

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

2024-25

Courage Commitment Compassion

www.newlandsgirlsschool.co.uk





Welcome to Newlands

Whether you are a new Newlands parent or an old hand, we are delighted to welcome you to Newlands Girls' School. As parents or carers of Year 7s who are starting their journey with us, this handbook will be a useful guide over coming months as your daughter settles into life at Newlands.

Our school has so much to offer all our students, and as parents and carers you are essential to supporting your child during their time with us. This guide will give you practical information and set our expectations for both parents and students. We will also provide you with an overview of what you can expect from us.

Our values



Everything we do at Newlands is underpinned by our 3Cs: **Courage, Commitment and Compassion.**

We expect our students to be courageous, from taking on activities and challenges that they have not faced before to tackling new concepts in lessons that may seem challenging. They will make lots of new friends that will last a lifetime and have the opportunity to experience many new pursuits. Whatever they choose to do in the future, by showing courage in everything they do, our students will be well equipped to face whatever the next stage of their lives may be.

Our students are committed to working hard, but they are also deeply loyal to our school. There is a wealth of opportunities to be involved with from sports to student leadership, performing arts to academic societies. We would encourage all new students to get involved with as much as possible. Lessons will sometimes be hard, but showing determination and commitment to embracing learning is all that we ask.

Finally, we expect students to show compassion both in school and in the wider community. We are a diverse school and expect students and staff alike to be tolerant, respectful and kind. We see this every day in the happy students who attend Newlands and treat each other in the manner that they would like to be treated themselves.

What follows is practical information that covers most of the key information that you need to know to successfully support your child during their time at Newlands. However, if you do need to contact the school for any matter, the following are some of the key members of staff who you will get to know over the next seven years.

Key Staff



Jo Capon
Headteacher



Lesley Allaway
Deputy
Headteacher



Andrew Morbey
Deputy
Headteacher



Charlie Bevan
Assistant
Headteacher



Suzanne Nuttycombe
Assistant
Headteacher
Senior link to Year 7



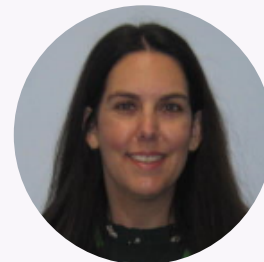
Justin O'Connell
Assistant
Headteacher



Gemma Walton
Assistant
Headteacher



Kate Foreman
School Business
Manager



Alana Holmes
Head of Year 7



Teal
Wellbeing Dog

The school day



TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

All students are expected to be in their Form room by 8:35 am The gates open at 8:25 am

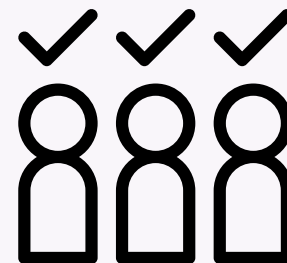
If a student is late, this is recorded in the register. We take punctuality very seriously and issue detentions for students who are repeatedly late. The Head of Year may also wish to meet the parents or carers of students who are repeatedly late.

At the end of the day, students are expected to leave the premises unless they are staying for a club, or a member of staff has requested that they do so. All students must remain on site during the school day.

If a student needs to leave during the day e.g. for a medical appointment or music examination they must be collected from the school Reception by a parent or carer.

Students are not allowed to leave school on their own unless they are in Year 10 upwards and their parent or carer has given written permission to the school.

Attendance



Students who attend school are more likely to do well and achieve their full potential both academically and personally. To give your child the best chance possible, they need to be in school. It is the responsibility of parents and carers, staff, students and governors to ensure all students have good attendance.

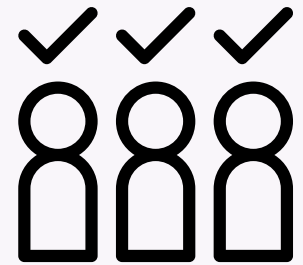
There is a clear link between attendance rates and high achievement. Good attendance is seen as being at least 97%. Attendance below 95% is a cause for concern and below 90% is classified as persistent absence.

Missing just a few days from school may seem unimportant and harmless however; the impact to a student's education should not be underestimated. A 90% attendance rate over a child's time at school means they have missed four weeks of school. Across a student's entire school life this would mean that by the end of Year 11, the equivalent of a whole school year will have been missed. On average 17 absences during a school year results in one less grade for a GCSE.

