

September 2024

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that year 12 students are settling into New College life and that they are enjoying their experience so far. In advance of our Parent/Carer Welcome Evening on 24 September (a separate letter will follow with further details on this), I am writing with some important messages about the weeks and months ahead. Please note that this, and all general letters, can also be found on our website.

<https://ncpontefract.ac.uk/letters/>

### Cedar

As students adjust to their new routines, I hope that they feel supported and informed. If you have any concerns or queries, please feel free to contact the relevant Progress Tutor via Cedar. As some of you may be aware, Cedar is a great way to keep track of students' progress and attendance at college, and allows you to email teachers. If you haven't created an account, please use the link below to do so. You will need a next of kin email address that we have on file, and the student's reference number that starts with L00. **Please note that the Progress Tutor is usually the first port of call for queries or problems.** Please contact student services if you have problems accessing Cedar. <https://cedar.ncpontefract.ac.uk/auth/account/create>

### Enrichment

Please encourage students to take part in the wide variety of [enrichment opportunities](#) offered at the college. We believe that this contributes positively to confidence, employability, wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

### Attendance and Holidays

Attendance is an extremely high priority here at New College, and whilst we encourage students to get the balance right between study and social time, we also tell them that extra sessions and lessons may be added to their timetable so they must be wary of booking regular appointments or part time work around their timetable. It's worth noting that timetables do sometimes change - so again, study periods should not be considered to be free time. Holidays taken during term time cannot be authorised and can have a significant impact on academic progress. In some cases, where attendance is already low, holiday absence will result in escalation of intervention levels. Please support the college in trying to ensure that missed learning is minimised and refer to the term dates and exam timetables when booking holidays. Recent statistics show that attendance of less than 75% leads to one grade lower achievement. <https://ncpontefract.ac.uk/term-key-dates/>

### Exams, assessments, and AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Some students who are enrolled on applied general qualifications will be sitting external exams in year 12. A small number of these are as early as January 2025 and many are in May and June 2025. Please be aware that external exams cannot be rescheduled and are a compulsory part of the course. Missing an exam will almost certainly result in failing the course unless there are significant mitigating circumstances, or unless the student resits the exam at their own expense later - this is not always possible. Please assume that there could well be a summer exam for applied general subjects such as BTECs, but students will be informed by their teachers.

Looking ahead for A level subjects, there will be important internal Progression Exams and external exams for Further Maths students in May 2025. The awarding bodies have not released the dates for the external exams in the summer of 2025 or 2026 at the time of writing. In 2024 the exams started very early in May and ran up to the end of June. We will support students with revision in college, including a 10-week revision countdown with weekly advice and reminders.

Artificial Intelligence is increasingly relevant in education, and staff will be supporting students in the safe use of AI. However, all students are being reminded that any work they produce for assessment must be authentic to them and cannot have been generated using AI. Nationally, the improper use of AI has already led to some students being disqualified from coursework and/or full qualifications, severely impacting their progression to positive destinations.

### **Study support and access arrangements**

For students who have study support needs, please log into Cedar with them and check under 'Learner Support' that their implications for teaching and exam access arrangements are accurate. You will need to do this together as only students can see this information when they are logged into Cedar. It is important that students get the right support and that they only receive access arrangements that have been officially approved. Please note that due to the size of the college, the arrangements for smaller rooms may differ from those experienced at school. If you have any queries about this, please direct them to the SENDCo [sarah.oneill@nclt.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.oneill@nclt.ac.uk)

### **Work experience and volunteering**

To support students with their next steps after education, we are providing opportunities to engage with employers in college as well as encouraging them to visit workplaces as a volunteer or for work experience. Even half a day in a place of work can help with employability skills and decision making, so we are asking all parents and carers to consider whether their place of employment may be able to accommodate students even for a short visit. If you think you can help, please complete this [brief expression of interest](#), and thank you in advance.

Finally, I hope to see you on 24 September. As well as hearing from me and other Senior Leaders, if you have any concerns there will be an opportunity to raise these with Progress Tutors and Study Support.

Yours sincerely,  
Vicky Marks



Principal, New College Pontefract