



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parent/Carer

Another incredibly busy week at Newent is coming to an end. On Tuesday I was sadly reminded of my age after spending the day on my hands and knees fixing social distancing reminders every two metres along our corridors. Brett our groundsman is clearly far more agile than me and easily took the marking of the outside areas in his stride without all the huffing and puffing he could hear from the Principal. All this activity was prompted by the government's desire that schools offer some limited face to face contact for students in Y10 and in Y12 in addition to providing support in school for vulnerable learners, the children of key workers and supporting parents to deliver distance learning.

Unfortunately our school is not blessed with modern wide corridors and external access to classrooms. In fact many corridors are less than 1.8 metres wide and it would be fair to say that the layout of our school buildings have evolved over time rather than being part of a modern grand design. As such we have introduced a one way system around the school that connects each distinct social bubble. These bubbles have been created so that we can keep each group of students apart while in school and maintain social distancing within groups as much as possible. They are part of a wider raft of measures to ensure that we comply with all of the government guidance on managing the risk of Covid-19.

The Student Journey

I am very aware that at times it must seem that you are constantly being bombarded with so much information, from so many different sources that it must be very difficult as a parent to ease the natural anxiety that your sons and daughters will be experiencing. Although this must be especially so for those young people in Y10 who will be joining us from Monday I thought it would be helpful for all parents to see what a normal, or should I say 'new normal' day at school will look like from Monday. I have included this in PDF form as an attachment to this letter. Please feel free to share it with your sons and daughters whatever year group they may be in. I will be there to welcome our students back when they arrive at the school site. All students will then be fully briefed on 'the new normal' of school procedures during their first tutorial bubble session of the day before they head to their core subject masterclasses.

For those students who are in school please remember that from Monday it will not be possible to use cash to purchase food in Meet 'n' Eat and, therefore, please ensure you can still access your ParentPay account and that your son or daughter remembers their cashless fob when attending school. If you need a password reset for your ParentPay account or need another cashless fob issued please email the finance office using finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk.

Transport to and from school

One of the frustrations that I have spoken to you about on a number of occasions has been the lack of clarity that schools are presented with that in turn causes further anxiety and confusion for parents and carers. The most recent example of this is around the guidance on face coverings on school buses. At the time of writing the most up to date government guidance (updated 4:51pm, 11 June 2020) states that school transport is unlike public transport, in that it generally carries the same group of children to and from the same destination each day. As such it is believed that this may help reduce the risk of cross infection and that students traveling on school buses do not need to wear masks. The guidance also quite rightly notes that children and staff won't be expected to wear face coverings in school.

However, at 12:26pm today (Friday) we received notification that Gloucestershire County Council will now expect all students to wear face coverings on the closed school bus routes that they operate. We have not heard from Stagecoach as yet and while I can only assume that they are still following government guidance I am worried that this may change after the school closes at the end of the day. Therefore given that children will be traveling to us on Monday I think that it would be prudent to assume that all children should now wear a mask on school buses to match latest guidance on public transport. I am sorry for any inconvenience that this causes.

Please remember that students are not required to wear masks in school and will be asked to remove them and store them safely during the day ready for their return journey.

As I have previously stated it is also my expectation that our students return to school in uniform. While there is no specific government guidance on this issue I believe that now more than ever wearing our uniform will help foster a sense of togetherness. This is especially important at a time when physically children have to remain apart. Maintaining a strong sense of community is critical when the majority of our children separated from each other, and we think that maintaining a familiar routine will be even more important when pupils return to the classroom with all of the unfamiliar social distancing measures we are duty bound to enforce.

Y12 Face to Face

Please would parents with young people in Y12 look out for additional information from our Head of Sixth Form, Miss Rogers about the face to face contact on offer to Y12 from the week commencing 15th June. In her letter Miss Rogers will provide more detail regarding dates and times of this provision.

University of Oxford, 'Online Pupil Survey - Home Edition'

As a school we are continually looking for more ways to support the emotional health and wellbeing of our students. Although the distancing measures enforced during this current crisis makes this a challenge it is too important to be missed. Therefore I have offered to take part in an online pupil survey facilitated by Oxford University. The information provided by this anonymous survey will give us greater insight into how our young people are feeling and coping in such uncertain times. I have attached a more detailed information sheet. Students will be sent clear instructions, including a help video along with the log in details via MILK. It should only take about 25 minutes. If you have any concerns about your child taking part please get in touch with the school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alan Johnson
Principal