The following table shows the amount of learning time lost through absence.

Attendance rate	Equals days absent	Equals weeks absent	Number of lessons missed
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	20 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	30 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	40 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Attendance



How can you help your child's attendance?

Illness

If you are unsure if your child is ill, send them in anyway. We will send them home if they are genuinely unwell.

Children can be given medication at school such as paracetamol or antibiotics. Do not let the administration of medication be a reason for students staying at home.

If your child is absent due to illness, do not give them another day "just to make sure" or "because it's Friday anyway". Send them back to school as soon as they are well.

Medical appointments

Make sure all medical appointments are outside school hours. If medical appointments are essential, please arrange these between morning and afternoon registration where possible.

Holidays

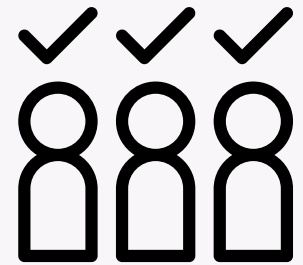
Holidays during term-time will not be authorised. This includes extended visits to relatives overseas. Any planned absence needs to be agreed by the Headteacher and will be granted on a case by case basis and in advance. Any holidays or periods of absence taken which have not been approved will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in a fine.

Using Arbor to monitor your child's attendance

The introduction of Arbor allows you to keep track of your child's attendance each day and over time. Please do use Arbor regularly to discuss your child's attendance. Form Tutors will be using Arbor to monitor attendance for students and you can find further information on how to review attendance in the Arbor guide. It is also possible to report absence via Arbor.

You will receive further information about Arbor in September.

Attendance



How we will support your child's attendance

If your child is absent without authorisation the school will text, email or phone home on the first day of absence to check the reason for their absence.

If your child's attendance starts to fall, their Form Tutor will discuss this with them to identify if there are any issues.

If attendance continues to fall, the school's Attendance Officer and Head of Year will meet with the student to support improving their attendance.

If attendance falls below 90%, the Attendance Officer will send a letter of concern home, explaining our concern and further meetings may held.

Where attendance does not improve, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and parents and carers will be invited into school for an attendance meeting.

Following this, if attendance still does not improve, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

FPNs may be issued in cases where students are either absent from school without authorisation or when an absence is linked to a holiday application that has not been authorised. Further information on FPNs can be found here: School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Who can I contact?

To report an absence, you can contact the Attendance Office by phone: **01628 502663** or email: attendance@newlandsgirls.co.uk. You can also report an absence via the Arbor app or web site.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, in the first instance please contact their Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Curriculum



Students at Newlands follow the same curriculum until Year 10 when GCSE courses commence. Students choose which subjects they wish to specialise in during Year 9.

You can find details of all subjects studied and the contents covered in each year on the school website. In Year 7 the subjects studied are:

Maths	Computing	German	Music
English	Technology	Geography	RE
French	Art	History	PE
Spanish	Drama	PSHE	

In Year 7 students are taught in the same groups as their tutor group in mixed ability classes apart from Maths, English, D&T and Art. Students are set in English and Maths later in the academic year based on ongoing assessment. Students are able to move set as they progress during their time at Newlands.

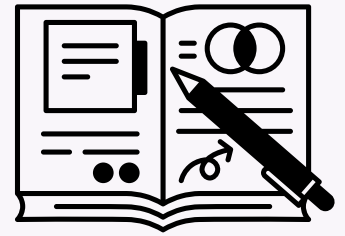
As students progress through the school they will be able to choose at the end of Year 7 which two Modern Foreign Languages they wish to focus on in Years 8 and 9.

GCSE options are chosen in Year 9 and students will follow a specialised careers programme to help them make these choices.

The majority of our students remain with us into our fantastic Sixth Form and students receive further advice and guidance around Post 16 choices during Years 10 and 11.



Homework



In Years 7 to 11, students are given a homework timetable, which specifies set subjects on particular nights of the week and suggests a reasonable amount of time for each subject. By the time they reach the Sixth Form, we expect students to be able to plan their own studies, since work will often be set over a period of days or weeks rather than in terms of fixed hours. Workload also varies according to the course being followed. The increased emphasis on background reading and research means that we hope students are learning to work more independently.

