

Our Ref: PRC/JYD

19 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Time has flown by and amazingly, we are already at October half term. This term has certainly been better than last year now that each positive case doesn't generate 30-40 students having to self-isolate. That said, we have continued to be challenged by COVID-19 this term, as well as the onset of the cold and flu season. Not only have we seen attendance amongst students being lower than in a normal year, we are also seeing an increase in cases amongst staff and supply cover is almost impossible to find. I would like to thank staff and students for the resilience and flexibility they have shown. I have always known that we have an amazing school community at Gosforth, which is why I have been here as long as I have (eighteen years!), but the last eighteen months just continues to reinforce how special the place is. Realistically, I know that these challenges are with us for the next few months, so I am thanking you (staff, students and families) in advance for your patience and understanding for whatever might be thrown at us next half term.

### **GCSE and A-level Exams-Summer 2022**

Here is what we know so far:

- Subject Adaptations: there will be optional topics and content in GCSE English Literature, History and Geography.
- Practical work in GCSE Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Combined Science may be delivered via demonstration if necessary. For Gosforth Academy students we are trying to ensure students have those key practical skills to progress but can use this flexibility should it be needed.
- GCSE and A Level Art will be assessed only on portfolios.
- Pupils will be given a formulae sheet for GCSE Mathematics as well as a revised formulae sheet for GCSE Physics and Combined Science.
- Exam Boards will provide information about the focus of the content of their exams for all GCSE, AS and A Level exams (except GCSE English Literature, History and Geography) by February 7th 2022.

**Preit Chahal** Principal

**Hugh Robinson** CEO

Knightsbridge, Great North Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2JH

T +44 (0)191 285 1000

E [admin@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ga.newcastle.sch.uk) W [www.gosforthacademy.org.uk](http://www.gosforthacademy.org.uk)

- Results for exams next year will return to their normal format, with AS and A levels being released on 18 August, and GCSEs on 25 August. VTQs used to progress in a similar way will be issued on or before the same days, and other VTQ results will continue to be issued throughout the year.

We will continue to provide updates to pupils as well as parents, as more details are shared by the Awarding Bodies.

The Government is committed to delivering a full exam season next year but given the Contingency plan is based on TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades) we recommend to all Year 11s and Year 13s that they continue to work hard in lessons and ensure they do the very best they can in homework and class assessments/mock exams. This is nothing more than our pre-Covid expectations.

### **Covid 19 LFT testing**

A quick reminder that, if your child has received a positive Lateral Flow Test, has COVID 19 symptoms or has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, in most cases they should seek a PCR test. Full advice for testing is available on the NHS website. Please see this link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>

### **Behaviour in the community**

When I walk around the school I am always amazed at how well ordered things are. Today, for example, I was overwhelmed with how many Sixth Formers were studying quietly in various areas of the school during their free periods- that academic ethos and high expectations of independent study really shone through. Furthermore, for Covid safety, staff currently teach with their doors open; there is always a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classes, which allows teachers to teach and students to learn.

We know that in a school of this size a small minority of students will let the side down. Police have been in touch to ask for your support with behaviour in the local community outside school at evenings and weekends. If you do have a child who is often out and about, for their own safety, please ensure you know who they are with, what they are doing and where they are going. Police plan to step up patrols in known areas of anti-social behaviour and as a parent myself, I know the last thing you want is for your child to get caught up in this.

### **Compulsory school coats after half term**

At October half term all Main School students must arrive to school with the school coat. This will be compulsory until February half term. The vast majority of students now have a coat, but if you don't below is some clarity on your options:

1. If you have ordered a coat and are awaiting delivery to school please check at Visitors Reception if it has arrived. You can do this by phone (01912851000), or

email ([admin@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ga.newcastle.sch.uk)) clearly stating your order number and name on the order.

If it has arrived, please ask your child to collect it from Reception this week. If it has not arrived then please contact [alison.whitehall@ga.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:alison.whitehall@ga.newcastle.sch.uk) who might be able to fulfil the order, or lend you one until the coat is delivered.

2. For a very small number of parents who have not yet ordered a coat then we have a number of coats in school with the old logo for £20. Please contact Alison Whitehall on the email above to purchase one.

To avoid sanctions after half term please could parents' check their child has a school coat before the end of the week.

Finally, wherever you are, whatever you are up to over half term, here's hoping you get some time to recuperate. I wish you all a good and safe half term and looking forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday 1st November.

Yours sincerely,

**Preit Chahal**  
**Principal**