



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Years 10 & 12 return to school

It has been an absolute pleasure to welcome so many of our Year 10 and Year 12 students back into school for some face-to-face tuition this week. Our students have managed the transition to the 'new normal' with great maturity and I was so proud of them as I watched them take the one way system, social distancing and all the other enhanced safety procedures in their stride. I am equally proud of our dedicated team of staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure our school remains a safe, warm and welcoming environment.

The taught 'Masterclass' sessions in English, Mathematics and Science have been well received by our Year 10 students. So much so that we will be adding to this provision in the coming weeks. As well as tutorial sessions and core subject masterclasses we will be focusing on revision and study skills to further support our student's progress. Furthermore, in the final three weeks of term students will be exposed to examination material from these core subjects. More information will follow on this from their classroom teachers, and throughout we will be continuing to set manageable and meaningful work for all students through Distance Learning tasks on MILK.

Distance Learning

While I am delighted to see how well our students and families have adapted to Distance Learning, I am also aware how hard it can be to maintain motivation when at times the task may feel never ending. We work very closely with our colleagues at MILK in order that the technology at our disposal is constantly improved to benefit the learning and progress of our young people. Please may I remind you to keep your Milk App up to date so that you can benefit from all of the new features and enhancements. The most recent improvement allows students to upload work directly to MILK which has enabled greater engagement and allowed more detailed feedback to be given to students by their teachers.

However, I do however appreciate the very fine balance between supporting students' welfare and encouraging them to complete work, and I can assure you that our absolute priority is always the well-being of our students in terms of both their academic progress and mental health.

The chasing of missed work was intended to help parents motivate their children to complete set tasks. Unfortunately, in some instances the well-meaning challenges to submit work on time has created further angst and anxiety at home. This was certainly never our intention.

Therefore, the written feedback by teachers to specific pieces of work submitted via MILK will continue, but in the final weeks before the end of term I have asked teachers not to keep chasing pieces of work that have not been submitted. Instead we will discuss progress in home learning activities during tutorial catch-up phone calls so that we may fully understand and support the unique situations of our students and their families.

FSM

As I have written in my previous letters, I am incredibly pleased to say that the voucher scheme Newent implemented at two days' notice for our free school meal families has worked from the start. This was not the experience for the families of the schools who elected to implement the National scheme, Edenred. I have previously said, in early May, that I had no plans to switch from the Wonde Scheme, however, as the school is currently funding this scheme I have had to keep this decision under review. Following the Government's u-turn at the start of this week to issue vouchers throughout the summer holidays, I feel now is the time to make that decision to move to the National Edenred scheme. However, please note that the finance office will continue to use the current scheme until the week commencing 20th July. They will work to introduce Edenred to coincide with this date.

The finance office will contact parents as and when required to ensure, as best as we can, the switch is as smooth as possible for families.

Transport to school

Letters for current Stagecoach users will be distributed via MILK during w/c 22nd June. If you live in the Gloucester City or Forest of Dean areas and haven't previously purchased a Mega Rider ticket but would like to discuss potentially purchasing a bus pass please email the finance office using finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk and request further information.

Polite request

A number of parents and carers have contacted the school this week very concerned that they are seeing an increasing number of young people congregating in public spaces like bus stops in the evenings. Although I understand how difficult this lockdown period has been for our young people please may I beg your support in reinforcing the expectations placed upon us all with regards social distancing.

Wider reopening of schools

This week started with an announcement about increasing face to face contact for other year groups and ended with one about a 'massive catch up operation' and 'tutoring programme'. I will write to you again shortly with the specific details of what these provisions may look like for our students.

In any event please stay safe and have a restful weekend.



Alan Johnson
Principal