



Dear NHS families,

We are looking forward to welcoming your child to the Norwood High School family. For the 2025-26 school year, we are excited to announce the launch of the First Year Academy, which aims to set students up for success in their ninth grade year and beyond. We are introducing a structured, supportive environment to help students thrive from day one. The aim is to provide additional academic, emotional, behavioral and procedural support for students on their transition to high school, while still maintaining the positive supports already in place.

The First Year Academy is built on the understanding that a strong foundation in ninth grade leads to long-term success. Studies have shown that high schools with targeted support programs, such as Grade 9 academies, see improved academic performance and increased student engagement (Styron & Peasant, 2010). Our goal is to create a learning environment where every grade nine student feels supported, connected, and prepared to succeed.

Through the First Year Academy, your student will have a dedicated team of teachers, counselors, and an administrator focused specifically on grade nine success. In core classes, students will be grouped with consistent teachers and classmates on “teams” to foster relationships and personalized support. In addition to these new structures, NHS remains committed to maximizing student voice and choice in course selection, and opportunities to engage in career pathways.

We believe that by investing in our students' success early on, we can create a positive and encouraging start to their high school journey. The First Year Academy is more than just a program—it's a commitment to helping every student build the skills, confidence, and relationships they need to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We are excited to welcome Grade eight students to Norwood High School for Step Up Day on June 9, and for New Student Orientation on August 18. We look forward to working together to make this a successful and rewarding experience for all of our ninth graders.

Sincerely,

The NHS First Year Academy Team