



NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER
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Dear Parents and Carers,

At the end of another school year, I wanted to write to thank all families for their ongoing support for the school and to update you with key information for next year.

As always, there has been lots to celebrate throughout the year, and the end of the Summer term is a time when you can really see the difference school makes to pupils' lives outside the classroom. Just over the last few weeks we have had the amazing school show 'A Night At The Movies', showcasing the performing talents of so many pupils as well as the organisational brilliance of the 'backstage crew'; the Year 11 Prom at the Parkway Hotel in Cwmbran, where behaviour was excellent and friendship and enjoyment were fully evident; our Sports Awards assembly recognising the sporting achievements of pupils across the school; school Sports Day; and our 'cluster sports day' where pupils from local primaries come to the school and compete in events organised by our outstanding Sports Leader pupils. Also this week we have held celebration assemblies across the school, recognising pupils hard work, progress and achievement in all our different subject areas – I hope your child came home with a certificate as we try to prioritise recognising as many pupils as possible. We have finished this school week with the Eisteddfod, brilliantly organised by our Welsh team, and also received the lovely news that our Year 8 Maths team came second in the national SEREN/Axiom Maths Solving Challenge final, beating multiple teams from 79 schools. I am always careful to avoid listing too many of our pupils' successes as it can be easy to miss somebody out, but I really do feel there is something available for every pupil to excel in our school both inside and outside the classroom. Please encourage your child to take part in any activities offered, especially some of our after-school and lunchtime clubs. I would like to thank all staff for the hard work they put in to supporting our pupils through the year, and all families for supporting their children as they grow towards becoming excellent young adults and future leaders.

Last summer we also achieved another set of outstanding exam results and we hope for another successful set of outcomes in August for our outgoing Year 11 pupils, who have worked so hard this year, as well as Year 10 pupils collecting their modular results as they continue through their courses. Both sets of results are Thursday 20th August: 9.00am in the hall for Year 11, 9.30 in the school office for Year 10.

Next year's start of term dates:

- Tues 1st September INSET day (**no pupils attend**)
- Weds 2nd September – **ALL pupils attend** (school starts at 8.30am as usual)

INSET days (no pupils attend):

- Tuesday 1st September
- Friday 2nd October
- Monday 15th February
- Friday 25th June
- Monday 19th July
- Tuesday 20th July

The full list of term dates is available on the school and Caerphilly Council websites.

Summer closure periods

To ensure safety of the school and appropriate access for building teams who will be carrying out work, the school will be closed to parents and visitors for most of the summer holiday period. Parents should also be aware that staff will be taking a well-deserved rest and will not monitor their emails for most of the holiday. There is wellbeing information on the school website, including contact and emergency details for when we are closed.

Change to bus passes (previously issued by the school)

Please remember that bus passes which were previously funded and issued by the school (for areas out of the school catchment area such as Crosskeys, Llanhilleth etc, usually digital passes) will no longer be provided by the school **except for pupils moving into Year 11 in September**. This does not affect any bus passes issued by Caerphilly County Borough Council (usually paper passes). Whether you purchase a bus pass straight from Stagecoach, or choose to pay the current child cash rate of £1 per journey, please make sure your child is aware of how they are getting to school from September.

School Calendar and Parent App

I strongly encourage all parents to access our online school calendar (linked through the website) and also to use the parental app to get up-to-date information including your child's attendance and behaviour. Please also ensure that if you have changed your contact details (including email address), you have informed the school office so that you are not missing vital information. If you have any questions about how to access the app, calendar etc, please contact the school office.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance to school continues to improve, though there is still room for further improvement. Please send your child to school as frequently as you can. This is essential for their education and their own personal wellbeing. The local authority issues fines for families whose children persistently miss school without appropriate reasons. Being punctual to school is essential and I am concerned that a very small number of pupils are often late for school (for which they receive detentions but also miss essential lesson time). Please monitor Classcharts regularly to be aware of both attendance and behaviour.

Basic equipment for school

We are still seeing some pupils coming to school without appropriate equipment. They should bring a school bag with essential equipment such as a fully stocked pencil case (including ruler, spare pens and pencils, and specialist equipment where informed eg. Maths equipment) and anything else they need for the day such as PE kit etc. This year a few pupils have attended school without even a pen, which is unacceptable and not fair for their teachers and fellow pupils (as their lesson is interrupted while this is addressed). Please check your child's equipment over the summer holiday for the basics of pens, pencils, ruler, rubber etc. If there are specific items required, departments will inform pupils of this at the start of the year.

Uniform

It is critical that our high standards of appearance are maintained next year as this is one of the indicators of how seriously pupils take school. Uniform also helps all pupils to feel equal and that they are not in financial or social competition with each other. Shoes/trainers must be **fully-black** (no colours/flashes etc), and requirements for skirts are that they must be knee-length, and cannot be 'tube skirts'; leggings are also not allowed. Pastoral staff work hard to ensure students dress appropriately, and this is expected across all year groups. We have good stocks of clean recycled uniform (all items) which is available for any families and parents who need it at no cost. Please ask your child to see their Progress Leader, or contact the school office or our family engagement officer Ellie Lawrence, in complete confidence.

Governing Body

Due to vacancies we will be advertising for new parent governors in September. If you would like to help the school to continue to improve and be part of a hard-working, skilled and committed team of volunteers, please put your name forward when the notification comes out. The work of governors is incredibly important and my thanks go out to those currently fulfilling this vital role.

Finally, just a reminder to all families and pupils – having spent the last few weeks in PE kit due to the very warm weather – that from 2nd September all pupils must be in full school uniform. Remember: if the weather is warm, we do not insist that our pupils wear a jumper or blazer; shirt and tie is fine.

Have a lovely summer break,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Thompson'.

Mr. A. Thompson
Headteacher