



# Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

*Striving for Excellence*

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parents and Carers,

On Tuesday this week there was an update to safer travel guidance that covers the latest thinking around walking, cycling, and travelling in vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus outbreak. When I read this guidance I had pulled out of it some key information that I thought would be useful to share with your children around social distancing while travelling.

You will be aware that Public Health England recommends that we all maintain a 2 metre distance from people outside of our direct family where possible. The key thing is not to be too close to other people for more than a short amount of time. With the risk of infection increasing the closer you are to another person with the virus and the amount of time you spend in close contact. However, they acknowledge that there may be situations where none of us can keep a suitable distance from people for example when boarding or alighting public transport especially at busier times of the day. In these cases they say that we should try to avoid physical contact, try to face away from other people, and keep the time we spend near others as short as possible. I was not expecting any change to this guidance this week but last night we were all informed during the daily Covid briefing that face coverings will be mandatory on public transport from the 15th June. When we contacted the bus companies today to seek clarification on expectations for school buses they informed me that the first they heard about this was at the same time as us and they are awaiting the relevant guidance to follow. When they receive this information I will be back in touch.

## **Y11 Leaver Video**

We plan to send out the link to our amazing Y11 video on Tuesday next week. I must warn you to get a box of tissues ready because seeing all their smiling faces after such an abrupt end to their time at our school is enough to make even the hardest heart cry. A big thank you to Mrs O'Regan for all of her hard work on the video.

## **Competition**

I ended my letter last week with an unusual picture. I was surprised how quickly so many of you were able to identify the entrance to my swarm trap. I have to say that I was getting really excited by the massive increase in interest from scout bees over the weekend. When I saw that there was going to be a change in our weather I became even more excited remembering the old saying 'a swarm before a storm'. It turns out I should have paid more heed to a different adage 'don't count your chickens' (or bees in my case) as they appear to have found a different place to set up their new hive. So disappointing! But on a happier note here are the three winners of the £10 Amazon voucher.

1. Keira Mackenzie
2. Poppy Kulesz
3. Piper Brooks

## **Year 10 and 12 face-to-face support**

As you are aware the Department for Education have asked that all secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges begin to “offer some face-to-face support to supplement the remote education of year 10 and year 12 students who are due to take key exams next year”.

From the week commencing 15th June we will be adding to our existing Distance Learning model for students in Yr 10 and Y12 to enable them to engage with their teachers within the school building.

We have developed a model to support this governmental ambition which still puts the safety and well-being of all members of our school community at its core. Further details have been sent to parents/carers/students in these year groups via MILK.

## **Duke of Edinburgh Award during the pandemic**

### **2020 DofE Certificate of Achievement**

For this year only, certificates will be issued to all participants who have completed their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections at Bronze, Silver or Gold level, but haven't been able to do their expedition because of the pandemic. The accolade will be a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their dedication to their programmes and everything they've achieved through these three sections, as well as their resilience in coping with the unprecedented events of this year.

All young people who complete their Skills, Physical and Volunteering sections will receive the 2020 DofE Certificate of Achievement and, if they go on to complete their Expedition section at a later date, they will also achieve their DofE Award.

Students who have had difficulty in completing their original activities for any section due to the pandemic are allowed to add time and hours spent on alternative activities they have been involved in whilst isolating. For example; Cooking for the family (Skills), Helping younger siblings with their home schooling (volunteering), helping neighbours or elderly relatives with chores (volunteering), keeping fit by walks/running/cycling or workouts with Joe Wicks (physical) are just some of the things that can be credited to the three sections of the Award. Simply add evidence for the relevant section onto the student's DofE account.

Any concerns or questions about what to do then simply contact Mr Morley on his school email.

### **Starting the Silver Award**

At Bronze level, participants who have completed their Skills, Physical and Volunteering sections – achieving the 2020 DofE Certificate of Achievement can progress to Silver without waiting to complete the expedition. They will be treated as if they have completed the previous Award level. This means they'll only have to complete six months of activity, not 12.

Participants who do this will be able to use their Silver practice expedition as their qualifying expedition at Bronze, enabling them to achieve both their Bronze and Silver Awards.

### **Completing the expeditions**

With restrictions still in place and campsites closed all the expeditions planned for this summer are postponed. The school's DofE team are proposing that in the Autumn Yr10 participants will complete their training and Assessed expeditions for the Bronze if they have completed the other three section of the Award.

Yr11 students in September will be encouraged to complete their sections for the Bronze Award this summer and move on to the Silver Award as normal. To avoid any further loss of time with their studies Yr11 students will be able to complete the expeditions for their Bronze and Silver as one event immediately after the GCSE exams next summer.

Gold Award students will have the same opportunities as usual to complete their training and expeditions in the half term, Easter and summer holidays (restrictions permitting).

Have a restful weekend

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Johnson', written on a background of light blue horizontal lines.

Alan Johnson