

## Principal's Newsletter 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

It's hard to believe that last week marked the two year anniversary of when our Prime Minister announced that schools were closing and the country was going into lockdown. I feel very proud of the way all in our school community: staff, students and parents, have shown solidarity through the immense challenges we have all faced during this time.

I have five main things to update you on today:

1. Attendance
2. Summer GCSE Exams
3. Covid measures
4. Changes to the school day for September 2022
5. Changes to the school menu after Easter

### **Attendance**

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Of course, we are fully aware and sympathetic that in the current climate attendance can look a little different to the norm but as a school we continue to follow any DfE guidance.

As part of our ongoing commitment to attendance at North Gosforth Academy we would like to draw to your attention to the Attendance policy below. This outlines our policies and procedures in relation to tracking and supporting pupils whose attendance is lower than we would hope.

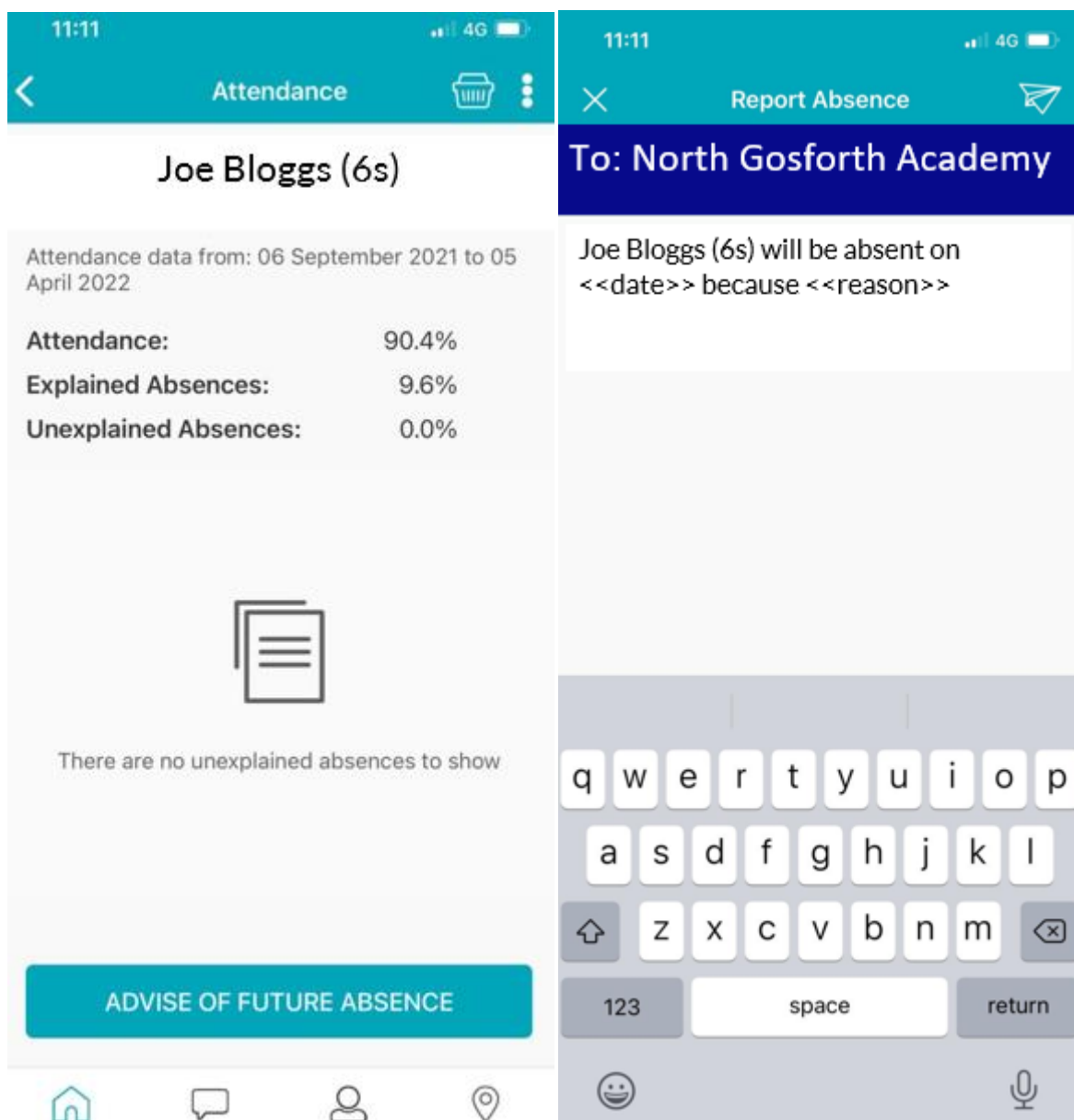
[4513-attendance-policy--sept-21.pdf \(northgosforthacademy.org.uk\)](#)

