

Our Ref: PRC/JUE

16 October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well and coping with the many challenges that life is throwing at us at the minute. I'll keep this update brief.

Covid Cases and Protocols

Receiving notification of a positive case, identifying close contacts, liaising with Public Health Newcastle, sending students home, writing to parents and setting work remotely has become part of a regular routine in most local schools at present. Thankfully we still have less than 1% of positive cases in our school community since September and, most importantly, all of them have recovered or are in the process of doing so.

When we are notified of a positive case, we immediately work out when the infectious period is and identify the close contacts from seating plans and friendship groups as quickly as possible. At that point our priority is to get students off site. Given that nearly all of our students make their way to and from school independently and sometimes we have multiple cases in one day, it is not possible to ring all parents before sending students home. Rest assured, pastoral staff will speak to students before they go home and check they have everything they need. We will also follow this up with an official letter in the post. For any students we deem vulnerable or simply upset, of course we will isolate them in school and contact home.

Exams 2021

Gavin Williamson made an announcement this week which can be found in this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/students-to-be-given-more-time-to-prepare-for-2021-exams>

The main points are:

- Exams will continue to go ahead next year but the exam period will move back by 3 weeks and will run from 7th June 2021 – 2nd July 2021;
- A Level results day is on Tuesday 24th August;
- GCSE results day is on Friday 27th August;

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- Contingency plans will be developed with the Education Secretary, Ofqual, exam boards, schools and unions over the next six weeks;
- One maths and one English GCSE exam will be held just before May half-term, giving any year 11 pupils who are affected by COVID-19 the best possible chance of still sitting a paper in each of these core subjects.
- The government has also confirmed that no further subject-level changes to exams and assessments will be made for GCSEs, AS and A levels.

Currently Newcastle has the fourth highest number of positive cases in the country. Too many students continue to miss face to face education because of Covid-19. We do not believe that the above measures go far enough to support students in our region and therefore will be lobbying the Government through various channels to ensure this is considered. Nevertheless, highly skilled staff will continue to prepare students in the best possible way for exams in 2021 and I have no doubt the majority of students are continuing to do all they can to be ready for them too.

Review Day- Tuesday 17th November-Year 9, 10 and 11

We are conscious that we haven't managed to have personalised contact with you since March 2020 with regard to your son/daughter's progress. We are working to make safe plans for this to happen with our first event being Review Day in November for Main School. Mrs Milburn will write to you in due course with more detail. In the meantime it would be great if all parents made sure they had access to Insight. This is the system which can be accessed from the website (at the bottom of the home page) which allows you to view your child's most recent progress assessment. If you have misplaced your username or password please request a replacement by emailing Insight@ga.newcastle.sch.uk.

Occasionally we may also put useful information in the 'Support During Covid-19' area on our website. The link to this area is here:

<https://www.gosforthacademy.org.uk/about-the-academy/student-support/support-during-covid-19>

Continued thanks for all your support; have a great weekend.



Preit Chahal
Principal