



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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13th November, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I seem to spend most evenings, either trawling through government guidance or glued to news websites trying to get ahead of any forthcoming changes. Most of it makes for very grim reading and so I truly understand how worrying it must be for every family with a child at school during the current pandemic. The headlines that have appeared in the media today stating that at least one in three schools have had staff or pupils test positive for coronavirus since the start of term are indeed unsettling. However, it is important to remember that there are significant differences in the way Covid-19 has affected schools in different parts of the country. Thankfully, we have had no confirmed cases in either our staff or student body so far. In fact, in Gloucestershire only 2.6% of the school population were self-isolating in Gloucestershire last week. If we do get a positive case in the future I will contact you all directly. Please may I implore you again not to speculate on social media about positive Covid-19 cases. All this does is increase anxiety in our community and I believe we all have enough of that already.

A reminder that if you receive a positive test result outside of school hours please telephone 07498717490 as soon as possible.

Remembrance Day

Every year the school comes together to commemorate and honour those who have sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom. Usually our whole school ceremony is supported by service personnel, veterans and members of the local community. Unfortunately, this was not able to happen this year for obvious reasons. Simply having the children mark the occasion in their classrooms did not in my opinion have the appropriate gravity given the sacrifice made on all our behalf. Therefore, we assembled outside as a whole school, albeit in our year group bubbles in a variety of distanced locations to mark the occasion. Please thank your sons and daughters for their exceptional behaviour on this solemn occasion.

Parents' Evening

We held our first ever socially distanced Parents' Evening last night. Another first for us as a school. It will be the way we conduct all such events until the end of the current crisis.

Mr Phillips has sent out a MILK message requesting any feedback you may have on the evening so that we may further improve the experience for future events.

School Trips and Visits

At the start of lockdown in March it became obvious that it would not be possible for trips to go ahead. Unfortunately, there was no alternative than to cancel some events such as the Year 9 Camp in June, London Theatre Experience in July and our annual Ski Trip in February. However, we were successful with getting agreement from the relevant tour companies to postpone a few events for a year as opposed to cancel. This meant the Football Tour to Holland was postponed from April 2020 to April 2021, the French Residential Trip from June 2020 to July 2021 and our Y11 Prom which includes leavers hoodies and photographs was postponed until, we hoped, Christmas.

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Registered in England and Wales under number 8153177 Registered office is Watery Lane, Newent, Gloucestershire, GL18 1QF

It is incredibly important to me that young people remain positive given the challenging times we are all living through. I sincerely hoped by postponing these events that we would see a little more normality return to our lives. However, I think it is important to confirm that the Finance Office have been in contact with parents to inform them that the Holland and French Trips, that were postponed to 2021, have now been cancelled. This is not the outcome I wanted for our students who were due to attend but I can assure everyone that as soon as we are able to start organising trips and events again we will. The process to issues refunds has commenced through whichever route you paid the money to the school. Any questions please contact the Finance Team via finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk

Year 11 Prom 2020

I am sure that while it will not be a complete surprise when I say that this event will now not go ahead. I know that this will be incredibly disappointing news as it was something that I sincerely wanted to take place at some point. However, I feel less and less comfortable holding on to the deposits collected on the off chance that restrictions will ease in the immediate future. Cancelling this event is however, a little more complicated as I am determined to mark their time at Newent although, of course, some of the students were unable to attend at Newent's Sixth Form. While it is not possible to arrange for photographs to be taken, the Finance Team has made arrangements for any student who attended Year 11 in 2019 / 2020 to have the opportunity to purchase a Leavers Hoodie. A separate letter will be sent out via MILK on Monday to those students who are now in Y12 informing them of the refund for the Prom itself and how to purchase a hoodie. I would like to ask that they share this information with friends to ensure we give all our ex Y11 students this opportunity. We will use our social media platforms too. Again, any questions please contact the Finance Team via finance@newent.gloucs.sch.uk

Year 11 Sixth Form Interviews

This week, the Sixth Form Team have been speaking to all Year 11 tutor groups about their potential options for next year; from apprenticeships to Higher Education Colleges and from employment to Sixth Form. From the week beginning 23rd November, all Year 11 students will receive a Post-16 interview to discuss their future plans. These will take place with either Ms. Rogers (Director of Sixth Form) or Mr. Britten (Deputy Director of Sixth Form). Students will have the opportunity to ask any questions relating to careers, apprenticeships, A Levels, colleges and employment. We will provide them with impartial advice regarding all the options available to them. In addition, application forms to all students who express an interest in joining our Sixth Form will be available.

A more detailed letter has been sent out to Y11 on MILK today.

Y11 Mock Examinations

A reminder to parents and students in Year 11 that mock exams will be taking place from Monday 30th November to Friday 11th December. Full details including a copy of the timetable was sent out on MILK earlier in the week. If you have any queries please email rphillips@newent.gloucs.sch.uk

#BreakALegShakespeare

As we get closer to our performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' as part of One Night of Shakespeare on November 20th we want to ensure we uphold some of our theatre traditions...

We feel it's imperative that every young person taking part in the Festival (both here at Newent and across the UK) this year is wished 'Good Luck!' or if you want to be super theatrical 'Break A Leg!'

We would like to invite you to film or write a good luck message to our young people and the other young people around the country in advance of their big shows. We're asking people to simply share their message on Twitter, tagging @newentdrama using the hashtag #BreakALegShakespeare

Masks

Please would you all check that your children come to school with a suitable face covering. The government has made it mandatory that these face coverings are worn in communal areas for the foreseeable future. Far too many children who do not travel on school busses are leaving their face coverings at home, and while up until this point we have been able to supply them with a disposable face covering, our ability to do so long term is unsustainable. Please encourage your sons and daughters to check before they leave home that they have all the appropriate equipment for school, which now, unfortunately, includes a face covering.

Children in Need

Before today I would not have believed that it was possible to see a broad beaming smile behind one of these masks that we are all obliged to wear at this time. When myself and Mountbatten House Captain, Josh Ellis, picked the winning ticket for 'Pudsey' (in as you would expect a socially distant manner) it was heart warming to see the reaction in our Year 7 winner Amy Shields.



Regards,

Alan Johnson
Principal