from next Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023**. These changes will last until the summer and we will be consulting with you about September’s school day in the next few weeks.

Time	Event	
From 8.10 am	Free Breakfast Club available	
8.35 am	Movement to Learning Bell	
8.40 to 9.55 am	Lesson 1	
9.55 to 11.10 am	Lesson 2	
11.10 to 11.30	Break	
11.30am to 12.45 pm	Lesson 3	
12.45 to 1.10 pm	Years 8 & 11 Lunch	Form Period or Assembly Years 7, 9 & 10
1.10 to 1.35 pm	Form Period or Assembly Years 8 & 11	Years 7, 9 & 10 Lunch
1.35 to 2.50 pm	Lesson 4	
2.50 pm	End of Formal Learning	
2.50 to 4.00 pm	Extra-Curricular – Clubs, Societies, Extended Study for Year 11	

Students have had assemblies and form time activities to prepare them for the change, but it is important that they are given some key messages from yourselves.

- A free breakfast is available before school and food can be purchased at breaktime. We expect students to tidy up any litter and behave courteously to the catering staff at all times.
- Staff are on duty at break and lunchtime to ensure safe and orderly behaviour. We expect students to behave courteously at all times.
- Students go directly to their next lesson. There is no ‘movement break’ and they must move speedily and directly to the classroom.
- When they arrive at the classroom they must line up, ready to go straight in to the lesson and complete the Do Now activity in silence. This is a standard start to every lesson.
- If a student needs to use the toilet between lessons they should use their year group toilets. Please emphasise that students are not allowed to gather, socialise or misuse the toilets.
- Older students must not use the toilets of younger students.
- Any students who do not go to their lessons directly will be spoken to by staff.

**HEADTEACHER:** Mr G Rule

## **Mobile phones in PE**

Disappointingly, we have had to deal with an increase in the misuse of mobile phones in PE lessons. This causes a clear Health and Safety hazard and I am sure you will agree there is absolutely no reason why a student should have a mobile phone in a PE lesson.

A letter has already come to you but I did want to highlight the following. Phones can be:

- stored in the student's own coat or bag which will be locked in the changing room
- brought into the PE lesson and given to the teacher to be stored in a sealed plastic box.

In line with the school behaviour policy which states "The College reserves the right to ask students to hand in phones for safe keeping to ensure both staff and students are safeguarded against inappropriate use. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who fail to comply" there will be a sanction should any student still use their phone during the lesson. Students will have to hand in their phone to their teacher and they will be able to collect it at the end of the school day from the PE / dance office after a short restorative meeting. All phones will be kept in a locked office, in a clearly labelled envelope with your child's name and form on. Can I thank you in advance for your support with this and for reinforcing the message at home.

## **Derogatory language**

You will be aware that we are working hard to eliminate rude, discriminatory and derogatory language in school. I have recently discovered that a number of students are using rude and abusive language towards our reception and catering staff. There is no place for this language at Denton Community College, whether directed at staff or other students. Lunch should be a pleasant experience for all members of the school community and, as we are bringing a food service into breaktimes, it is essential that our catering colleagues are treated with respect at all times. I would appreciate it if this could be discussed at home.

## **School Improvement update**

With the support of our School Improvement Partners, we have already begun to make some changes in response to the Ofsted priorities. We have begun a programme of work on ensuring safety is at the heart of the DNA of Denton Community College. As well as through assemblies and form time, there have been sessions run by external organisations on staying safe online and encouraging respectful behaviour this week, in particular focusing on eliminating sexist and misogynistic language towards girls. It would be helpful if you could ask your child about these sessions to make sure the key messages were understood.

We will be in touch with you shortly on some further changes we have planned for September. These are areas that have been identified by Ofsted as well as by listening to the whole school community about what they feel needs to be improved, for example around safety. It is important that we continue to consult with you, as well as with staff & students, and listen to your views about the best way for these to be introduced. The changes include:

- A longer lunchtime for students
- Actions to ensure students behave safely and feel safe in school
- Introducing a complete ban on the use of mobile phones on the school site
- Steps to improve attendance and punctuality

Further details about all of these will follow over the next few weeks and I look forward to hearing your constructive views as we prepare the students for the coming changes.

## **Industrial Action: Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May**

As you are aware the National Education Union (NEU) are intending to take industrial action on Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that this strike action is happening because of a national dispute between the unions and the government over teachers' pay, working conditions and the funding levels for schools. The industrial action does not relate in any way towards the actions of any school.

**HEADTEACHER:** Mr G Rule

A considerable number of staff are members of the NEU and there will therefore be a significant impact on our ability to deliver the normal curriculum to our students. As a school it is our responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff, therefore the following decision regarding our provision for students on these days has been made:

A number of our most vulnerable students will be invited into school to be taught and/or supervised in accordance with their normal timetable

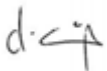
- Students in Year 11 must attend College in accordance with their timetable.
- GCSE Textiles and Art exams scheduled on these days. Students must attend these exams. Detailed information has been shared already with those students.
- Students in Years 7 to 10 will be expected to work from home on both days
- Subject work for students in all year groups whose teacher is not absent (due to industrial action or illness) will be provided via Google Classroom
- If your child is in Years 7 to 10 and their class teacher is not absent (due to industrial action or illness), the teacher will be online within Google Classroom during the timetabled lesson to answer any questions or address issues relating to the work that has been set
- If a teacher is absent (due to industrial action or illness), generic enrichment work relevant to their year group will be made available through the school website, via the 'Enrichment Work 2023' tab
- Families eligible for free school meals will be contacted so a 'grab-bag' lunch can be booked for collection from school on both days.

As before, Google Classroom is the normal platform used for all our home learning. All students are familiar with this platform, however if you do expect difficulties in accessing this work please contact the school at the earliest opportunity.

As a parent, I understand how these arrangements are not ideal and may cause some disruption. I would like to reiterate that these decisions have not been taken lightly and are in place to ensure the health and safety of our students. I must make it clear that these plans may be subject to change closer to the date, or even on the date of industrial action itself. Any further changes will of course be communicated to you as soon as possible.

Finally, it is also important to remember that school is closed over the bank holiday weekend on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May. Please also remember that there is an additional bank holiday for the King's Coronation on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Yours sincerely,



Donald Cumming  
Acting Headteacher