



# Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

*Striving for Excellence*

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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10<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

After spending most of my life working to the beat of the education calendar with established term times and the certainty of knowing what each week will bring, it is a challenge to adapt to the new uncertainty that we all face with Covid-19. However, I am confident that we will come through this crisis far stronger than before.

It is said that in times of crisis you see the very best of people. This is clear in the hard work and dedication of all of the key workers that are working to keep us all on an even keel. It is also true of every one of you who in these difficult times is taking a leading role in supporting students with their distance learning tasks. While at times it may seem like a thankless task, especially when the latest guidance from the Department for Education (9th April 2020) states that schools will remain closed until further notice, only to re-open schools when the scientific advice indicates it is safe to do so. It is therefore vital that we all continue to support young people in the challenging times ahead. To paraphrase my Vice Principal Mr Phillips, 'Hard work always pays off', and every piece of work that is completed at home will ensure that when this crisis is over, our students are best prepared to pick up their formal education from where it left off. So please, keep nagging, cajoling, encouraging and supporting until things get back to normal. We in turn will keep developing and adapting the work that is being set to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners. On that note a big thank you to those students/parents that have provided Mr Phillips with feedback on our 'Distance Learning' model. We have combined this information with feedback from our teachers and will be issuing some revised guidance on how we set work to students in the latter part of next week so there is manageable and meaningful work ready to view when you log back on to MILK on 20th April.

## **Free School Meals**

I am aware that there are still a small number of families who have chosen not take up the FSM voucher scheme that we put in place on 23 March 2020. Please be aware that this option is still available to you should you wish to take advantage of it. To find out more information please contact the school by emailing [admin@newent.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@newent.gloucs.sch.uk).

I am also aware that some families will face additional financial pressures during this challenging time and would like to remind you that you are still able to apply for Free School Meals. GCC are still processing applications and as soon as we receive notification from them, we will contact you regarding our voucher scheme.

## **Forthcoming Trips**

As we look to forward to next term I am acutely aware that we have a number of trips and external activities planned. We are, as you will understand, desperate for these enrichment events and activities to go ahead whilst very mindful of the likelihood that some, if not all, may need to be postponed or indeed cancelled. Given the sometimes conflicting messages that we are all receiving about when schools are likely to reopen, I plan to keep this under constant review. I am sure that you will understand that while each of these trips and events offer a spectacular opportunity for our young people, some are written into the very DNA of the school and I do not wish to cancel them unless I have no alternative.

## **Work Experience**

Unlike trips and visits, the logistics of ensuring that a meaningful work experience happens for students en masse at a time when many companies and small businesses are struggling to keep their heads above water is clearly not going to happen. While we believe that the opportunity for students to gain experience of the world of work is critically important, we plan to treat any opportunity that may arise on a case by case basis until the general situation returns to normal.

Thank you again for all of your efforts in partnership with us at this time and finally I would like to wish you and your families a Happy Easter.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Alan Johnson', with a stylized, cursive style.

Alan Johnson  
Principal