



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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1st May, 2020

Dear Parents/Students,

There has been a great deal of speculation in the press this week about our schools will reopen. As ever, with no clear guidance the various different options put forward in the media have only fuelled the anxiety of parents, students and teachers. However, following the other Mr Johnson' briefing on 30th April, I expect to be in the position to give you definitive information next week about when and how we will reopen our school. Boris Johnson said that he will be setting out a comprehensive plan next week to explain how the government plans to reopen schools. I hope that this guidance will be detailed and specific as while I understand that children are desperate to see their friends and teachers again, I believe that it is unlikely that all students will returning to school straight away while social distancing rules remain in force. On Wednesday this week, the education secretary, Gavin Williamson, said as much, indicating that schools would open in a phased manner. As soon as I have any further information I will be back in touch.

Free school meal voucher scheme

The government's free school meal voucher scheme, set up to try to ensure that the most disadvantaged children do not go hungry during the crisis has come in for criticism from MPs this week who were concerned about long delays in getting vouchers to families. I have no plans at this time to switch from the Wonde FSM voucher system that we implemented at the start of the lockdown to the 'Edenred' government scheme. The system that we are using to support our families is working well and I am pleased to announce that the range of supermarkets has expanded to include Aldi and, hopefully in the next week or so, the McColls convenience stores. If you would like to change your supermarket of choice, please contact the school by emailing finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk so that we can make the necessary change for you.

Updated Public Health England Guidance

Public Health England has published further guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

£100m worth of investment in equipment and IT

You may have seen an announcement by the government that they plan to issue free laptops and tablets to help disadvantaged pupils. I have been informed that the first batch of free laptops and tablets to help disadvantaged pupils studying at home will not arrive until after half term. As soon as I am given further details I will be in touch with the families of those young people that are eligible to receive one of a total of seven laptops in total that we have been allocated under this scheme.

@NCSHorticulture

One final thing before I leave you to enjoy your weekend. I am delighted to draw your attention to yet another Newent Twitter feed to help our students remain connected to their school. Our wonderful science department will be launching @NCSHorticulture in the next day or so to that students and anyone interested can see seasonal progress and their work within the horticulture area.

ParentPay

In preparation for the school reopening, whenever that might be, we are asking parents to check they have access to their ParentPay account as we will be requesting parents use this system for making payment for trips, events and uploading money to their child's cashless fob as opposed to sending cash to school. If you need a log in for a ParentPay account or have forgotten your password, please email the Finance team using finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk.

New Intake for September 2020

We look forward to meeting our new Y7 students and their families at some point in the hopefully not too distant future when the current health situation permits, however, if you know someone who is still looking for a secondary school place for September we are still able to consider applications at this time. Please ask them to call the school to have a conversation with us and look at the available options.

Best wishes

Alan Johnson
Principal



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