



Newtownhamilton High School
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Wednesday 16th September 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

I will start by offering my thanks for your patience and support over recent weeks as we adapt to the many new COVID-19 routines and procedures. I welcome the 41 new Year 8 pupils who have joined us and trust that they and indeed all our pupils have settled well back into school life after a lengthy absence.

COVID-19 Updates

At Newtownhamilton High, we are taking COVID-19 extremely seriously but we are also running the school with a common sense approach. A wide range of measures have been put in place in order to minimise the risk of infection and I have to commend the pupils for their positive approach to date.

Symptoms

A leaflet for parents and carers was distributed to all pupils last week and this document clearly states that the key symptoms of COVID-19 are as follows:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough
- A loss or change to their sense of smell or taste



Pupils must not attend school if they have any of the above symptoms. Parents/guardians should also keep me informed.

Face Coverings

Latest DENI guidance strongly recommends that pupils wear face coverings while in communal areas and on home to school transport. **Parents of pupils who are medically exempt from wearing a face covering should contact me to discuss this matter.**

Positive COVID-19 Test Result

Unfortunately, it is highly likely that a member of our school community will experience a positive COVID-19 test result at some stage in the future. Plans have been put in place to deal with such a situation, however I appeal for pupils, parents and community members not to listen to or engage in local rumours or speculation as it is not helpful.

Preparation for Remote/Blended Learning

In the event of a future full/partial school closure or periods of self-isolation, it is important that pupils are prepared for remote/blended learning. Our teachers have been setting up their Google Classrooms and training pupils how to use them. **It is therefore essential that your child has joined all relevant classrooms so that they are able to access learning materials from home** (an information help sheet for remote/blended learning is available to download from our website).

Staffing Updates

Miss Muldrew has been appointed to cover the maternity leave of Mrs Flanagan with Mr Sloan covering Mrs Flanagan's SEN duties. Miss Frazer and Mrs Qua have returned again to cover the latest maternity leave of Mrs Graham while we also welcome Mrs Dillon as our new Classroom Assistant.

Year 8 & 12 Parents' Evening

A decision has been taken to **cancel our Years 8 & 12 Parents' Evening that was due to be held on Tuesday 20th October**. It is our intention to speak to all Year 8 parents via telephone before the mid-term holidays.

Whole School Policies

Parents are reminded that the key whole school policies are available to view via our school website through a password protected page. Please follow the instructions below in order to access this more environmentally friendly method of communication.

Access to School Policies/Documents:

1. Log on to www.newtownhamiltonhigh.org.uk
2. Click on **Docs** on the main toolbar
3. Type in the Username and Password

Username	newtown1955
Password	newtown1955

Energy Drinks & Nut Allergies



It is requested that pupils do not bring high energy drinks (Lucozade, BPM, Red Bull, Boost etc) to school. Healthier options such as bottled water or fully school compliant fruit drinks are available for sale in our vending machines and also the school canteen. Please believe me when I say that our pupils have plenty of energy without these drinks!

I would also be grateful if you would refrain from sending peanuts into school as we have 2 pupils who have severe nut allergies.

School Publicity & Use of Social Media

Our school website (www.newtownhamiltonhigh.org.uk) and Facebook page continue to receive a large number of hits. Our Twitter page and text messaging service should also keep parents updated on all the latest news and events within school.



Over recent years, Newtownhamilton High School has used social media positively to promote many aspects of school life. Unfortunately, there is an increasing trend across Northern Ireland of parents and pupils using this communication method to voice frustration about school matters which they are not entirely satisfied with. This often results in inaccurate information being shared publicly, thus quickly damaging the reputation of a school or an individual.

Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to remind parents that **I prefer to discuss any worries or concerns either face to face or over the telephone rather than read about them on social media.**

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or concerns.

Yours faithfully

Neil Megaw
Principal

Forthcoming Key Dates 2020

Tuesday 20 th October **CANCELLED**	Year 8 & 12 Parents' Evening (3.30-6.00pm)
Friday 23 rd October	Staff Development (no pupils in school)
Friday 23 rd October – Friday 30 th October	Mid-Term Holiday