

Dear Colleagues

This is the last newsletter of the school year (and plenty of schools have already finished), so it may be the least-read there is. I'll be brief. I hope everybody has a relaxing and enjoyable summer break and you come back refreshed for the challenges of a new year. If, that is, you're coming back. If you're leaving, I wish you well in your future endeavours / retirement / alternative career in pest control or whatever.

I've also been asked to pass on the thanks and best wishes of Cllr Julianne Marriott, Cabinet lead for Education, and Cllr Jane Lofthouse, her deputy.

This has been, to say the least, an interesting school year. Always, in the moment, there's this pressing issue or the other (and I know I don't need to tell heads about that) and the pressure to deal with the urgent that doesn't always coincide with the important. It's easy to assume the default mode is crisis management of some level or other. But with my colleagues this week we were prompted to consider what's been achieved in the last year. Now, I'm always anxious that doing so will either (a) inevitably mean that whatever one nominates as a success will immediately fall apart through some reverse Midas touch, or (b) convince people that we're complacent and don't recognise there are still challenges (otherwise expressed as classic 'whataboutery'), or (c) elicit howls of derision ('*you think that's GOOD???*').

However, my less suspicious and risk-averse colleagues, convinced me it was worth doing. They are compiling their own lists for us to collate and consider as a team, and we'll be sharing it with our staff who also often feel under the cosh. But, a few random highlights from me are:

- The progress with establishing the Education Partnership Board. Of course the usual caveats about very early days apply, but it has moved in a year to being a genuine forum for some challenging discussions about how we move forward together.
- The School Development Partnership proposals. We have a group of schools engaged in defining and promoting this, while others have decided that it's not for them – but without any fracture in relationships (of course, it's not in place yet, but the process has been challenging)
- Establishing a new process for EHCP assessments, improving the timeliness and beginning to clear the backlog. (In the small print it will say Ts & Cs apply, but there's definitely progress)
- Successfully implementing new procedures for CME and EHE that have improved our tracking of these children – and reduced the numbers
- Managing the large numbers of in-year admissions applications. It's a difficult environment for this with pressure on secondary places (and primary in some parts of the borough), as well as the needs and challenges of many of the families applying, and it demands time and good relationships
- Reducing the number of children with complex needs without a school place. Finding suitable places is extremely difficult (and potentially extremely costly) and there's been progress with voluntary sector partners, as well as state and independent mainstream and special schools, while we've also been moving to increase specialist places
- Educational outcomes for Newham's looked after children are very good. The tenacious work of the Virtual School with schools, children and carers promotes this very well.

Every time I read a list, I want to argue with it, so I've got my tin hat ready. I also always want to add to a list (my own list of West Ham's worst ever transfers is well into three figures and gets added to every year), so I'm not claiming this is exhaustive nor exclusive, but I do think these are solid achievements.

Of course, as well as education colleagues, there are wider council services for all schools. For example, you should all have air-quality monitors outside your schools when you return from the summer as part of the Council's drive to improve the quality of the environment.[See update below.]

Meanwhile, I appreciate that the achievements I've mentioned would be impossible without us having the support and cooperation of schools and others. And schools rightly have to focus on their core business of educating children, as the early KS2 results indicate has been done so successfully again this year.

So have a good break and we'll see you in September (I think there's a song there...)

Best wishes

Terry Reynolds; Director of Education and Skills

Air quality monitoring devices will be installed at 96 schools in Newham

Newham Council is committed to creating the best possible street environments outside schools across the Borough.

We want to make sure that children breathe cleaner air, are safe from cars near the school gates and choose to walk and cycle to school. This will help us create healthy communities with people being more active, enjoying their neighbourhoods and engaging positively with one another.

As part of our Healthy School Streets programme, in early August 2019 we will be installing air quality monitoring devices outside 96 schools in the Borough to monitor levels of air pollution and to determine what we can do to improve air quality near schools.

The air quality monitoring devices are small tubes which will be located on lamp columns or road signs near school entrances or playgrounds. Where this is not possible we may need to attach the monitoring devices on a school fence, subject to permission from the school. The monitoring devices will be placed at a height over 2 metres so that they are out of reach.

Data from the air quality monitoring devices will be collected monthly and a detailed report of the findings will be produced in autumn 2020, to include data analysis for a 12 month period and reflect a true representation of the air quality near each school.

In the meantime, please let us know if your school would like to receive informal updates on the air quality data throughout the year and if you would like children at your school to be involved in our Healthy School Streets programme through educational activities. You can contact the Healthy School Streets team at HealthySchoolStreets@newham.gov.uk

For more information visit: www.newham.gov.uk/HealthySchoolStreets

The Newham Connect Newsletter will return in September 2019.

Training/Events

Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

Tailored to meet school needs and compliance requirements in relation to policy and practice.

Date - 9 September 2019 9.30 am– 4.30 pm

Location - tbc

Designated Safeguarding Leads Training

Tailored to meet school needs and compliance requirements in relation to policy and practice.

Date - 14 October 2019 9.30 am- 4.30 pm

Location - tbc

Calendar - Events and Deadlines

July / August 2019

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18

Diary Dates & Deadlines

28 July 2019	Open consultation - SEND & AP provision: call for evidence
29 July – 30 August 2019	School summer break



Email us at newhamconnect@newham.gov.uk

You can send us items for the newsletter

The newsletter copy deadline is Thursday 10am each week

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