In the front of the main school student planner you will see the Attendance Pyramid, which shows if students fall below 90% they are in the red zone and classed as a persistent absentee. At this point attendance can be legally monitored by the Local Authority and grades will be affected. The stark reality is that, with below 90% attendance, students have less than 50% chance of achieving Grades 9-4 compared to their peers of similar ability.

We are extremely proud of all that our students achieve, therefore, by encouraging high levels of attendance we are determined to work together to ensure every child reaches their full potential by being present in school for as much time as possible.

Strong attendance is particularly vital for the next few months as Year 11 enter into the final stages of their exam preparation. Year 10 will also be gearing up for mock exams.

We are making attendance a big focus at present, so you may receive more information regarding this. One way that we are now able to communicate with you more easily and quickly on attendance is via the School Gateway App. All parents that have the App should now be able to see an option to view your child's current attendance data, advise of a future absence and explain an unexplained absence via the App:



You should also now be able to view your child's timetable and be able to amend any of your personal details that have changed.

If you would like any more information about this new feature please contact the school office and ask to speak to Miss Moody.

### Summer GCSE Exams

GCSE Results Day - 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022

The Government have made it clear that GCSE exams are going ahead, and with four teaching weeks to go students should now be working hard. The changes that have been made to facilitate an exam season taking place this summer include:

- **Advanced information** being released which can be seen using the links below. This has been shared with students by subject teachers.

- Some subjects have no Advanced Information e.g. GCSE English Literature, History and Geography as papers contain **optionality** instead.
- Some subjects e.g. Maths have **formulae sheets**.
- Some subjects have **changes to NEA**.
- Changes to **exam scheduling** has taken place so that papers are more **spread out** in the event that a student misses one due to covid.
- Appeals and the structure and format of papers will be the same as 2019.

I'd like to dispel the myth that if a student does not attend an exam then they will automatically receive a Teacher Assessed Grade. This is absolutely not the case. Exam boards have spread out their scheduling in each subject more than a normal year. The only time we are likely to use TAG evidence is if the Government decide to completely cancel exams nationally, which at present seems unlikely. You should also be aware that there is no opportunity to sit exams in November 2022 unless it is GCSE English or Maths resit.

AQA

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/2022-exam-changes>

Eduqas (WJEC)

<https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=1764>

Pearson

[https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/summer-2022-support.html?utm\\_source=ealertairelease&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=GBEDGS0821SUM22](https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/summer-2022-support.html?utm_source=ealertairelease&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=GBEDGS0821SUM22)

OCR

<https://ocr.org.uk/qualifications/2022-advance-information/>

The main messages to students from the school with regards to exam preparation are:

1. Most students have started revising out of school hours (despite what some may say) - **if you haven't started, you're in the minority.**
2. Take every opportunity. **Attend all after school and holiday sessions** you are invited to.
3. If you are off due to Covid or general sickness be **proactive** in finding out what you missed.
4. Revise **little and often each day**. Intense cramming won't work and leads to unnecessary stress.
5. Build in some relaxation time by reading, doing some exercise, seeing friends or getting some fresh air. It's normal to feel stressed in the lead up to exams so make sure you look after your own mental health or seek support if you need to.

### Covid Update

[Please see the letter that was sent home earlier this week](#)

School is certainly feeling more normal, thankfully. We have good reason to feel positive about the final term and beyond. However, you will be well aware that Covid is still having a huge impact on student and staff attendance. There is also a recruitment crisis in the secondary sector and it is nigh on impossible to get supply staff. Thank you for bearing with us on all of this.

## Changes to the school day for September 2022

From September 2022 we are proposing the following changes to the school day:

- Changing from 7 x 45 minute lessons to 5 x 1 hour lessons
- The end of the compulsory school day changing from 3.10pm to 3.00pm

These changes are aimed at maximizing lesson time ensuring all students make good progress in their learning to achieve their full potential during their time at North Gosforth Academy.

