



## MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

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October 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to you to firstly thank all of you for your continued support of the school during a challenging period. All our decision making is taken in consultation with LA and PHE / DfE directives. Through the term we have also listened to parents, students and staff to ensure that we understand the challenges being faced in and outside of school. It is important that I acknowledge the hard work of staff and students who have embraced the changes at school with optimism, courage and resilience. I am delighted that we have been able to offer a broad curriculum with only small adaptations required. However, the national and local picture is changing once again, this means that we need to make a small change to directives around wearing of masks. Students already wear masks when moving to / lining up for lessons, we now need to ask students to wear masks whilst queuing for food. Masks do not need to be worn when eating / drinking. Where possible we are using outdoor space for social time / large indoor spaces that are ventilated and we will continue to work like this next half term. I will carefully review our management of 'bubbles' in November and will inform families of any adaptations to this in due course.

There is much talk of a 'circuit' break locally and nationally but as yet England have not committed to this. As a school it is important that we are prepared for any changes that may be enforced with little notice. Therefore we have taken the decision that next Friday when students leave for half term they will come home with extended work for English. This means that regardless of access to ICT resources all students will have work to complete should an extended half term be announced during the half term week. If this is not announced the work should be completed as homework which will be due in on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. We hope that this small but important contingency measure will reassure you that students have work to complete should it be required.

In this letter I would like to outline some other important information/reminders:

### **PE kit**

Many thanks for supporting the high expectation of the school PE kit. Following the half term break we are hopeful all school orders have been processed successfully enabling all of our students to attend in full, Middlewich High School branded PE uniform. For this year please be reassured that a mixture of the existing PE kit and the new PE is acceptable. As the weather turns colder (and wetter) we are asking that after half term, all students should have a warm, waterproof coat to wear for school, this includes days when they are dressed in their PE kit. There is therefore no further need for students to wear their blazers on days designated for PE lessons (this was an interim measure during more temperate weather). This decision has been informed by parental communication and we are always appreciative of feedback from our community.

### **Cold weather**

For our management of the safest site possible in consideration of the COVID pandemic, we will need to continue to ensure there is a high level of ventilation in all rooms through the day. This is in line with government directives to ensure sufficient ventilation exists in rooms. We are therefore

confirming that any student (and staff) wishing to wear their outdoor coat in class can do so to keep themselves warm. Please consider that a coat should be warm and waterproof; not therefore a cotton hoodie. We recognise that through the winter, temperatures will drop, we will always prioritise student and staff safety and in these circumstances will make adjustments to the management of ventilation in rooms, once again this will be in conjunction with PHE/LA advice.

### **Excellence in Attitudes to Learning**

In the current climate of risk to health we are even more reliant on our students meeting our high expectation of conduct, compliance and excellence in their attitudes towards their learning. We expect, and are grateful for, full support and trust from parents and carers.

After half term, I will be delighted to recognise so many students demonstrating excellence, with the award of our Silver and Gold badges. 5 students will additionally be recognised for their pride in their learning with the presentation of another £50 voucher! As parents and carers can I please encourage you to engage with the parental portal to monitor daily attitudes in class. Grade 3 and 4 is the expectation, every day, every lesson.

### **Year 7 lunch provision**

We are keen to try to improve our offer for Yr7 so we will be allowing students to move to the tennis courts once they have accessed the canteen for their lunch. This will allow them to access some fresh air and open space for at least part of their lunch.

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

We are looking for creative ways to broaden our curriculum offer in a COVID secure way. I am delighted that we have introduced Yr8 Samba club and that we will be able to support Yr11 with music practice after school in the music rooms. It was a pleasure to read Yr7 entries to the creative writing competition. We also very much enjoyed recognising the importance of mental health through our mental health awareness day last week with students wearing yellow and receiving a yellow pencil, as well as covering some awareness work on mental health during the week. We are also looking to provide a homework catch-up session for students, with each year group having a designated evening to complete missed work. This will launch after half term, more details to follow on this.

### **Equipment**

It has been excellent to see so many students well prepared for school, however after eight weeks of hard work we know that some stationary etc needs replacing. Therefore can we ask that you check your child's school equipment and ensure that after half term they have the following as a minimum:

A reading book (this is an essential part of their daily curriculum). Minimum equipment required is as follows: Black/blue biro, green pen (to support assessment & feedback), ruler, rubber, scientific calculator, pencil case (needed to secure equipment), highlighter, pencil sharpener, glue stick.

### **Google Classrooms**

We have now provided access to parents, so that you can see what work is being set. For some parents however, we are aware of a known Google issue that may have prevented you from

receiving the Guardian Invite from Google Classrooms. Please follow the instructions below to resolve these issues:

If you hold a Gmail address as well as the email address that you have provided to school please check the invitation has not gone to this address. If not please provide the Gmail address and we will resend the invite to this address.

You may have had in the past, a Gmail account that you no longer use, recover this account by following <https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/7682439?hl=en> The invitation may be in the inbox for that account. If not please provide the recovered Gmail address and we will resend the invite to this address.

If either of the above does not work/apply – create a new Gmail account by following this link, <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/56256?hl=en-GB> Provide us with the Gmail address and we will send the invite to this address. This will not change the email address we hold for day to day contact but will only be for the Guardian email updates.

### **Yr11 Exams Update**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October the Government updated schools on the proposals for GCSE examinations this summer. The statement from the Government is simple enough with a clear intent to preserve an examination series for students. Exams will be delayed by three weeks with results day moved to August 27<sup>th</sup>. Students will also sit a Maths & English exam before May half term.

I appreciate at this time there are many valid, unanswered questions. As I understand it, there will now follow a further six week consultation period with school leaders, local authorities, Ofqual and DfE to ensure that any final decision making understands the level of variance nationwide. In the meantime, as a school we will continue to ensure that we deliver a strong programme of education in school covering all the required content. We will continue to run internal exams to ensure students can demonstrate understanding and experience of exam papers. We will use these exams and other assessments to inform our planning so that we are addressing gaps in understanding with students. It is important that all students prepare effectively for these exams, as in the first instance they inform us where the gaps knowledge are. My view is always to be pragmatic and prepared in these situations and this approach has served the school and our community well during this difficult time. Attendance at school, focused learning and accessing all learning opportunities students are directed to by staff will be key to future success.

### **DfE Examinations Update 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/students-to-be-given-more-time-to-prepare-for-2021-exams>

Finally it only remains for me to wish all our community a safe and happy half term.

Best wishes,



Headteacher  
Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All