



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

Telephone: 01531 820550

Community Enquiries: 01531 828916

Sixth Form: 01531 828915

Watery Lane, Newent, Gloucestershire GL18 1QF **www.newent.gloucs.sch.uk** **Email:** admin@newent.gloucs.sch.uk

18th September, 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

During lockdown our fantastic staff and students found so many ways to be creative. That creativity has not stopped, nor will it. In fact, our ability to find creative solutions to the challenges facing schools is something that makes us stand out. It is therefore with immense pride that I can share with you that at Newent THE DRAMA DOESN'T STOP! I am absolutely delighted to share with you the news that our first public performance of the new academic year will take place on Friday 20th of November at 7pm.

Although Sister Act will be postponed until the following year, Newent will be staging a performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' as part of this year's 'Shakespeare School Festival'. The theme of the festival is 'Sunshine after the rain' and it is a theme that our students are thoroughly embracing by finding incredibly innovative solutions to ensuring safe rehearsals and a performance can take place.

In an ordinary year this performance would take place in a professional theatre but in these very special times both the rehearsals for and performance of the show will take place via ZOOM.

Please do save the date! We will share a link to the performance after the half term break.

COVID-19

On a less positive note I need to alert you to the introduction by the Government of a new "four-tier" system to respond to a local lockdown, if one becomes necessary. These new tiers range from full opening, through two stages of partial opening to a full closure. You will be aware from the media that many schools across the country are now suffering from drastically reduced staffing due to illness and the need for self-isolation. The challenges that this presents to schools are further exacerbated by the widely publicised problems with the test and trace system. Please let me reassure you that it will always be my goal to remain fully open for all of our children. However, I am sure that you will understand that this will only be possible while I am confident that I can continue to operate our school safely for students, staff and the families that they return home to.

To this end if your child or any member of your household is showing COVID symptoms you should let us know immediately by calling the school absence line on **01531 828927**. In addition you should also book a test by using the NHS online portal <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/antigen/name> or by calling 119.

If you have any medical concerns about your symptoms the NHS 111 helpline is still available.

DO NOT send your child to school.

If anyone in your household is showing COVID symptoms everyone must self-isolate. If one of the household is one of our students they should not return to school until a negative test result is given.

If your child has a positive test result, **please notify the school immediately by telephone. Do not email this information as it will require urgent action.** There is a procedure for me to follow which involves contacting Public Health England for confirmation and direction.

If you receive a positive test result outside of school hours, please telephone 07498717490 as soon as possible. This will enable me to take the required action as soon as I am alerted and put the necessary protocols in place for the remainder of your child's bubble. **Please note this number must only be used in the event of a positive test result being confirmed.**

I will of course notify all relevant parents/carers if we have a positive case and then let you know the action we need to take as directed by Public Health England. As you know, we have taken measures to keep students in year group bubbles, as a result, it is most likely that we would only direct members of the affected class or year group to self-isolate; these students would then access their learning online. I will, as always, be guided by Public Health England on these matters.

If any positive test is confirmed during the school day, parents/carers of affected groups of students will be contacted immediately. In the event that the positive test is confirmed out of school hours, I will ensure that this is communicated in a timely fashion to prevent any students in the affected group from coming to school the next day.

Please be assured that we continue to take note of revised guidance being issued to schools daily and make the necessary amendments to our risk assessment to ensure that our young people are as safe as they can be in school.

You, like me, will be aware that this is also the time of year when many children suffer with the usual coughs and colds and it can be difficult to decide if your symptoms could be COVID or are just the normal 'back to school cough and cold', so I really value your support in continuing to send your child into school if their symptoms do not match the criteria on the government guidelines to warrant the application for a test. You may find this NHS link useful <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Parent Information Evenings- Y7, Y11, Y12 & Y13

Normally at this time of year we would be inviting you into school to attend one of our parent's information evenings. Unfortunately we are unable to host these events in the usual fashion at this time. We will instead be trialing 'virtual' information evenings. The first of these will be sent to our Y7 parents, next Tuesday. The reason that it is scheduled for Tuesday will become clear on the day, with some exciting news to share.

New School Bus Route

I wrote to you last week with details of an extra bus service that we have managed to secure with Stagecoach. Please find attached more details on the actual route and price of this fifth bus. Please contact finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk if you are interested in swapping to the service or would like to be added.

Regards



Alan Johnson
Principal