



Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Striving for Excellence

Principal • Mr Alan Johnson

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Dear Parents/Carers

As you know we have been successfully delivering asymptomatic testing every day since 11th January. Although it has been a challenge I could not be more impressed with how our staff and students have taken the whole thing in their stride, even putting up with my vain attempts at humour as I try to put them at ease. However, the government have now asked that we expand this offer to include every young person upon their return to school from the 8th March.

Like much of what has been requested of schools over the past year you found out at exactly the same time that we did. The huge logistical considerations as daunting as they are, pale into insignificance with my disappointment that the first thing that young people will be required to do as they return to school is to undergo testing. We have missed seeing them all and it is frustrating that I must welcome them back into a clinical testing centre rather than the warm caring school that they remember. Please forgive me for this, it is not what I would have wanted.

My primary concern must remain the safety of your children and my staff. It is unfortunately not physically possible for us to bring all year groups back safely and at the same time to begin the first of the three lateral flow tests that the government expects from us. It is also important to understand that lock down principles have not been eased, therefore an earlier start to testing would breach restrictions on unnecessary travel. I am convinced however, that we can invite smaller numbers back on a daily basis and maintain the Covid secure environment that has worked so well at the school thus far. It is my intention to bring back Y13, Y12 and Y11 students on Monday 8th March, adding additional year groups each day across the week. This is in addition to continuing the current face to face support of the children of critical key workers and vulnerable young people.

Date	Year Group	
Monday 8 th March	Y11, Y12, Y13	Vulnerable and children of critical key workers will continue to follow their current daily routine until they filter back into regular teaching when their year group returns.
Tuesday 9 th March	Y10	
Wednesday 10 th March	Y9	
Thursday 11 th March	Y8	
Friday 12 th March	Y7	

When they arrive at school each student will go straight to their tutor group for registration. As soon as all young people have recorded a negative test they will resume normal lessons. Please note that there is likely to be a delay before you receive notification from the NHS of a negative result. We will have access to the information much sooner and will act accordingly. Please remember that these tests are not compulsory and no child will be compelled to take one or be disadvantaged educationally if they do not wish to do so. However, the government is clear that these new measures are designed to cut Covid transmission both in school and in the community.

I know that your children may be feeling a little anxious about what the process will look like, especially as it was not something that was happening when they last left us. Rather than just include another set of photos of our testing bays, I have added a link below that will give you a first-person tour of the testing process here. Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

[Testing Journey](#)

[Consent-Form-Information.pdf \(newent.gloucs.sch.uk\)](#)

Please complete our electronic consent form available [here](#) by 3pm on Wednesday 3rd March. Without consent we will not be able to offer your child a test.

Uniform

Please help us to ensure the smoothest possible return to school by ensuring that your sons and daughters return in full uniform. As a father of three children I remember myself how quickly they grow and I completely understand that the recent lockdown may have presented challenges with regards to obtaining uniform. However, having all children return in correct uniform, ready to learn is just another part of our journey back to normality. As I stated when winter was approaching I do not care in the slightest how bold and bright their winter coat is, but hoodies are not an acceptable alternative.

Please note that our two uniform stockists are operating online orders. Further information is available from their websites:

Gooch Sports - [School Uniform Shop | Sportswear Shop & Equipment - School Uniform Supplier - Newent Gloucestershire \(goochsports.com\)](#)

Monkhouse Schoolwear Specialists - [The Booking System \(monkhouse.com\)](#)

Face coverings

Face covering have been a contentious issue in some quarters with suggestions that they may interfere with individual liberty. Sadly, my own daughter has been assaulted twice in her place of work for insisting that a member of the public follow the expectations that are placed upon us by our government. Therefore, I want to be completely clear in my expectations around face coverings when we return. Face coverings will continue to be compulsory on school transport. We will ensure that all students who travel on our buses leave the school site wearing a face covering. Please would you ensure that they journey to school in the same manner. From 8th March all students will be required to wear face coverings in lessons as a temporary measure until Easter. This is in addition to wearing them when moving around the building when they cannot maintain social distancing. They will not be required to wear them at break, lunch time and during PE and Games. The government has said that they will review this guidance at Easter. I hope that you will look back at our record of keeping your children safe and on our track record on maintaining a consistency of face to face learning throughout the pandemic when reading this letter. My number one duty is to protect your children, your families and my staff, as such when a decision must be taken I will always err on the side of caution. There is nothing that I would like more than for children to see my beaming smile as I welcome them back but that will have to wait until the government informs us that face coverings are no longer needed.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#:~:text=This%20includes%20\(but%20is,ability%20to%20serve%20the%20public](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#:~:text=This%20includes%20(but%20is,ability%20to%20serve%20the%20public)

Special Careers Edition for Careers Week.

[Careers Update - Careers Week 1-6 March 2021.docx](#)

Examinations

This week we have also been informed how students in years 11 and 13 will be awarded their qualifications this summer. Mr Phillips will be writing to students in these year groups separately to outline our plans to ensure all students receive the grades and opportunities that they deserve.

Key Dates

With the disruption to our school calendar this term and the current focus on the safe return of students to face-to-face teaching this term, a new Key Dates documents for terms 5 & 6 will be issued before the Easter Break which will include revised dates for examination windows, reporting sessions and Parents' Evenings.

3rd Lockdown Virtual Exhibition

Please find below the link to our 3rd Lockdown Virtual Exhibition. Big thanks to Scott Redfern in Y13 for creating this.

<https://www.artsteps.com/view/602fbf3340765d37ca535c6b?currentUser>

Please also take the time to view our wonderfully heart-warming virtual exhibition for our 'Voices of Hope' competition. The winning posters are going to be displayed in Newent shop windows within the next few days. They certainly brought a smile to our faces. Well done to Olivia Reed in Year 7 who was the overall winner.

<https://www.artsteps.com/view/6033be360606cd27671bdad6?currentUser>

Finally, before you ask, no I do not have any tattoos... and honestly, I thought that I would go to my grave without ever having one. No not a mid-life crisis, but with all the GMB hype this week about Headteachers and their tattoos, my 24 year old daughter reminded me that I'd talked her out of getting one herself when she was 18. It would seem instead that I promised her that if she waited and still wanted one when she was 25, then she could choose a tattoo for me too. So, thank you Piers Morgan and GMB for reminding Anastasia. With a big smile on her face my daughter informed me this week that whilst I don't know what it will be or where it's going, a tattoo is coming soon (answers on a postcard). Oh dear, the things we do for our children.

Warm regards,



Alan Johnson
Principal