

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

17 September 2021

Dear Parents

Newsletter 1 2021

I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to the start of our 2021-22 academic year. I hope you all have had a restful, relaxing and safe summer break, ready for the start of a busy but exciting year. A very warm welcome too, to all our new students and parents – we are looking forward to welcoming you to our Brownedge family and building a partnership with you to support your learning journey in our fabulous school community. They have settled in extremely well and look keen and eager to enjoy high school. I also offer our love and very best wishes and thanks to all our students who have now moved on from Brownedge at the end of the last academic year. We hope they move on from their success of their last year and build on their fantastic results on their new adventures.

We are in for an exciting year! As we move on from COVID restricted times, we look at how we can adapt some of the new, creative and innovative ways of working we developed last year, whilst restoring proven and well-practiced processes and standards. We are also developing our resources for our students in terms of new classrooms, corridors and catering facilities. More about this in the very near future. Whatever changes we make, rest assured we will continue to uphold the high standards and expectations we have for our students, both in terms of behaviour, attitudes, personal development and their academic progress.

Staffing Update

As we welcome students back, we also welcome new staff who join Brownedge this year. Miss Smith joins us as Head of Technologies, with specific specialism in Design Technologies. This is a new faculty and signals our intent to move forward with emerging new technologies for teaching and learning over the next year. Miss Thompson and Miss Simpson join us in the Maths Faculty and Mr Heraty joins us in the History Department. To support our Covid recovery plans we are also joined by Mr Ibrahim in maths and Mrs Birchall in English, who will support students and extends our provision in these important subjects. Finally, Mr Foley, an ex-service mentor joins our fabulous Intervention Team.

Uniform is important

Whilst the vast majority of our students have returned to school in correct uniform, in order to continue our drive towards excellence we have introduced a uniform card for all students. This will allow us to reward students who consistently present themselves excellently, whilst ensuring all strive towards our high standards following school uniform rules, such as appropriate skirt lengths, shirts being tucked in and no jewellery. We know that we are preparing students for future employment and rules that they will need to adhere there. Following rules is an important element of our students' education –and I thank parents for their continued support on this.

Testing

As you know we were asked to test students twice in their first week back at school this term in order to get them back into the habit of twice weekly testing at home. We conducted over 1250 lateral flow tests during the week, with only 2 positive cases. Covid is still around and whilst we try to have normal school operations we will still be taking as many precautions as possible whilst we “live with” Covid as a feature of our daily lives. We will continue to promote hand hygiene and ventilation and ask that students undertake twice weekly testing. The test kits have been issued to students and the results should be uploaded to the NHS website please. If a student tests positive they will need to isolate for 10 days from either the onset of symptoms or (if asymptomatic) the test date. Young people who are contacts no longer need to isolate but the strong advice is to get a PCR test.

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Charity

We are aware that over the last months, due to covid restrictions, we have not been able to live out our commitment to service in the local community through our normal fundraising activities. With this in mind, we are very happy to announce therefore that next Friday, 24th September we will be holding our annual Cancer Awareness Morning. If students could bake or donate cakes, sweets or snacks, we will open our Main Hall up at break time for fun, food and frivolity to support charities close to our community's heart. Please support us in this worthwhile morning.

Attendance Matters

As we recover from potential lost learning, pupil attendance at school is more crucial than ever. Every pupil in school has been set a target of 97% attendance which in simple terms equates to no more than 6 days absence of the course of the entire academic year. Achieving this target will be important for your child to be eligible for our end of term rewards. As always, taking of holidays during term time is highly discouraged and unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are reviewed case by case, it is unlikely that any holiday request will be authorised. All our holiday patterns link with our local primary school and they can be found on our website for 2021-22 and next week we will publish our 2022-23 patterns, which we hope you find helpful in your planning. As we enter into the winter season, it is imperative that we follow guidance with regards symptoms and continue to test regularly, but outside of the main COVID symptoms and with negative lateral flow tests students should endeavour to attend school where they are physically able to. Any absence that is related to COVID and supported with PCR test evidence will not have a detrimental effect on a child's eligibility for rewards, and is true for extenuating circumstances surrounding absence from school. Should you require further information regarding attendance at school, please contact Mrs Doherty our Attendance Officer.

Open Evening

On the 30th September we will be holding our annual Open Evening event. We are so pleased that this can take place in person this year as we have missed many opportunities for parents to come and experience our fantastic school and the outstanding relationships that make us so special. As in previous years school will close at 12.30pm on this day to allow the school to fully prepare for this important evening. There will be no dinners served on this day but there will be more substantial snacks available in the mid-morning break. Students entitled to Free School Meals can draw down their allowance at morning break on this day. If you have a younger child in the school and this presents you with a problem, please let me know in a brief note and I will ensure your child is supervised in school until 3.05pm as normal. In the next few days we will be asking for volunteers and do hope lots of students will come into school on the evening to show how proud they are of our school. Many students have already volunteered to help which is fantastic.

This week has felt very much like a stride to normality. We have had House groups in assemblies and pupils have enjoyed the summer sunshine and release from the restrictions of bubble systems. I hope you enjoy the weekend when it comes and I send my very best wishes to everyone for another great academic year.

Kind regards

Mrs N Oddie
Headteacher