



NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER
Mr. A. Thompson, B.A. (Hons) NPQH

BRIDGE STREET
NEWBRIDGE
NEWPORT NP11 5FR

TELEPHONE
(01495) 243243
(01495) 248808
(01495) 248921

PUPIL ABSENCE LINE
(01495) 241891

FACSIMILE
(01495) 248128

E-MAIL
newca@caerphilly.gov.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As the summer holiday approaches, I wanted to reflect on the success of this year in school and also to inform all families of some key updates for next year.

When we returned to school in September 2021 we were happy to be back together, on site, as a school community, and hoping for an uninterrupted year. Since then we have been through a period of fairly extensive Covid issues including face masks in classrooms and a national picture of staff absence coupled with a lack of supply teachers, but the school has continued to run at a high level for all pupils throughout. We are very proud of how our pupils responded throughout this year, and I would also like to recognise the hard work and dedication of all the staff in not just ensuring the school remained fully open, but also in caring for the pupils' achievement and wellbeing as they have returned, including preparing our Year 11 pupils so well for their final summer exams.

We have had a number of successes this year, for which I would like to thank the staff who provided them and the pupils who took part:

- **New extra-curricular programme** – beginning in September, all subject areas offered at least one club or activity for pupils, on top of the already outstanding offer in sport, drama and music. Our chess club has been particularly popular! Whilst these sessions had to be reduced this term to allow for Year 11 revision classes, the programme will be fully up and running again in September and all parents/carers will again be provided with the calendar so you can encourage your child to take part. It is my belief that all pupils should have an activity outside the classroom which they are interested in and able to pursue in our school.
- **Lunchtime sporting activity for all pupils** – despite our site being very small, our football/basketball/rugby sessions run by PE staff have ensured that all pupils can be active and sociable throughout their lunchbreak.
- **Sporting successes** – this year the successes of our many teams and individuals have been too numerous to list, and these are being celebrated in our end of term Sports Awards evening. Alongside the victories it has been heartening to see so many pupils involved at so many levels. Of particular note have been the growth of our girls' football sessions and the Year 11 boys becoming Welsh Champions for rugby 7s at the WRU/Urdd national competition. We also continued our trial of year group sports days this year, which have hugely increased the involvement of pupils actively taking part in this key school tradition. We always reiterate the importance of sport for a healthy body and a healthy mind, as well as developing pupil confidence, so it has been great to see the number of pupils involved increasing.
- **Music** – our new Head of Music Miss Evans has had a huge impact and seeing so many pupils taking part in the orchestra/band, choirs and other instrumental sessions has been amazing. We had

planned an in-person carol concert for last December but unfortunately the Covid situation again drove this online. However, Miss Evans has numerous events and evenings planned for next year which parents will be able to attend and I look forward to seeing many parents and pupils at these.

- **The recent school show** 'A Night at the Musicals' was a tremendous success. The hard work of pupil and staff over many months culminated in a week of outstanding performances displaying the huge talent of our number of pupils. This was truly a triumphant 'return' from Covid!
- **School prom** – Year 11 celebrated their school prom in person at the Parkway Hotel in Cwmbran for the first time since 2019. The evening was full of laughter, dancing and singing. All had a great time and the behaviour was, as always, exemplary throughout.
- **Celebration assemblies** – for much of the year we still could not run any 'in person assemblies' in school. We began these again as soon as we were able, from Easter, and the ability to talk directly to all pupils again and for whole year groups to spend time together has been invaluable. This has culminated in celebration assemblies at the end of this term where we recognise the hard work and success of any many pupils as possible across all subjects, including many 'Seren Star' pupils who competed university level modules and projects. If your child would like to be involved in the Seren Star programme they should see Miss James.
- **Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme** – we have re-established the D of E Scheme this year and invested in staff training and resources. Ms Clough and Mr Radcliffe will be speaking to Year 10 pupils in September to offer this opportunity and we will also be taking interest from other year groups moving forward.
- **School library and Accelerated Reader** – the library is soon to benefit from thousands of pounds of government investment in new books. Alongside this, lower school pupils have been taking part in Accelerated Reader, a scheme designed to promote reading and accelerate pupils' literacy and reading skills.
- **Year 6 pupil transition day** – in June we welcomed pupils from 15 different primary schools to our school for the day, helping them get ready for September. They were fantastic ambassadors for their schools and we are looking forward to them joining us in September. The school is heavily oversubscribed again with a waiting list for September of pupils wanting to join.
- **Years 7-10 trips day** – whilst transition day was happening, the rest of the school went on trips to theme parks to reward their hard work and all had a great time. This marked a more normal return to trips from Covid, with other trips this year including Year 7 pupils team building in the Black Mountains, Geography fieldwork and preparation for future trips to Canada, Poland and other places both near and far.
- **Year 11 exam preparation** – staff worked incredibly hard preparing Year 11 pupils for their examinations, including after school and holiday revision sessions. The pupils have done exceptionally well so far, returning from a broken two years with great resilience and commitment, and we expect an outstanding set of examination results for them this summer. Other year groups also sat formalised exams in the school hall to help them get ready for next year and the future.
- **Redevelopment of the school site** – site staff deserve thanks for helping to continue modernising the school buildings and classrooms. Last year this was the school kitchen for Hospitality lessons, the school reception and other pupil areas including corridors; this summer we are gutting and refitting two of our Science labs and beginning work on a new Wellbeing suite.
- **Eisteddfod** – our celebration of our Welsh culture will be on the last day of term, with staff eagerly anticipating the many pupil entries.

Final day

A reminder that our last day of term is Friday 22nd July. We will finish slightly early at 1.30pm – school buses have been booked for this time.

Next year's start of term dates and INSET days

- Fri 2nd & Mon 5th September – Both are INSET days (no pupils attend)
- Tuesday 6th September – ONLY Year 7 pupils attend (start of term for Year 7 only)
- Wednesday 7th September – ALL pupils attend (start of term for Years 8-11)
- Fri 7th October – INSET day for all pupils (no pupils attend)
- Fri 23rd December – INSET day for all pupils (no pupils attend)
- Mon 27th February – INSET day for all pupils (no pupils attend)
- Mon 26th June – INSET day for all pupils (no pupils attend)

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.

Exam results day

Exam results day is Thursday 25th August and pupils can collect their results from 9.00am. Year 11 pupils should go to the hall. There may be a different venue within the school building for Year 10 pupils, and this will be communicated through Google Classroom as well as in school on the day.

Attendance

Please send your child to school as frequently as you can. The Covid restrictions have led to a sharp decline in attendance nationally – but it is essential that all pupils attend school all the time. A small number of pupils have continued to miss a day or two on average every fortnight, which is not enough if you wish to do well at school.

I wish you and your family a restful and enjoyable summer holiday, and we look forward to seeing all the pupils in September.

Yours faithfully,



Mr. A. Thompson
Headteacher