



# Newtownhamilton High School

9 Armagh Road, Newtownhamilton  
NEWRY, Co. Down  
BT35 ODG

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Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

## Safeguarding Team

**Designated Teacher:**  
Mrs Laverty

**Deputy Designated Teacher:**  
Mr Cousins (Vice Principal)

**Principal:** Mr Megaw

**Designated Governor for Child Protection:** Rev Graham

**Chairperson of the Board of Governors:** Mr Bingham

**School Counsellor:**  
Mrs Leona Gallagher



Our defibrillator is located in the main school foyer.

**First Aiders:** Mrs Alexander, Miss Anderson & Mrs Boyle.

It is hard to believe that January is over and we now have started the process of planning for the 2022/23 academic year. Please find below some important information which you should share and discuss with your child.

## COVID-19 Updates

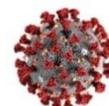
Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to dominate the day to day running of the school with increasing numbers of pupils and staff testing positive during January. Fortunately, despite staffing being down to the bare bones on a few days we have been able to maintain face-to-face teaching for all year groups.

Latest guidance for school aged pupils on self-isolation states that pupils who test positive must self-isolate for a period of 10 days with the potential of release early from day 6 if:

- They have 2 consecutive LFT results taken 24 hours apart, with the first of these no earlier than day 5.

And

- They do not have a high temperature



If day 5 or 6 tests are positive, pupils cannot leave isolation.

## Year 8 Admissions – September 2022

Parents of Primary 7 pupils will know that we were unable to hold our annual Open Night for a second consecutive year due to COVID-19. However, our 2022/23 prospectus and promotional video can now be viewed on our website and Facebook page. All Primary 7 parents in our 7 main contributory primary schools should have received a hard copy of the prospectus with a letter so hopefully all these materials should give you a good insight into life at Newtownhamilton High.

Interested parents/guardians are encouraged to carefully read our recently updated Admissions Criteria and to list 'Newtownhamilton High School' as their first preference (via the EA digital application process which opened on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and closes at 4.00pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022) as the school has been oversubscribed in recent years.

Finally, prospective parents/guardians are welcome to contact me to discuss any aspect of the school and/or the post-primary transfer process.

### EA Draft Area Plan Consultation

You may be aware from media coverage on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January that the Education Authority has launched a draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-27: Planning for Sustainable Provision and they are seeking your views. The plan focuses on improving the quality of educational provision for all pupils through a network of viable and sustainable schools that are the right type, the right size, located in the right place at the right time with a focus on raising standards.

The press reports that I referred to focused on the additional cost of educating a child in a small school. My view is that the education of a child should not be about money but rather should focus on the child having access to a high quality education which I believe that our small, but yet successful school offers.



For the 12-week public consultation period on the draft Strategic Area Plan, the Education Authority has provided an easy read version, a short animated video, and consultation questionnaire, on their website (<https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/consultations>). A number of engagement sessions have been organised for parents/stakeholders on **3<sup>rd</sup> February, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2<sup>nd</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022** all starting at **7.00pm** and these have also been identified on the Education Authority's website.

I therefore encourage our parents/guardians to respond to this consultation (before the closing date of Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April) and use the opportunity to highlight the many opportunities that your child experiences in our small country school and the benefits that rural schools have to local communities.

### Staffing Updates

I can now confirm that, following an external recruitment process, Mr Reid (Technology & Maths) and Mrs N Graham (Head of Science & Maths) have joined our teaching staff as permanent members.

### Year 10 Options

We will begin the process of Year 10 Options immediately after the mid-term break – further info to follow.

### Forthcoming Key Dates

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| • Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> February                                  | SRC Skillbuild in Greenbank, Newry           |
| • Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> February (6.30-8.30pm)                  | Year 12 GCSE Geography Booster Session       |
| • Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> February                                | 11X Amplify Trip                             |
| • Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> February                                  | Year 9 Trade Fair @ Rushmere Shopping Centre |
| • Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> February        | Mid-Term Holiday                             |
| • Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February                                 | Year 11 HE Trip to Ballylisk Dairies Ltd     |
| • Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> – Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> February   | Year 11 & 12 Science Modules                 |
| • Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> February                                  | 10X Enterprise Challenge                     |
|   | 12X Science Trip to CAFRE                    |
| • Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> February – Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March | Year 12 Mocks                                |
| • Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> March                                   | St. Patrick's Day Holiday                    |
| • Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> March                                     | Staff Development (no pupils in school)      |
| • Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April         | Easter Holidays                              |

Yours faithfully

*Neil Megaw*

Principal