Homework is set in the student planners but it is likely this will move to being recorded digitally on our Arbor platform in the future.

Students also have access to the Library and computer rooms outside of lesson times to support tasks set for homework or to complete coursework.

Should you feel that your Child is spending too long on their homework, or if you rarely see them completing it, please do not hesitate to contact us. Whilst recognising its importance, we would not want homework to exclude other activities which have an equally important role to play in personal development.



PASTORAL CARE AND STUDENT WELLBEING

At Newlands, we pride ourselves on our excellent pastoral care. The Form Tutor is an important role in the school. Your child will see them every morning and they will play a key role in helping all new students settle in and checking that they are prepared for the day ahead.

The Form Tutors will become your first point of contact should you have any questions or concerns. Each year group also has a Head of Year (HOY), who oversees the personal and academic development of the students. The Year 7 Form rooms are geographically close to one another and the HOY office is central so that students can easily access their HOY outside of lessons. Year teams are supported by a member of the Leadership Team, known as the Senior Link.

Working closely with the pastoral teaching staff, the Wellbeing Hub is run by our team of Wellbeing Practitioners and aims to meet the emotional needs of all students. In addition to one-to-one appointments and group work, the team have an open-door policy for students to drop in at break and lunchtimes.

Houses & Rewards

As a school community, we feel passionately that a well-established House and rewards system has innumerable benefits including, but not limited to, instilling our school values: courage, commitment, and compassion.

House System

All students are placed into a House. Each House has an affiliated colour and is named after inspirational women:

- Jane Austen (pink)
- Emily, Charlotte and Anne Bronte (green)
- Marie Curie (yellow)
- Grace Darling (purple)
- Amelia Earhart (orange)
- Anne Frank (blue)



Students earn House Points, which will contribute towards the overall winning House. These House Points will be logged on Arbor by teachers so parents, carers and students can see how many points have been awarded. In regular House Assemblies, the students with the most House Points are awarded prizes. Students are also able to enter competitions and volunteer for House leadership opportunities.

We also reward students for meeting our values through their attitude, efforts and academic achievements. These rewards include:

- Praise during lessons
- Positive comments in written feedback
- Excellent letters following Progress Reports
- Phone calls home
- Postcards
- Including your work in displays
- Public recognition in assemblies, Newlands News and Reward Assemblies
- Assemblies
- Hot Chocolate with the Head

Uniform



All students in Years 7-13 are expected to wear uniform and to adhere to our rules regarding appearance. These regulations apply in school, at Parents' Evenings, on the way to and from school and where students are representing Newlands. You can find further information on our website.

Hair

Hair should be in a simple style and tied back if it is jaw length or longer. Only natural colours are allowed.

Appearance

As members of the school community it is expected that appearance should be neat and tidy at all times. Kilts and summer dresses must be on the knee, or below. Shoes should be smart and trainers are not allowed.

Jewellery

If students have pierced ears they may wear one pair of small stud earrings in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and above, students are permitted to have a second single ear piercing. No other jewellery is allowed in school. Earrings must be removed for P.E. when requested.

Coats

Coats and scarves may be worn to and from school and are permitted outside, but should not be worn in the school building unless directed by the Headteacher. Hoodies are not allowed to be worn under any circumstance.

Make up

Nail polish and nail extensions are not permitted in Years 7-11. Make-up should not be worn in Years 7-9 and only minimal make up is permitted in Years 10 and 11.

Equipment



Students need a suitable bag in which to carry their books and to give them adequate protection on the way to and from school. We provide the textbooks and exercise books which are needed, but we expect students to take care of them. You will be asked to pay for any textbooks which are lost or damaged.

A **student planner** will be issued, but if it is lost, you will be asked to pay for a replacement at a cost of £3.00.

A pencil case will be needed which should contain **pens** (including a **green pen**), **pencils**, a **ruler**, **glue stick**, **whiteboard marker**, **protractor**, a **pair of compasses** and a **calculator**. Maths equipment can be purchased directly from the department once your child starts in September. Tipp-Ex is not permitted.

