



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am sure that we are all very anxious to see the detail contained in the "road map" for easing the lockdown that the prime minister will unveil on Sunday at 7pm. We are told to expect that these plans will include a phased reopening of our schools, with some students going back earlier than others. As soon as we have sight of this information we will begin enacting our plans for the next phase of coping with this pandemic.

Please rest assured that our planning is already focusing on the emotional as well as the academic impact of the lock down. Our head of PSHE Ms Harrill has already produced an absolutely fantastic resource to help with the healing process. I am incredibly aware that this initial period of social isolation has had a massive effect on the emotional wellbeing of our students, staff and all of our families.

It has also provided moments of heart warming joy. Last weekend my mother who lives on the south coast, was to be fair, not looking forward to celebrating her seventy-fifth birthday by herself, isolated from her family. In the previous six weeks she had watched every box set on Netflix that she ever cared to, reread every book in the house and was desperately missing her grandchildren. All that changed when from her front garden she heard first my sister along with all of her children singing Happy Birthday, followed shortly afterwards by my brother and his children. Both had used their daily exercise time to serenade her from her front garden. Although it has to be said that my brother and I will never be known for our singing! A day my mother was dreading turned into one of her best birthdays yet.



If this crisis has taught me anything it is that happiness and wellbeing is lifted by those people who care for us. Which is why I am so immensely proud of the caring staff at Newent school who have risen to the challenge of coronavirus and will continue to do so for as long as is necessary.

Goodbye to Y13

At this point in any normal year, we would be celebrating an emotional final assembly with our Y13 students. Some of these fantastic young people have been with us for seven years. In this time they have thrown themselves into the full life of the school and have played a key role in supporting the younger years. They have been amazing ambassadors for the school and as such one certainty that I do have in these very uncertain times, is that every one of them has the capacity to achieve great things. On behalf of all of the staff at Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre I wish them all well in the future.

I also include a special message from Miss Rogers

My 'Goodbye' message to Year 13

I write this in my home office 'bubble' that has become my virtual classroom and sanctuary for the past six weeks. This is not the environment I had imagined experiencing today; this, after all, was to be your 'official' final day at school. Typically, we would be enjoying our final assembly together, Mr Britten would be compering and sharing his 'turtle' witticisms (there's always a phrase about sticking your neck out' which we would probably groan at, but also emit a wry smile) and we would show a reel of (probably) unflattering photographs of the people you were in Year 7 and the key events to mark the changes in your school lives up to this time. 'Where did the time go?' you'd ask each other while reminiscing, while simultaneously impatient to leave in anticipation of the excitement of your new lives – your life beyond Newent Sixth Form.

It's hard to comprehend that it was only 6 weeks ago that all our lives changed beyond recognition, where your teachers hurriedly had to say goodbye, heavy hearted, with as much uncertainty about when we will be able to meet each other again. The word 'upsetting' doesn't remotely convey the array of emotions we experienced on that day or the days which have followed. I know that it's been extremely difficult for you – for us- and that life seems to feel like it's in 'freeze frame' at the moment. Yet one thing hasn't wavered at all for me: it's the faith I have in you. I want you to know that I'm so very proud of you all. So too are your tutors and teachers. I've seen the many creative ways you've supported each other during lockdown; the kind messages, the online chats, the telephone calls, video conferences and yes, even the online gaming! You have shown your resilience and character; when you reflect on your biggest achievement, I'm sure that many of you will look back at this time and understand that you have the potential to deal with anything. Absolutely anything. And that's showing true character in the face of adversity.

I hope that we meet again very soon. I'd also like to thank (on your behalf) your tutors and teachers throughout your school career who have supported you through good times and the not-so-good times too. Finally, I want to thank you for making my job so rewarding and enjoyable and for all the lessons you've actually taught me during the past two years.

I leave you, for now, with the words of Gina Miller from her autobiography 'Rise':
"True character is not how you face your successes. It is how we face reality, obstacles and failures that defines who we really are.....and when you do succeed, remember that it comes with responsibility, because other people matter and your caring matters."

Miss Rogers.

One final thing that I wanted to bring to your attention before the weekend comes from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They have updated the online safety information that I have included in a previous letter to you. This updated content is aimed at parents and carers. It includes new advice by the NSPCC on talking to your child about online safety and most importantly the upsetting coronavirus content that is online

Please visit the NSPCC website:

- [Online safety and coronavirus](#)
- [Upsetting coronavirus content online](#)

Thank you again for your continued support in these difficult times.

Happy VE Day and I do hope you are able to celebrate it in some way during lockdown.

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

Alan Johnson
Principal