



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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17th December, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

You get two letters for the price of one this week! Below this one you will see the letter that I had intended to send out today until the government dropped the latest bombshell upon us all this afternoon! You would be right to sense some frustration in my tone; I was a trifle irritated last week when the guidance on the amount of time needed for self-isolation changed within an hour of me sending out last week's letter. To find out today just before the end of term that the government now wants a staggered start to the new term, flow testing and remote learning is simply astonishing. We will, of course, do everything in our power to meet these new expectations and I will write to you before the start of the new term.

Warm regards and best wishes for the Christmas period.

Alan Johnson

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we rapidly approach the Christmas break you would be forgiven for thinking that things would be slowing down. Far from it. I am in equal measures amazed and humbled by the efforts of our staff. Not content with staging a fantastic 'socially distanced' production of A Midsummer Night's Dream we can all look forward to more laughs in our next Covid Secure production of Cinderella early in the new year. However, you don't need to wait that long to see our fantastic students in action. Hopefully, you will have already caught the Christmas message sent out by the Drama Department yesterday, which can be viewed following the link: <https://youtu.be/amh5HTaRBrQ>

Today please join us on YouTube to celebrate our amazing Music Department and the fantastically talented students in our Christmas Concert available from 7pm on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTRMOS2LZV8&feature=youtu.be>

Mass testing in schools

You may have seen in the media this week that from the start of the new term rapid Coronavirus testing will be available in schools and colleges. As ever, you will have seen this announcement at exactly the same time as us. Therefore, although I appreciate that you will have many questions, please understand that at the time of writing, apart from the expectation that it will come into effect from the start of term, I have no further information to share with you. The Government has released a Q&A sheet about the process which I have included below. You will see that they have promised support to set up appropriate spaces on site that can be used for testing, along with supplying test kits, PPE and training. However, I am acutely aware that there is precious little time before schools break up for Christmas and as yet none of these resources, training and support has been forthcoming. As soon as I have any further information I will share it with you all.

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/12/15/mass-testing-in-schools-your-questions-answered/>

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

COVID-19 Reminder

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 result being confirmed.** Due to the timelines given to us by Public Health England, over the Christmas break positive results only need to be notified, using the number above, until Monday 21st December. This number will then be in use again 24hours a day from Tuesday 5th January 2021 when we return to school.

Free School Meals

During the COVID-19 pandemic Children and Young People entitled to Free School Meals have been offered support throughout the various holidays and this Christmas will be no different. This service is being administered by Gloucestershire County Council. Please note that if you previously received a voucher in the October half term this process over Christmas should be seamless. If you have any queries, please ring the helpline on 01452 426165 (during office hours, 9am-5pm) or alternatively e-mail childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk

CyberVibe

Recently 600 students from across the county took part in CyberVibe, a Cyber Security writing competition organised by Cygenta, where they had to say what cyber security meant to them. As a school we had 20 incredible entries from students in year 7 and 8. We are delighted to say that Stanley in 7/1 came runner up in the 10 - 13 age category and Nikola in 7/5 received a special award called the 'Security Go-Giver' commendation for her entry in the same category. Well done to both of them and we can't wait to see what they achieve in our Cyber lessons after Christmas.

Parent Governors

As a result of the advertisement for Parent Governors, we would like to welcome James Joyce (child in Yr7) & Nicola Gee (children in Yr8 & 12) to the Governing Body. Both parents have key skills and experience that will benefit the school and we look forward to welcoming them to their first full Governors meeting in January 2021.

Lost Property

Reception have lots of un-named lost property. Please come and check if you are missing anything. Anything not collected by mid- January we will donate to charity.

Edward Whitehorn Young Volunteer Award

Y13 student Joshua Robertson has been awarded the John Edward Whitehorn Young Volunteer Award which is given by Royal British Legion in recognition of the young people in our community that have contributed and put others before themselves. Well done Josh.

Thank you again for all tremendous support over what has been a difficult year for all of us. When I started writing to you at the end of every week back in March, I did so because with so much confusion in the world I judged that regular school contact was vital. I also felt that the cold formality that sometimes characterises correspondence from school was inappropriate, given the unprecedented challenges we were all facing. So as the holiday approaches, I hope that you will forgive my Friday informality and Mr Phillips' taste in suits. I hope that you are able to have a safe and restful Christmas.

Warm regards,



Alan Johnson
Principal

