



9 January 2026

### Welcome Back and Looking Ahead: Spring Term Update

Dear Parents, Carers, and Families,

I would like to start by warmly welcoming you all back to a new term and a new year. I hope you had a restful and enjoyable break with your loved ones.

It has been a pleasure to see our students return this week. I must praise them for the manner in which they have conducted themselves. Our hallways and classrooms are already filled with a sense of focus; students continue to look incredibly smart, they have arrived well-organised for learning, and the atmosphere in lessons is calm, quiet, and purposeful.

As we look toward the months ahead, I would like to briefly outline our key priorities for this term.

### A Fresh Start for Attendance

While there is much to celebrate regarding attendance across the school, we remain concerned that the figures for some individuals and groups are still not where they should or could be. We fully appreciate that December was a difficult month, with flu and various seasonal viruses impacting both students and staff—myself included. Consequently, many students saw their attendance percentages dip.

In response, we are talking to students this month about a **'Reset.'** We want students to move on from last term, set new goals, and measure their success against their attendance for this term specifically, rather than comparing it to the last. This opens up new possibilities:

- **The 98% Goal:** Even if last term was tricky, every student can achieve 98% or higher this term.
- **Weekly Progress:** Students can look to improve their attendance week by week.

We ask for your continued support in promoting positive attendance. Please encourage your child to come in and "give it a go," and please continue to book medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

### The Curriculum

Our second priority remains the development of teaching, learning, and our curriculum. This will include the important options process for Year 9. Families of Year 9 students will receive more information shortly to inform them about the process and outline key information. Our Year 9 Parents' Evening and Options Fayre will take place on Thursday 5 February and we look forward to welcoming you all then.

This is also a critical time for our Year 11 students as they near deadlines for coursework completion, prepare for a second set of mock exams, and finish their courses. I wrote to Year 11 families in December to outline a proposed model for out-of-hours revision and support. We are keen to provide a workable model for students and staff that will provide students

*'Part of the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership'*

with the time and support they need. The school is working with colleagues and we hope to finalise arrangements on the preferred model over the next few weeks.

In the meantime, it goes without saying that every day counts now. We strongly urge all Year 11 students to be in every single day to make the most of the opportunities on offer.

### **Enrichment**

Our strong commitment to Enrichment will continue this term, and we are very much looking forward to The Addams Family production taking place at the end of the month. This is our third production in as many years, and everyone is working hard to make it a success.

Furthermore, we are finalising arrangements for our Enrichment Week offer and will share this in February. In a change to previous years, this will take place over two days in the final week of the academic year, providing a range of excursions as well as activities on the school site.

### **Looking Ahead**

There will be opportunities for families to attend Parents' Evenings for Years 11, 10, 9, and 7. We encourage all families to look out for these dates and make every effort to attend.

Thursday 22 January- Year 11 Parents' Evening

Thursday 5 February- Year 9 Parents' Evening & Options Fayre

Thursday 12 February- Year 10 Parents' Evening

Thursday 13 March- Year 7 Parents Evening

Thursday 26 March- Year 11 Exam Preparation Evening

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to seeing you all over the course of the next 12 weeks at one or several of these important events.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Balkwill', written over a horizontal line.

Mr P Balkwill  
Headteacher