

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: End of half-term updates and information for parents/carers**

It gives me great pleasure to write to you and thank you for the support which you have given to myself and staff so far this year as we approach the end of half-term 3 and reach the half-way point of the current school year.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable half-term break next week and we look forward to your child returning or in some cases, starting as a new student in the new half-term as school re-opens to all students at normal time on **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024** at the normal time.

**Reflecting back on this term so far**

As I have previously made you aware, the PRU expanded the number of students on roll from 40 to a potential 60 places when we relocated in January 2023 to our new building in Seghill. We have now reached our full capacity on site with 60 students now attending the PRU across 8 different classes. These include our 3 Nurture groups, our Vocational group, 2 mainstream groups and also two Year 10 groups who are now well underway in completing their GCSE examination qualifications. All students follow one of our 4 tailored Pathways.

This term the PRU has registered and has been accepted to be an examination centre and this means that students in key stage 4 will be able to sit their final GCSE exams on site in the future.

All of our lessons last half-term have followed our curriculum theme of 'The Circle of Life' across every subject and students have accessed a wide range of educational and cultural experiences. Our focus will change when students return after the break as our new theme will be 'Conflict' for half-term 4.

We will also use next half-term to deliver sessions to all students on Relationship and Sexual Education within our timetabled PSHCE lessons. This is in line with DfE guidance. Further information can be found on the school website in relation to our approach to this and we welcome the input and views of all parents/carers.

We will also continue to develop our broad extra-curricular offer currently in place. Students have accessed the Rugby Sports Leaders Award in school each Thursday, NDA Level 2 Horse care is attended by Pink group each Monday and Thursday off-site and 3 groups are well underway working with Newcastle United Foundation in completion of the Prince's Trust Award every Monday and Wednesday in school.

The PRU has secured external and impartial Careers Education advice for all students last half-term with a company called 'CareerWave' who have attended school already to meet personally for an interview and guidance session with Year 10 students. All students in other year groups will also each receive a similar personalised session across a further 10 days in the second half of the school year.

Our PRU football team 'PRU United FC' has also experienced a number of successes in matches held against other local teams and this week on Monday were hugely successful as they took part in their first Futsal tournament. We are very proud of our students' achievements.

### **School uniform reminder**

All students in Years 7 – 10 must attend school each day in full Northumberland PRU uniform. Once again, a reminder that we have provided all pupils with their own polo shirts and sweaters free of charge.

Students have previously been exceptionally good at wearing the correct uniform and we expect this to continue next year. You can help us by reminding your child of the school's expectations regarding appearance and conduct.

I would like to stress that the style of footwear 'Crocs' are not acceptably safe forms of footwear to be worn in school and any student attending wearing this style of shoe will have contact made with home so that appropriate footwear can be arranged.

In addition to this, we have recently seen an increase from some students wearing large, gold chains and large sovereign rings. Again, these items are not deemed to meet our PRU uniform policy and also pose risks to health and safety. Such jewellery is requested to not be brought on site by students and if students are found to be wearing it, they will be asked to remove it so that it can be securely stored on site until a parent/carer can attend to collect it.

Students should bring a bag containing their own water bottle, stationary (pen, pencil, ruler) and PE kit.

### **Student attendance and punctuality**

All students (Year 7 – 10) **must** continue to remain on the school premises for the full duration of the school day (except when attending a visit or off-site activity), which promotes good punctuality and attendance and which also strongly impacts positively towards further increasing high standards of teaching and learning.

May I please request that doctor or dental appointments are made after 2:30pm wherever possible, ensuring that you provide medical evidence (letter or appointment card) for any medical related absences. I must also stress that in line with DfE guidelines that students must not be taken out of school during term time for holidays as permission cannot be given.

### **Health & safety and student behaviour expectations**

Detailed information about the school behaviour policy and our 'Behaviour for Learning' and rewards systems can be found on our school website <http://www.pru.northumberland.sch.uk/website>.

## **Mobile telephones and other technical equipment**

All mobile telephones must be handed in to staff members each morning by all students for safekeeping where they will be securely stored until the end of day at which point they will be returned to students. This helps support the school approach to safeguarding.

## **Break time and lunch time – Student catering and refreshments**

I can confirm that the cost of a daily breakfast will continue to be fully covered by the school.

## **Looking ahead**

When students return back to school after next week's holiday they will find that we will be changing some base classrooms for some groups. Students in Yellow, Pink, Cyan and in key stage 4 will be relocating into new areas of the school. This will provide them with increased space for lessons, additional break-out spaces and easier access to separate group toilet facilities. We will be preparing students for this in school at the end of this week so that they are ready for this change.

You may recall that in October I issued our first Parent/Carer Perception Survey so that I could seek your views on all aspects of the PRU. I will be issuing a second Perception Survey for all parents/carers to complete next month and I look forward to reviewing your feedback to see how much progress you feel we are making this year and how we can improve your experience even further.

Another exciting development is our recent purchase of 7 new bicycles and maintenance equipment to maintain them. In the summer term we will add cycling and maintenance courses to our curriculum offer and teach road safety awareness to students. This will also help further expand our Friday rewards menu as the weather improves.

Finally, all students will receive their spring term academic report in the final week before the Easter holiday break in April.

With your valued and on-going partnership, I look forward to sharing further successes and updates with you throughout the coming months. You will always be kept updated and we will continue to work together to support all of our students.

Yours faithfully,

*R. L. Carr*

Richard Carr, Headteacher