

Our Ref: PRC/EMH

02 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I thought it would be useful to update you more often than normal on how the school is coping with the sea change caused by Covid-19. Please keep checking the website regularly for fortnightly updates as things are fast changing in our region. If there is something of vital importance we will also alert you via text message.

Firstly, I have been extremely impressed with the way the vast majority of students have conducted themselves in school. They are all taking this situation really seriously and doing their bit to ensure learning continues in a safe environment. Clearly transmission in the community is high in Newcastle at present and I am regularly in touch with other Trust colleagues, Newcastle Local Authority and Public Health experts. Thankfully we have only had a very small handful of positive cases (currently less than 0.5% of the school population) and some students were identified as close contacts therefore their learning is continuing remotely. This virus is such that even sitting near to someone in class over the 48 hour infectious period results in self-isolation. Clearly this cannot be avoided in a school setting and with community transmission rates currently being high. I have spoken to Public Health after each case who have been extremely impressed with all of our procedures: to quote a conversation on Tuesday 'it sounds like you are doing a great job, have everything in hand. I wish all schools had things as organised as you'. I share this with you not as to be complacent, as I know there are difficult decisions and times ahead but just to reassure you that our plans, so far, are going well.

Now to a few operational reminders that I'd appreciate your support on:

### **Face Coverings**

It has been remarkable how students have adapted to this measure by putting them on and off safely during the change of lessons and in all communal areas. Please remind your children that even with a face covering on this does not make them immune to catching the virus, so distancing and hand/respiratory hygiene is equally as important. Please ensure your son/daughter brings one to school every day and it is washed regularly. Dark colours are preferred.

**Preit Chahal** Principal

**Hugh Robinson** CEO

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### **PE Uniform**

Other than exceptional cases agreed by the Head of Year, please be reminded that non-branded PE uniform is not permitted and will result in further sanctions. On PE days, students should also wear their school sweatshirt on top of their PE uniform so we can identify year group colours and of course to keep them warm. If students have not got branded tracksuit bottoms or leggings then they should wear their school trousers on top of their shorts if they want to keep warm. On PE days students must also bring their uniform in so in the event of inclement weather they can get changed. The wearing of trainers on non-PE days is not permitted.

### **Behaviour In Public**

A reminder that when students are arriving or leaving school they are representing the school and we still expect the highest standards of behaviour. Occasionally, a small minority of students let the school down by congregating in Asda in larger groups than six, not wearing face coverings, mingling at Regent Centre etc. The staggered starts and finishes has reduced the mass gathering at Regent Centre but again a small handful of students still feel the need to loiter around these areas for too long. I'd be grateful if parents could re-iterate these points to your child; you will know if they do this or not.

### **Contacting staff**

If you feel it is necessary to contact staff please ensure that if your query is in relation to a subject you contact the class teacher in the first instance. If this does not resolve the matter you can contact the Teaching & Learning Leader. In the event of a pastoral concern then please contact the relevant Pastoral Lead. Staffing information can all be found following this link.

<https://www.gosforthacademy.org.uk/about-the-academy/school-information/staff-contact-list>

Please be aware staff may not respond to emails immediately, particularly at evenings and weekends.

### **Exams 2021**

As far as we know exams next summer are going ahead in the usual way. As such we are preparing students as normal. As soon as we have any further information from the Government we will let you know. We urge all students not to be side-tracked by potential changes and prepare for all assessments in a thorough way like they would do normally.

### **Thank you**

Finally, everyone at Gosforth Academy is working tirelessly to remedy disadvantage, fill gaps in study and make sure that all of our students can 'create their future'. All staff

have been working unstintingly to ensure the least impact to school routines, but the truth is, this will not be a seamless time for learning. Safety of staff and students must be our absolute priority. I can assure you our staff have been outstanding in their 'can do' attitude to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to all students. Due to year group zoning many of them move from room to room six or seven times per day, taking resources with them as they go. Whilst practical areas are based in their own rooms they too spent the summer developing new procedures to ensure students still study the full breadth of curriculum.

I have been overwhelmed by the support of parents this term; your kind messages of support mean so much so please keep sending them in!

Have a relaxing weekend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Preit Chahal', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

**Preit Chahal**  
**Principal**