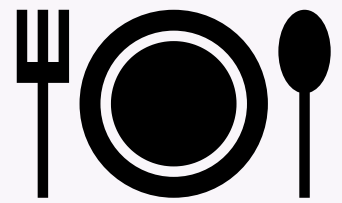
We believe that reading for pleasure shouldn't stop when students move to secondary school. Students should ensure they always have a **reading book** in school.

Students need to provide their own **padlock** (a numerical one is preferred) to secure their lockers.

The school's insurance does not cover students' personal possessions. We therefore cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to students' property whilst in the school buildings or grounds. Each student must take responsibility for their own belongings, and we urge parents to arrange their own insurance for valuable items such as bicycles or musical instruments. Parents are also advised to take out a personal accident policy for their children if they are likely to participate in out-of-school sports.



Catering



A wide variety of food and drink is served in the Canteen at break and lunchtime each day. Students can choose from a selection of individually priced items ranging from soup and paninis to a full cooked meal with vegetarian options. Students may bring a packed lunch if they wish.

We use a cashless catering system. Students pay using their biometric data and parents and carers are able to top up students' accounts using the sQuid website. This also allows parents and carers to see how their child is using their account by seeing previous purchases.

New students are scanned during their first day with us. No actual finger prints are stored and a series of anonymised data points are used to identify students.

Students eating food are allowed in the Canteen, Hall or the outdoor spaces. Food is not allowed to be eaten in classrooms or corridors.





EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities form an important part of any student's experience of school, helping to extend what they do in lessons; giving scope for areas which are outside the standard curriculum provision and catering for a variety of interests.

At Newlands we provide an extensive range of activities both at lunchtime and after school; there are many different clubs and activities on offer during the school year.

We are aware of the many demands made upon parents, but we hope you will feel able to support your child in at least some of these activities since they are valuable in terms of enriched experience and increased social confidence.

A full list of clubs are published on the school website each term.



Behaviour expectations



We are a diverse community of over a thousand people and we therefore have some basic rules to ensure the maintenance of an orderly environment in which teaching and learning can take place effectively.

Our students and their parents need to be clear about the framework within which we expect the students to operate on a day-to-day basis, both for their own sake and for that of others. The basic principle underlying our rules is that each individual should follow our 3 Cs and treat each other with compassion.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are a useful and often essential part of young people's lives. They are also a distraction in school and they should not be seen or heard in use at any point in the school day. If a mobile device is seen or heard in use it will be confiscated and a detention will be set.

Around the site

When moving about the building, students should keep to the right in corridors and on staircases. Students should keep noise to a minimum and carry bags so that they do not bang into others.

Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated at Newlands. Bullying is behaviour that is repeated, intended to cause either physical or emotional hurt and is often aimed at certain groups. It comes in many forms and is dealt with seriously at Newlands. If a student believes they are being bullied they should speak to their Form Tutor or Head of Year to report it. All reports of bullying are thoroughly investigated and parents are always informed of the outcome.

Food and the environment

Students are not allowed to eat or to chew in lessons. Litter should be put into the nearest bin. We all share responsibility for our working environment and therefore should care for our classrooms e.g. desks, notice boards and displays. Students are allowed to eat in the Canteen, Hall and outside spaces at break and lunch time.

Behaviour expectations



Unauthorised substances

Students are forbidden to smoke or vape on or around the school premises or to bring vapes, cigarettes, matches or lighters into school. Any student who is found smoking or who is with others who are smoking or vaping on the school site or on the way to or from school will be dealt with severely and their parents will be contacted. Newlands is a non-smoking environment and this applies to visitors and staff as well as contractors on site. Tippex and aerosols are not allowed in school because inhalation of fumes may cause problems for asthma sufferers.

Any student who brings alcohol or drugs onto school premises will be dealt with severely. Each case will be dealt with individually, but you should be aware that such misbehaviour is likely to result in suspension or permanent exclusion from school.

Travel

When travelling to and from school please remember that students represent the school and rules on uniform and behaviour still apply.

Behaviour for learning

We expect that all students focus on their learning in lessons. Teachers will use our systems set out in our Behaviour Policy to ensure that learning is uninterrupted and focused. In the very unlikely situation where a student is not following a teacher's instructions a clear escalation system is used which may result in an "on call" member of staff removing the student from their lesson.

Detentions

Detentions may be set by teachers for infringements of the school's rules. If students miss detentions or for more serious matters we run centralised detentions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after school.



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