

16<sup>th</sup> 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 had only around 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 most students make their way to and from school independently, we always try to make contact with parents/carers either by telephone or text. 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 text and letter.

### **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 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021;
- A Level results day is on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August;
- GCSE results day is on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August;
- Contingency plans will be developed with the Education Secretary, Ofqual, exam boards, schools and unions over the next six weeks;

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- 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.

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 in the process for all year groups completing progress reports, which will be sent to you hopefully before half term, some year groups will receive them immediately after the half term break.

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

Yours faithfully

Claire Smith and Paul Anderson  
Acting Principals