



NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL

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8th April 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been another successful term, and we are all pleased to have had another uninterrupted one with no lockdowns and no need for virtual teaching. You may have seen in the media that national staff absence rates have been difficult for headteachers to manage, with very few available supply staff and Covid/other illnesses affecting schools heavily. We have managed to get through this period relatively 'unscathed', and I would like to pay tribute to our hardworking staff for a very flexible approach this term, including frequently covering for absent colleagues at crucial times to ensure we could stay open to all pupils.

School highlights this term have included: some notable sporting successes (please follow our PE department on Twitter for full details); Year 11 pupils really committing themselves to their lessons and their upcoming exams, including some outstanding controlled assessment grades across many subjects; the continuation of our after-school extra-curricular programme (temporarily on hold in some subjects to allow Year 11 revision classes to run); our lunchtime sports offer continuing to promote healthy lifestyles; preparations for the summer school show, with hundreds of pupils auditioning; the restarting of school assemblies, allowing year groups to really come together as a school community; and the exceptional behaviour and attitudes to learning and lessons that all our pupils show day in, day out. Now we are moving back towards a more 'normal school', with some trips etc starting to be planned again, we will be publishing a termly newsletter; this will come out towards the end of the summer term.

For next term I would like to provide some key reminders:

Key dates

Term starts back for all pupils on Monday 25th April at 8.30am. We have two more INSET days this year: Friday 29th April (this has been rescheduled from 27th May due to a clash with exams) and Monday 27th June. Pupils do not attend school on these days. Monday 2nd May is a Bank Holiday, so the school will be shut. The

term ends on Friday 22nd July. All of these dates are on our website.

Examinations (Year 9 and 11)

Year 9 pupils have internal exams in the first week back. This is an important part of preparing our pupils for their future exams, getting them used to the exam hall, revision etc. It is also an excellent opportunity to assess where they are and what they need to improve. Your child has their examination calendar.

Full Year 11 examinations (GCSE and BTEC) are proceeding as planned. We do not expect there to be any disruption to these this year. Many pupils will be in school over Easter for revision classes, and I would strongly encourage all parents/carers to check your child's revision plan (and the work they are doing) at

home throughout the Easter holiday. There will be a Year 11 Celebration assembly next term, and a 'leaving date' confirmed for pupils once the main examinations are finished.

Uniform

Two important points to note. Firstly, pupils will no longer be allowed to wear coats in any classroom. This was allowed during the winter due to the open windows required for Covid, but the school is now much warmer. All pupils should have a school jumper or blazer in case they get cold. Families who struggle to afford these should contact their child's progress leader in confidence, and we will help out. 'Hoodies' are not allowed at any time (even as a coat). Coats should be black with no more than one small logo please.

Secondly, the governing body has agreed to make a small change to the uniform policy regarding shoes. We have removed the requirement for shoes to be leather/faux leather. Shoes must now be 'plain black low-heeled shoes'. This does mean that pupils can choose to wear a wider range of black shoes, including ones which can also be worn for lunchtime sports (such as plain back Nike Air Force One style shoes, or similar). These shoes are commonly sold as 'school shoes' in shops including sports shops. We have made this change for a number of reasons: to assist with the lunchtime sports programme, for the comfort of pupils travelling longer distances, to help those families who want to buy one pair of shoes which can also be worn outside of school, and also at the request of the school council. This decision is in line with most schools nationally. However I need to point out that there must be no grey, white or coloured markings/laces at all and no platform/bubbled soles etc. The previous rules around no open toes, no boots, no higher heels etc still apply. We will be very strict around the requirements so please note the points in the table below carefully (the whole policy is available to view on our website):

Plain black low heeled shoes	These must have no coloured, grey or white markings, and no coloured, grey or white laces. Soles to shoes must be low/standard. No platforms, air bubble soles etc. No alternatives to shoes are acceptable, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No sandals• No boots• No high-tops• No open backed/toed shoes• No high heels
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Any shoes worn must also be a sensible choice for school. Many pupils will choose to continue wearing black leather shoes and I would actively encourage this.

The new Curriculum for Wales

Year 7 pupils joining the school in September will be taught the new curriculum, which we have been planning over the last few years. Although this does not yet directly affect any current students (who will continue with the 'old' curriculum), next term Mrs Parfitt will be contacting all parents to seek views to help shape our planning. We would appreciate feedback from as many parents as possible.

Attendance and Wellbeing

The Covid lockdowns have had a significant impact on both these areas. Please encourage your child to attend school every day. If they have Wellbeing concerns, your child's Progress Leader can arrange support for them.

School Canteen

Due to rising costs, prices within our canteen will have to rise slightly. The meal of the day will now be £2.50 rather than £2.25, which I think is still a great deal given the exceptional quality of the food! Other items will also go up slightly. We apologise for this but are sure you understand; prices have not been changed for many years. Pupils on free school meals will not be affected.

I hope you and your family have a lovely Easter holiday, and we look forward to seeing all the pupils refreshed and ready to learn on 25th April.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Thompson', followed by a period.

Mr. A. Thompson
Headteacher