

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

11 February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

NEWSLETTER 6

Never have we been more ready to turn off our laptops, tablets and mobile phones and have a well-deserved break from our screens next week during our half term holiday. Home learning, since the start of term, has been extremely successful in many ways and I would like to thank you again for your ongoing support and the overwhelmingly positive feedback we have received regarding the school's management of BSM@Home and live lessons. All that we do as a school is a result of the whole Brownedge family. I am continually blown away by the way our students and staff have adapted to this way of teaching and learning and your part in supporting your child is hugely significant in their success. I thank you on their behalf for that. Before we do finish for a well-earned rest, I would like to update you on some pieces of information.

Remote Learning Survey

Many thanks to all parents and pupils who completed the remote learning survey over the last two weeks. We had over 46% of parents return their constructive feedback. We have a clear and uncompromising vision for how we should continually be transforming and striving for excellence and your feedback supports us to do this, ensuring we continue to be a reflective and self-evaluating school. A resounding number of parents (86%) and pupils (76%) much preferred the implementation of live lessons and 94% of parents felt their child was more engaged than in the previous lockdown last year. I thank you for your extremely positive comments and notes of appreciation which I have passed onto staff. We will continue to develop our remote pedagogy to ensure that teaching practices remain engaging and interactive and even in recent days have introduced breakout rooms, OneDrive, polls and Nearpod to further support learning. Our partnership in these times is as important as ever and please do not hesitate to contact staff members should you need assistance in supporting your child's learning.

Pupil Engagement

We have recreated complex systems to monitor your child's engagement in their learning and have congratulated a large number of pupils who have shown true determination and resilience in their learning. Pupils with good attendance/engagement will be recognised and receive rewards in the usual manner regardless of learning remotely. If your child is ill (Covid-related or not), has an appointment or is struggling to get online for their lessons, please can we ask parents to let us know by contacting school in the usual way.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing are so important and particularly during these challenging times. Three weeks ago, we introduced Form Time to support your child with increased social interactions and in an attempt to balance screen time with wellbeing. We have also set weekly challenges to encourage students to engage in alternative activities to subject specific learning. On Friday 12th February we will have a whole school Mental Health and Wellbeing Day where we will ask pupils, staff (and parents if they wish) to participate in sessions aimed at supporting this important aspect of school life. Mrs Dudaniec has written to parents outlining the plans for the day. [This letter can be accessed here if you have not had chance to read it.](#) We would love all the family to get involved and indeed this is part of the wellbeing idea. No other curriculum learning will be set on Friday 12th February. We hope you will support the day. If you would like any additional resources to support your child's wellbeing, our school website is packed full of guidance and links to information and agencies that can assist you. [There is also a wonderful blog by Mrs Watson,](#) our fabulous Intervention Manager – Watson's Weekly Wellbeing to have a look at. If your child wants to lift their spirits and giggle their way into the weekend – it is the perfect tonic!

Brownedge Resource Bus

The Brownedge Resource Bus made its maiden tour a couple of weeks ago equipped with everything students might need to support their remote learning. Due to its huge success, the bus has run again today with Mrs Sinclair, Mrs Watson and Mr Wilson handing out lots of stationery equipment, exercise books and reading books to over 50 students.

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

Time for Lent

As we enter the season of Lent in the next half term, we will be introducing a second afternoon Form Time session for all students. Every student will have a Form Time on a Monday afternoon and then one additional day through the week. Year 7 and 8 will be on a Tuesday, Year 9 on Wednesday, Year 10 on Thursday, and Year 11 on Friday. During our afternoon form time on Monday 22nd February, students will begin meeting via Teams from 2.55pm-3.10pm for a time of collective worship. This session will incorporate activities, resources, and reflections, prepared by our Lay Chaplain, that students can partake in both in school and at home. These Lenten form times will continue each Monday until we break for Easter, to give both students and staff an opportunity to enter fully into this beautiful season.

