

Our Ref: RS / AMCG
Your Ref:
Contact: Robert Smith
Tel: 01698 274944
E-mail: enquiries-at-cardinalnewman@northlan.org.uk
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Education and Families
Robert Smith
Head Teacher
Cardinal Newman High School
Main Street
Bellshill ML4 3DW
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

The school closes for Christmas Holidays on Wednesday 22 December at 2.30pm and classes resume on Monday 10 January at 8.55am.

This has been another difficult session for young people and families as a result of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. I had no idea when I wrote to you at this time last year that we would be facing another Christmas with restrictions and an uncertain New Year.

As you know we cancelled or postponed most of our planned Christmas events which, given the developing situation, was the right thing to do. Young people were obviously disappointed but understanding of the reasons. We are determined to make it up to them as best we can as soon as circumstances allow.

We have refunded the young people in S1 with the money they paid for their pantomime trip. If your child has not received their refund, please ask them to speak to Mrs Hamilton, Principal Teacher of English who is taking care of arrangements.

We raised £650.00 on our Christmas Jumper Day last Friday 17 December. Thank you for your donations.

Through everything we have been concentrating on the real message of Christmas and the imminent birth of the Baby Jesus. Our Advent preparations have included a daily Advent Calendar prepared and broadcast by senior pupils and The Chaplaincy Team, which is available on Twitter and the School Website.

We are doing everything we can in school to keep all our young people and staff as safe as possible. Our current COVID19 mitigations will remain in place in the New Year. I will let you know about any changes or updates to national guidance as soon as I receive them.

Prelims

Senior pupils have just completed two weeks of prelim examinations. We also arranged for catch up arrangements this week for young people who were unable to sit an examination. We will make further arrangements with individual pupils if necessary.

Results of prelim examinations will be available week commencing Monday 17 January 2022.



A second diet of prelim examinations takes place week beginning Monday 24 January 2022. We have already published the schedule. We will send you a reminder of dates and any modifications to the programme week beginning 10 January 2022. The information is also on the school website.

SQA Arrangements – National Qualifications 2022

The current position from SQA is that exams will take place next year if safe to do so and public health advice allows. Due to the ongoing uncertainty over the pandemic, two contingency plans are in place.

- If there is further significant disruption to learning as a result of COVID-19, but it is still safe for exams to go ahead, there will be further modifications to courses and assessments.
- If public health conditions do not allow for an exam diet to take place, awards will be made on teachers' judgements based on normal school-based assessment. This is the system we have used for the last two years, and which has worked well for our young people.

I know the ongoing uncertainty is causing some anxiety for young people in senior phase. Be assured that we are planning carefully for both scenarios and we will ensure that learners in Cardinal Newman High School receive the qualifications they deserve.

I will inform you and all young people in senior phase as soon as a decision is made by Scottish Government and SQA on the system to be used for national examinations in 2022.

Parents' Evenings

We have two upcoming parents' evenings following the Christmas holidays. These will both be online events:

Tuesday 18 January – S5/6 Parents (4 - 6.30pm)

Tuesday 8 February – S4 Parents (4 – 6.30pm)

The system for booking your appointment time slots goes live week beginning 10 January for S5/6 parents and week beginning 31 January for S4 parents.

Detailed instructions are on the school website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/nl/CardinalNewmanWebsite/video-parents-evenings-2/>

We will send you further instructions on Monday 10 January which will tell you how to book your online appointments.

I am confident everything will work well on the night. The school digital team have planned meticulously. As you know it is the first time, we have used this system and I know you will bear with us in the event of any teething problems.

Cardinal Newman is AABOUT Programme

We have been speaking to all year groups about our AABOUT (Achievement, Attendance, Behaviours, Opportunities, Uniform, Timekeeping) Programme. All of these aspects of school life are essential to our young people achieving their full potential.

Following the Christmas holidays, we will be having a whole school focus on various aspects of the AABOUT Programme. We will concentrate initially on **Uniform and Timekeeping**.

If you need us to support you or provide your child with any item of uniform, please let us know. You can do this by contacting your child's pupil support teacher. We will do this discreetly and all items of uniform we provide are new.

Please make sure your child is in school by 8.50am each morning. Classes begin promptly at 8.55am. If you drop your child off in the morning, please help us by making sure they are here on time – this will help us to challenge late coming.

Some young people are regularly arriving late after lunch because they are leaving school to buy lunch elsewhere. We have spoken to them about this and made clear that this is not acceptable. If young people cannot be back in school on time after lunch, we have asked them to make other arrangements.

We may contact you directly in the new year to ask for and offer support with our AABOUT Programme. We know that you will agree that it is important that together we help all of our young people to be in school on time and in full uniform. I look forward to working with you on all aspects of our AABOUT Programme.

Session 2021/22

Despite the difficulties young people, families and teachers have had to overcome, we have had a very successful year. You will be aware via social media, the school website and the letters and certificates we have sent, of the many collective and individual successes our young people have had. They have continued to achieve and to support others and the wider community. We are very proud of all of their achievements and hard work. They are a credit to the school and to you.

I know we are all looking forward to more normal times and I hope this is not too far away.

In the meantime, I wish you and all of your families and loved ones a Wonderful Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful 2022.

With every best wish from everyone in Cardinal Newman High School.

Robert Smith

Head Teacher