



Newtownhamilton High School

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Friday 14th August 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Firstly, I apologise for the delay in confirming arrangements for the start of the 2020/21 academic year. Our Vice Principal Mr Cousins and I actually drafted this letter two weeks ago but I was unable to forward it as I awaited further guidance from the Department of Education.

Thankfully, the latest (and hopefully final) guidance was distributed to all schools yesterday (13/08/20) morning. Education Minister Peter Weir also issued a letter and information leaflet for all parents/guardians and this has been enclosed. I have also included a letter for the parents/guardians of all Year 8-12 girls regarding appropriate school uniform.

In the 'New School Day' guidance, Mr Weir clearly states that previous plans have been revised to allow for all schools to return to more normal patterns of operation and attendance. Therefore, **Newtownhamilton High School will be returning to school full-time following a staggered induction (beginning for Year 12 on Monday 24th August).** This phased return to school will enable pupils to become familiar with our new COVID-19 procedures. I have therefore attached a table which clearly identifies specific dates of return and attendance for each year group.

In preparation for our full restart, please see below some key information which you should discuss with your child:

Home to School Return Transport

While parents and children are encouraged to use other means of travelling to school (eg walking or cycling where it is safe and reasonable to do so), **Mr Weir has confirmed that home to school return transport will be available from Monday 24th August.**

Furthermore, there will be no requirement to follow public transport guidance for social distancing between pupils on school buses, however where it is possible to socially distance, pupils should do so. The wearing of face coverings is strongly recommended when using school buses (and minibus).

Face Coverings

There has been a lot of media coverage over recent days in relation to the wearing of face coverings in schools. The latest guidance issued by Minister Weir states "*face coverings are not generally recommended for routine use in schools. Staff and pupils may wish to use them during the routine school day and this is acceptable*". **Therefore, the decision to wear a face covering rests with each individual.**

Arrival at School

On arrival at school, pupils should wash/sanitise their hands before reporting directly to their Form Classroom. Pupils should not congregate in corridor/toilet/communal areas.

Hygiene

Good hygiene is essential at all times during the school day with numerous sanitising stations and hand washing facilities available. Pupils are also strongly encouraged to bring their own personal pocket sized hand sanitiser.

Social Distancing & One-way System

Mr Weir has also confirmed that "*strict social distancing between all pupils will be relaxed from a specific distance to the best spacing that can be achieved*" but will remain in place between adults and, as far as it is practicable between adults and pupils.

As a school, we will implement as much social distancing as is practical and where physical capacity and curriculum delivery permit. To facilitate social distancing, a one-way system with floor markings and signage will be in operation throughout the main building (from 8.45am to 3.15pm). This system with entry/exit arrangements will all be explained to pupils during their induction.

School Uniform & PE Wear

The latest guidance issued regarding school uniforms states “*while Coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, schools are not a high risk environment*”. Therefore, **our pupils will be expected to wear full school uniform as normal each day except on PE days when they can wear their school PE kit.** The latter will provide an opportunity for midweek washing of school uniform and will also eliminate the need for using changing rooms.

Equipment

The need for pupils to have their own stationery equipment is even more important during this academic year in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **There should be no sharing of equipment.**

Extra-Curricular Activities

Initially, there will be no extra-curricular sport during term 1. However, after school subject support classes may be available for Year 11 and 12 pupils.

Canteen

Our canteen service will be available to provide break and lunch from Tuesday 1st September with a staggered intake and adherence to strict hygiene regulations. **Year 12 and 8 pupils that are attending on the week commencing Monday 24th August should bring a morning snack and packed lunch.**

Trips & Events

Unfortunately trips and events for the foreseeable future will be limited. We are still awaiting guidance on our proposed ski trip in March 2021 while information regarding other events (Year 8 Parent Induction Evening, Parents’ Evening and Prize Night) will be shared at a later date.

Visitors

Parents/Guardians and other visitors should contact the school office (02830 878246) in advance of any necessary visit. On arrival, visitors should report to the office window located beside our main entrance (clearly sign posted).

COVID-19 Symptoms

Pupils that are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms at home should not attend school and follow PHA guidance. If a pupil feels unwell during the school day, they should report this information to a member of staff immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

Pupil Adherence to COVID-19 Regulations

At a recent meeting of our Board of Governors, it was agreed that, in the interest of health and safety of all school stakeholders, pupils must adhere to all COVID-19 regulations/guidance. Pupils who willfully refuse to adhere to the regulations/guidance will be dealt with in line with sanctions identified in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

To conclude, I hope that the above arrangements are clear and that you have trust in our restart plan. After much consideration we are confident that this plan will support the safe return of both pupils and staff.

The success of Newtownhamilton High School over recent years has been based on pupils, parents, staff and Governors all working together. I have no doubt that there will be bumps ahead over the next few months as we deal with the implications of COVID-19. However, by working in partnership, I am confident that we can continue to deliver a high quality education in a safe environment.

Finally, I trust that everyone will enjoy the remainder of the school holidays.

Yours faithfully

Neil Megaw

Principal



Newtownhamilton High School Restart Plan for 2020/21

| | Transport | Canteen | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 | |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|--|--------|---------|---------|---------------------------|--|
| Mon 24 Aug | Y | N | | | | | | |
| Tues 25 Aug | Y | N | Surname A-L 8.50am-1.20pm | | | | | |
| Wed 26 Aug | Y | N | Surname M-Z 8.50am-1.20pm | | | | | |
| Thurs 27 Aug | Y | N | | | | | 12X Only (No VEP for 12V) | |
| Fri 28 Aug | Y | N | All Year 8 | | | | | |
| Mon 31 Aug | | | Bank Holiday – School Closed | | | | | |
| Tues 1 Sept | Y | Y | | | | | | |
| Wed 2 Sept | Y | Y | | | | | | |
| Thurs 3 Sept | Y | Y | | | | | | |
| Fri 4 Sept | Y | Y | Restart of Whole School Timetable | | | | | |

Key: = pupils should attend in full school uniform (8.50am – 3.00pm unless otherwise stated)

Notes:

- **Year 8 Testing & Induction:** Testing will take place on Tuesday 25th (Surname A-L 8.50am-1.20pm) and Wednesday 26th (Surname M-Z 8.50am-1.20pm) – pupils must bring a morning snack, ear phones and a pencil/pen for the computerised testing. Our Year 8 Induction Day will then take place on Friday 28th (8.50am-3.00pm) and pupils are reminded to bring both a morning snack and packed lunch.
- **12V:** There will be no timetabled lessons for 12V pupils on Thursday 27th as the vocational programme does not commence until September.