



MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

HEIDI THURLAND BA (HONS 1ST CLASS) NPQH HEADTEACHER

Dear families,

I am writing to you to update you on our plans for the start of term. On 30th December, Gavin Williamson announced further delays in the start of face to face teaching. The delays are to help control the transmission of the virus and also provide schools with some time to implement testing in schools. In this letter I will outline our position on this and expectations for the next two weeks. The changes to the start of term are as follows:

- Jan 4th INSET day – we will set work on google classrooms for all year groups. No live lessons.
- Jan 5th – 8th – ALL year groups will be off site with remote learning. During this period we will be investing in infrastructure and training for mass testing. **The only exception to this will be the OCR PE Yr11 group who have an exam at 9am on the 11th Jan. We will be running a face to face session 11.00-14.00 on Jan 8th for students in the OCR PE group to help prepare them for this exam.** This session will take place in the Science classrooms, students should enter school via the Science gates. (Please note we will schedule testing for these students in the morning prior to their attendance in the session – see below for more info on this)
- Jan 11th - Yr11 return to school - all other year groups remain off site with remote learning.
- Students of critical workers who are eligible to be on site (and have booked their place with us) will attend their usual timetabled lessons and arrive at school at the usual time. This is essential care only where it is unsafe for a student to be at home and the parents/carers meet the critical worker eligibility. We have contacted all EHCP students to agree provision – they should attend normal lessons.

Remote Learning Expectations:

- Work will be set according to student timetables in google classrooms; we will only deliver live lessons where capacity allows – links will be sent out by the class teacher via google
- Each session is based on 45mins work
- We do not want students to be anxious about completing all the work, we only ask that you do this to the best of your ability. Tutors will be supporting students over the remote learning period if they are struggling to engage with work set
- Please note P1 & P5 will always be online learning not live lessons.
- Live lessons when they take place will be recorded so that students can access them at other times; all lessons will be supplemented by google classroom set work to cater for students who may be sharing ICT resources.
- We will not be setting homework during the first two weeks of term. We know that previously families informed us they struggled to manage workload and we do not wish to increase anxiety where resources at home are pressured.
- Student cameras and microphones must be off in a live lesson; staff may choose to have their camera on but are not required to do so. Staff will manage student discussions. We ask that parents/carers do not at any time interrupt the session. If there are any issues please contact our admin email and we will direct support as it is needed. Students are expected to maintain respectful behaviour throughout the sessions as they would in school.

Mass Testing:

It is important that families are aware that over the Christmas break myself and the senior team have been processing significant amounts of guidance and continue to do so. In terms of testing in school whilst I am supportive of this I have to be confident in our ability to be able to do so safely and effectively.

On Monday the 4th of January we have taken the opportunity to designate this day as an additional INSET this will allow us to engage with DfE training so we can fully understand the implications of mass testing at Middlewich High School. It is important you understand that the logistics of this process are complex and significant, we will do all we can to support this process but at this stage I cannot with confidence assure you that this process will be completed before the 18th January – or if we are able to deliver it. I will know more after Monday. Therefore my proposal if we are able to, is to stage testing in the following way (all timings are subject to change & dependent on capacity):

- Phase 1: Training of staff on 4th Jan - an evaluation of MHS capacity to deliver mass testing
- Phase 2: Testing of staff / infrastructure resourcing / parental communication 4th-8th Jan
- Phase 3: Testing of Yr11; evaluation of testing processes at MHS 5th-8th Jan
- Phase 4: Testing of all other Yr groups wk beg 11th Jan

We believe that once we have tested a full year group, we will better understand how long this will take in practice. This will enable us to effectively schedule year groups for week beg 11th Jan. I should state that this is an ambitious plan and requires significant staffing resources. If there is anyone in the community who has experience in testing/healthcare/administration and would like to volunteer to support staffing over the next 10-15 days please contact Laura Platt on the email below.

During the mass testing period any students who test positive and then have this confirmed with a secondary PCR test will have to isolate. For the period students have not been in school during the start of term we will not be identifying close contacts; this should be done through the NHS test and trace service. Once students return to school we will support track and trace for close contacts as we have done previously.

Please be aware that we do not have capacity to mass test AND also conduct daily testing for close contacts of a positive result. This means in the first 2-4 weeks of term if a student is identified as a close contact of a student with a positive test result they will be required to isolate for the full period. Once we have completed mass testing we MAY be able to support the serial testing approach for close contacts of a positive case.

In order for testing to take place students MUST have completed the consent form and registered for testing. All this information will be posted to you on Monday. It is essential that all students return this form even if you do NOT give permission for testing as we need to record this. This will mean that families are not required to complete multiple forms / to be contacted again if they do not give permission.

We anticipate the process may look something like this:

Testing Process:

- Students arrive at scheduled appointment time with their signed consent form. Students must attend at the allocated time. Parents / carers are not allowed into the school (please wait in the car if you have brought your child to school / socially distance from other members of the community whilst waiting in the car park if you have walked with your child to school).
- We will be sending information out in the post regarding consent forms on Monday.
- There will be clear signage on the sports centre car park to identify entry and exit points. We will be using the sportshall as the testing area. We may expand this to the Drama studio in the week beginning the 11th if we have enough staff to support this. We will inform you if this is the case when we schedule appointments following staff & Yr11 testing next week.
- Testing itself is administered by students NOT by staff. Staff will be on hand to provide reassurance and guide students in how to administer the tests themselves.
- Students must socially distance whilst on site, the areas will be clearly marked out with staff on hand to guide.
- Students will be expected to sanitise their hands several times during the process.

- Students are required to wear a mask at all times except when undertaking the test itself.
- Once students have taken the test they must leave site. It is essential students do not mix with other students as per Tier 4 restrictions.
- We will communicate the results by phone once processed. We will do this as efficiently as possible but be aware it may take until 6pm to fully process all results (we will know more once we have run this through with a Year group)
- School transport is *not* running in the week beg 4th Jan; we will review transport provision for week beg 11th Jan.
- If your child has a significant sensory issue our SEND team will discuss with you how best to support your child through the test.

What is involved in the test?

- Students are required to be tested twice three days apart e.g. Wed & Fri
- The test is a lateral flow test which is self-administered. The test involves swabbing the back of each side of the throat and then also each nostril. The test itself takes only a minute or two to complete. Staff will be on hand to guide and reassure students throughout the process.
- The test is then processed, however we require students to leave site immediately so that we can continue to efficiently test the rest of the cohort safely.

What if my child is symptomatic? As previously do NOT send your child to school, we advise you get them tested at a designated centre and inform us of the outcome. (New continuous cough, high temperature, loss of taste, no smell, severe prolonged headache). If your child has sickness / diarrhoea they need to isolate for 48hrs. If symptoms persist book a test.

I appreciate that there is a lot to process here. As a community, more than ever, I need your support to be able to implement what is an extremely ambitious plan from the DfE. There are many significant logistical barriers to overcome; please be assured we are working around the clock to overcome these. We appreciate we are at a critical point in controlling this virus and it is up to all of us to play our part in supporting the NHS and the most vulnerable members of our community. However, I cannot do it without your support or without the fantastic dedication and commitment of the staff at Middlewich High School.

Thank you in advance for your patience and support at this time,

Best wishes,

Heidi Thurland



Headteacher Middlewich High School
Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All

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