

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

27 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As we reach the end of this long Summer half term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering support; it is truly heartening to see our pupils working hard and being back in our family environment. So many have been exemplary in the way in which they have resumed their learning in school and deserve a well-earned rest and relaxation over the half term break.

Return to normal school day timings

Many thanks to the parents that expressed their views in our recent survey regarding the school day. The overwhelming response saw the parent view that a return to normality was the right action to take. In reply, therefore, as of Monday 7th June school will revert to normal timings starting at 8.50am and finishing at 3.05pm for ALL year groups. Pupils will have a form period at the beginning and end of the day, allowing for our outstanding pastoral care to continue to be the best it can be. We will maintain our year group bubbles and split break and lunchtime arrangements to ensure the highest safety possible of all our community. Year 11 will have finished school by this date, and we believe our reduced numbers will have a positive impact on how school operates. We are aware of parental concerns in terms of bus restrictions and will continue to work with parents of pupils who use the 125 bus service from the Clayton Brook area.

Mobile Phones

Since returning from lockdown, inappropriate use of mobile phones during the school day has become a significant issue in school. As we revert back to Form Period before and after school, I will enforce our school rule regarding their use and storage. Can I remind you that mobile phones, if brought into school, MUST be handed into the Form Tutor at Registration to be locked in the mobile phone safe. They will then receive their phone back at the end of the school day in the registration period before home time. Pupils caught with phones (whether they are on or off) will receive sanctions. Please refer to our Behaviour Policy for more details if needed. Your support on this matter is appreciated.

Home testing and Face Masks

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring that regular Covid testing takes place. Please can I urge you to continue to do this twice weekly. Test kits are available from school whenever needed. Directors of public health from Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council are advising pupils and staff in schools and colleges to continue wearing face coverings until 21 June, despite restrictions relaxing nationally from May 17. My apologies on behalf of the Lancashire Health Team for the lateness of their announcement. This decision has come following a recommendation from directors of public health across the North West, amid concerns about the spread of the Covid variant first detected in India, which has been classified by the World Health Organisation as a "variant of global concern". Continuing to use face coverings in schools, along with maintaining hand washing, social distancing, fresh air and regular testing, will help to control the spread of the variant. The advice will be reviewed as we return to school and ahead of 21st June, the next milestone in the Government's roadmap.

Exams in Years 7 to 10 – June 17th to June 24th

Summer examinations will take place, beginning on Thursday 17 June. Summer exams are a test of how much pupils know and understand from the work they have done all year. As you are aware, GCSEs require pupils to learn facts by heart and to show an ability to understand new ideas and concepts. It is vital that pupils revise well. To support pupils and to support you in helping your child prepare for these exams, an information booklet for each year group has been produced. This booklet includes topic lists for all subjects, the exam week timetable and tips and strategies for effective revision. In preparation for this, all regular written homework will cease after half term to allow for your child to consolidate their learning through revision. Knowledge from school learning can always be supplemented by learning from the web so students should always have lots to do.

Learning for Life

During the lockdown periods we reduced our Learning for Life curriculum. Over the next half term we will ensure that pupils access this vibrant and enriching curriculum once more. We plan to run several L4L Theme Days involving

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numerous guest speakers, dedicated PSHE time and interactive tasks and activities to support the education of our pupils in this important curriculum area. More information will follow in the next half term.

FSM Vouchers - May Half Term

We can confirm that, following a further grant allocation from the new Covid Local Support Grant, we will once again be using the LCC funded Edenred account to order May half term vouchers for benefits-eligible FSM pupils. Each eligible pupil will be issued with a £15 voucher to cover the half term holiday. If you require more information, please contact Mr Burrows (bursar@st-maryshigh.lancs.sch.uk)

Careers

In these challenging employment times, careers advice is more important than ever. In the weeks returning from half term Year 11 and Year 10 pupils will be able to access a superb array of opportunities to support their knowledge and understanding as to what is available to them as they think about the next step of their life journey. The two weeks of face to face and virtual activities include working with numerous local colleges, FutureU, Training 2000, ASK (The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme), Barclays Life skills and mock interviews and CV/job application writing tutorials. If your child would like to get involved, please contact Miss Mault for more information.

Rewards and Prize Giving

Heads of House, Subject Teachers and Form Tutors are busy ensuring that pupils are rewarded for their hard work and efforts over this demanding year. Heads of House are currently planning rewards trips for the end of the summer term. Those pupils who have already earned their golden ticket will be included in these trips. However, it's still not too late to make the list! Heads of Faculty and Subject Teachers are also deciding who will receive prizes at our annual Prize Giving. This event will run differently than it has in the past due to continued COVID restrictions and mass gatherings. However, we are determined we will still have this important event in our school calendar. We hope it may even be better as we plan a virtual event, allowing the whole school community to be involved and celebrate and congratulate those pupils who have shown resilience, determination and commitment. More information will follow after half term.

Year 11 Farewell

Finally, I would like, on behalf of the whole school community, to say thank you and farewell to our amazing young adults in Year 11. They leave school on Friday following a whole year group assembly, photo and Mass celebration. They have worked incredibly hard over the last months and in particular 10 weeks. We wish them the very best for their next steps in their learning journey and hope they keep in touch with the Brownedge family. As I will say to them on Friday, "Once you are part of this family, you are in it for life. So, once you have finally, finally left, come back and see us; we always love to see how you are getting on."

Many thanks again for your ongoing support.

Mrs N Oddie
Headteacher