



# Newtownhamilton High School

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Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Our full return to face-to-face teaching has been a positive experience to date with no partial or full school closures required due to COVID-19. I therefore commend pupils and staff for their compliance to our current COVID-19 rules and regulations and encourage everyone to keep playing their part (with hand sanitising, social distancing, wearing of face coverings etc) in order to ensure that we keep the virus away from our community.

At this time of the school year, it would be normal practice for me to share the main key dates and events for the remainder of this term. However, this academic year has been very different to date and will be for the remainder of this term based on guidance which I have received from the Department of Education. Please therefore take time to read the following information and share it with your child/children.



## **Year 8-10 Formal Assessment 4 (Summer Exams)**

In previous correspondence, I have clearly stated that nothing will ever replace the benefits of face-to-face teaching and therefore I want to maximise this teacher-pupil contact during the remainder of this term. I am also conscious that some pupils are playing catch-up from remote learning and that this is creating additional pressures.

Furthermore, the impact of social distancing requirements for hosting exams would result in an extended examination period thus further reducing the face-to-face time for teaching and learning. Therefore, in the interest of pupil learning (with teacher contact) and well-being, **I have made a decision that Year 8-10 pupils will not sit FA4 (Summer Exams) in June 2021** but instead will complete ongoing assessment (homework, practical tasks, end of unit tests etc). It is noted that full teaching and learning will take place up until 3.00pm on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June, before we end the school year with some non-academic events (eg Sports Day) during the last week.

## **Year 11 Summer Assessments**

Our Year 11 pupils will be aware that GCSE exams for our Year 12 pupils this Summer (2021) have been cancelled and that all schools have to award Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) based on teacher professional judgement with moderation. While no decision has been made about the awarding of GCSE grades in Summer 2022, it is possible that a similar type system could be implemented and we therefore have to be ready for that. As a result, **I can confirm that our Year 11 pupils will complete assessments in all subject areas commencing Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June (timetable to follow). These pupils are therefore strongly encouraged to begin preparations soon as it is possible that the outcome of these assessments will be used towards the awarding of final GCSE grades in 2022.**

Once these assessments are completed, Year 11 pupils must continue to attend school as full teaching and learning will take place up until 3.00pm on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Year 12 Assessments & Attendance**

Our Year 12 pupils continue to complete subject assessments that will provide teachers with the necessary evidence to award the Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) that your son/daughter deserves. **I again reiterate the importance of full attendance and dedication over the next 4-5 weeks.**

In normal circumstances, Year 12 pupils would begin study leave in early May so that they can prepare for exams. However, this year the Department of Education has updated its guidance to allow schools flexibility regarding this date. Following some thought, I feel it is important that we maximise teaching and learning and therefore pupils will remain timetabled for lessons until we reach a point where the overwhelming majority of assessments have been completed (a final leaving date will be communicated with pupils and parents at the appropriate time).

### **Term 3 Holidays & Staff Training Dates**

In addition to the traditional May Bank Holidays, pupils will not be required to attend school on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May (Qualification Procedure Day 2) or the period Monday 28<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June (Staff Training). Please therefore note the key dates listed at the bottom of this letter.



### **Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) Update**

Following some feedback, a decision has now been taken to allow Year 12 pupils and staff to complete their Lateral Flow Testing on Sunday and Wednesday evenings rather than on Monday and Thursday mornings. Those participating are reminded not to consume food 30 minutes before taking the test.

Finally, I hope that the contents of this letter will provide some clarity for everyone moving forward. However, it is important to stress that everything is subject to change during these uncertain times.

Yours faithfully

*Neil Megaw*

Principal

#### **Forthcoming Key Dates**

Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Bank Holiday
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> May	Staff Training (Qualification Procedure Day 2)
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> May	Bank Holiday
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 11 Assessments
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Full Year 8-11 Teaching & Learning until 3.00pm
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> – Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	Non-Academic Events (eg Sports Day, etc)
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	End of Term @ 12.00pm
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Staff Development