## Changes to the school menu after Easter

We have been in discussions with North Tyneside Catering Services about ways to improve the offering at lunchtimes to make it healthier and more varied. We are pleased with the new menu that they have offered us and this will be in place after the Easter holidays. I have attached the new menu here and this is also on the [school website](#). There will no longer be a snack meal, the combo meals will continue to be offered. There is no change to the menu at break time.

## Spring half term news

As well as these key important messages I would like to share with you some good news and events that have happened in school this half term.

### **Spanish Spelling Bee**

The Spanish Spelling Bee final took place this half term. Students worked incredibly hard to perfect their skills in spelling, pronunciation and translation of their vocabulary. All teams scored very highly and put in so much effort. We are very proud of them all. The winning teams were: Year 7 - Anna Phillips, Sophie Charlton, Daniel Dixon, Aimee Welford, Holly Bundy and Year 8 - Harry Graham, Daniel Rosario, Archie Kellacher, Imogen Gibson, Brooke Pearcy. Students were awarded a certificate, a special prize and got to hold the NGA Spelling Bee trophy which is now in our school trophy cabinet. Congratulations and a HUGE well done to all students who took part. ¡Felicidades!

Thank you very much to our very special judges too - Mrs Storey, Mr Fryer, Miss Reche





### Careers Update

It has been a busy half term for careers related learning at North Gosforth Academy. Our students have been involved in a variety of events related to the world of work. Our year 10 students took part in the World of Work careers fair where they found out about their Post-16 options and spoke to employers from a variety of occupations. We also celebrated National Careers Week in a series of assemblies and opportunities, with careers learning in subject areas throughout the week too. Our Year 9 students participated in the Buzz personality quiz, and some of our younger students have been working with the Newcastle United Foundation NUFutures programme during enhancement time. Our students have really engaged in the careers programme over this half term, and it has given them the knowledge and guidance so that they can make informed decisions about their futures.

### PE News this term:

As always our excellent sports stars have been busy and there have been some fantastic successes in various sporting events.

- Brooke Forster earned a place in the U18 Northumberland Rugby Squad. Former student Lauren McDermott also got into the squad.
- Y7 Girls Football enjoyed a trip to Goals to play in the North Tyneside 5 a side competition. This is the first time most of this group have represented NGA and they're already looking forward to future football matches.



- Y8 Girls Cricket took part in an event at Walker Dome. Our girls beat Corbridge and came close against Ponteland B and St Thomas More. The girls have only recently started a cricket unit in PE, but performed exceptionally.



- Y7/8 girls footballers played Studio West last Thursday. We had 2 five a side teams - NGA1 won 2 games and drew one, NGA2 won 2 games and lost 1. Lots of goals were scored and fun had by all involved!



- Y7/8 Netballers played a tri-series last Thursday. The girls played with real skill, endeavour and sportsmanship throughout. Imogen Gibson was awarded Player of the Game.
- As a reward for their excellent behaviour and attitude in lessons, 9 Year 7 boys were chosen to play in a football tournament on the roof of Newcastle United Foundations' new building (NUCASTLE). The day started with a stadium tour where the boys got to see the changing rooms, go pitchside and walk out to 'Local Hero', just like the players do. After lunch they played in the tournament and did well, winning 2 out of 3 games. Their next surprise was the arrival of the actual Premier League trophy, where they managed to get some photos to finish off a great day.





### **Rugby Attendance Reward:**

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 26 students with 100% attendance were selected to attend a rugby match at Newcastle Falcons. They were involved in a pre-match coaching session, they got to meet two of the players and get autographs signed, as well as playing on the pitch at half time and watching the Falcons beat Leicester Tigers. Our students were impeccably behaved and represented NGA fantastically.

You can watch a video of what they got up to during the trip attached to this newsletter on the [school website](#).





## Fundraising

I would also like to thank and praise all students who supported the cake sale on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April, we raised over £100 for the Ukraine. Special thanks go to the year 7, 8 and 9 Junior Leadership Team members who cooked and decorated the cakes. Students are also collecting items for donations in form classes which will be collected at the end of this week.

## PROUD event

Yesterday we had our half termly PROUD event and it was a delight as ever to see so many Year 7/8 students proudly showing off their excellent work!



I'd like to end by wishing you all a restful Easter holiday. As usual at Easter we finish at 1pm today and look forward to welcoming students back on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

Thank you for your continued support.

Pete Fox

Principal