Covid Testing Facility

In anticipation of pupils planned return in January, we created a COVID testing facility in the school Gymnasium. This facility has now performed over 300 tests on over 80 staff and 30 key worker and vulnerable pupils. The facility carries out the lateral flow device test and this rapid testing helps identify those asymptomatic cases that might otherwise not be detected, causing the virus to spread further. This testing will continue and will hopefully be rolled out to all pupils as they return to school. More information on how this will take place will be shared once we know more about how and when our pupils will return to school.

Parent Events

Even though we have not been able to have parents physically in the school building, we are still very much open through virtual events. In fact, since starting back to school in September we have held a Year 7 Welcome Evening, a Year 9 GCSE Information Evening, our annual Open Evening and three Parent's Evenings for Year 7, 10 and 11. Staff have become very adept at talking into a camera, as I'm sure we all have! We will continue with this over the next half term, beginning with our virtual Year 8 Pathways evening on Tuesday 23rd February. If you require more information about this please contact Mrs Godbold, our Assistant Headteacher who leads on Curriculum (godbold@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk). We will also be holding our Year 8 and Year 9 Parents' Evenings in March using our new system SchoolCloud. Mr McCreesh, our Deputy Headteacher, will be in contact with parents who have children in these years to ask them to make online appointments. There has been much positive feedback so far from parents and staff who have used this system, and all are extremely praiseworthy of how it makes the evening more efficient and informative.

Reviews and Reports

It is important that we continue to share information about your child through our Pupil Reviews and Reports, following our published schedule. However, given the current situation, these reviews and reports are likely to have a slightly different look and feel to them in order to reflect the remote learning that is taking place. They will still comment on attitude to (remote) learning and report on progress made in learning taking place in live lessons. To support this, it is essential that pupils continue to 'hand in' assignments in the daily class Teams and interact and engage in live lessons. As I have said earlier, the vast majority of pupils have been amazing so far in their efforts to continue their learning.

And finally, as I have commented before during these lockdown periods, it has never been clearer that our school is more than just a building; our school is the people, the community, and the spirit within it. Everyone is aware of how much our school community means to us all. During a time when our building is not open to many of our children and we have not been able to be together in one place, our community has continued to work together, both in terms of learning and looking after each other. We will continue to connect and work together no matter where we may be physically, so that in partnership we will 'let our light shine' brightly for all to see.

Sending my very best wishes and wishing you all a restful and happy half-term break. I look forward to seeing all students remotely, ready to start the new half term on Monday 22nd February at 9.00am.

Mrs Oddie
Headteacher

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

We know that some of our young people are finding the current situation we find ourselves in a bit tough! Having a child in Year 11 myself, I see first-hand the impact it is having on them.

Here is a poem for anyone who has a teenager in their life. Please share it with them, send them our love and let them know everything is going to be ok!

Tell the teenagers

That this will not go on forever, that very very soon, their life will begin again, and it will begin in glorious technicolour.

Tell the teenagers

That they are not being left behind, that all the other young people are waiting too, this stress is collective.

Tell the teenagers

That night is darkest before dawn, so if they are feeling extra hopeless right now, that's because it's coming to an end, soon.

Tell the teenagers

That it's possible to feel utter despair and misery, then, for no apparent reason, to wake up one day and to suddenly feel joy again, we don't know why. Don't believe anything to be permanent, it's not.

Tell the teenagers

That we may not understand how this is affecting them, but we can imagine, and we can worry. We don't know what to do for the best, but we are here.

Tell the teenagers

That one day they will look back on this and realise it made them a far better human somehow. They will seize the moment, face the fears and take every opportunity with open arms. And when tough times come, they will remember they survived.

Tell the teenagers

To find a little purpose every day and hang onto it, like a life raft. Anything, no matter how small, can keep you afloat.

Tell the teenagers

That what they are enduring right now is not fair, it's not easy and it is hard. But great things are coming, if they can just hang on and wait...

Wait...

Just a little longer.

#itsokcampaign #teenmentalhealth