

Brownedge St Mary's Catholic High School

Headteacher: Mrs N Oddie BA(Hons) NPQH



*Let your
light shine*

11 February 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

As we draw to the end of another extremely busy half term, I would like to thank you for your continued support and share how proud I am of how our pupils have acted over the last six weeks to the changes and uncertainty that continued to evade our everyday working practices. Whilst the situation with Covid has much improved, we still have to ensure that we are complying with all safety measures and pupils have responded well to the routines placed in front of them in terms of masks and testing. We ask you to please continue to use the testing kits and encourage your child to adhere to safe practices. Test kits continue to be available for home use.

School Council – You asked, We listened!

Following feedback from School Council, we were delighted to open our Brownedge Bites food van this half-term. After responding to our pupils' request for a more convenient and swift food service at break and lunch time, it has been brilliant to see so many of them queueing up for meals and snacks as they try out our new facility. We encourage anyone who has yet to sample Brownedge Bites to give it a go! Following another suggestion from School Council, 2022 has seen us usher in the era of Meat-Free Mondays at Brownedge. An initiative proposed by our pupils as a way we can look after our planet and protect God's creations, our canteen and food van are now serving healthy and sustainable meat-free alternatives every Monday. We are very proud of our pupils for coming up with this idea, and their work has not gone unnoticed – after we posted news of Meat-Free Mondays on the Brownedge Twitter (@BrownedgeStMary), the official Meat-Free Monday Twitter account (@MeatFreeMonday) shared our efforts with their 50,000 followers, hailing the efforts of our pupils as "fantastic news."

Mary's Meal charity

The past few weeks have seen our lay chaplain, Rachael, introduce a brilliant charity to our pupils which we will be supporting this year in our pledge to raise awareness of our School of Sanctuary Award work. Mary's Meals is an organisation that provides school dinners in parts of the world where they are desperately needed to ensure children have the energy required to tackle the school day. Rachael has delivered assemblies outlining the work Mary's Meals has done in countries like Lebanon, Myanmar, Ecuador and Haiti. Our Chaplaincy GIFT Team and Equality groups will be planning for ways in which the Brownedge family can fundraise for this terrific cause – watch this space!

Careers

Empowering our pupils with the knowledge required to take their next steps in life after school is important to us at Brownedge, and our Careers programme is a key part of that. With that in mind, we were delighted to receive 100% in all eight of the Gatsby Benchmarks – the eight criteria at the heart of the National Careers Strategy for Schools. This half-term has already seen us welcome in guest speakers for careers activities – such as Ashbridge Nursery who delivered a presentation to our Health and Social Care pupils – with more such visits due soon.

Half Term Food Vouchers

We can confirm that approval has been granted for schools to utilise the LCC Edenred account to order February half term vouchers for benefits-eligible FSM pupils. Each eligible pupil will be issued with a £15 voucher to cover the one-week holiday period. Please contact [Mr Burrows](#), our school Business Manager if you have any questions.

Trips

As we begin to get back to normality, we are starting to enjoy school trips and plan future enrichment opportunities. These include at a local level, college taster sessions for A Level and vocational courses, mock trial law court visits, retreats to Castlerigg, DofE expeditions and numerous rewards trips to Alton Towers and Rock and River. We also have opportunities to visit wider afield such as sports trips to Spain, history visits to Krakow and of course, our Ski trip to America in 2023 and 2024. Information about exciting opportunities will be published on our school website.

Attendance

We are delighted at the significant number of pupils who have maintained a 100% attendance, with many winning the 'Weekly 100 prize' as well as being on course to achieve their Silver 100 Club badge at Easter; high standards of attendance is truly commendable. We are also delighted to have welcomed Mrs Carrera to our team, as our

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Attendance Manager. Mrs Carrera is working closely with Mrs Doherty, our attendance officer, to track and monitor attendance and punctuality, as well as work with our families to support improvements where necessary. If your child is unable to attend school, please report their absence to our attendance team on the morning of absence otherwise it will be categorised as unauthorised. It is important to note that unless unavoidable, do not arrange medical or dental appointments during school hours as these count against attendance. As we move forward, it is essential to establish good habits and ensure 'loss of learning' is kept to an absolute minimum. Pupils who have an attendance of 90% or below, and should this pattern continue through their academic life, could miss the equivalent of at least half an academic year of learning. As a school we are passionate and committed to high standards of attendance and the support of you as parents is integral to achieving this.

High behaviour expectations

In assemblies last week pupils were reminded of our expectations on prohibited items in school. Once again, we highlighted the consequences of bringing/using eCigarettes, lighters, eScooters and laser pens into school. This will not be tolerated in any circumstance. We continue to uphold our high standards relating to the use of mobile phones. Can I remind parents, as we have pupils, that our school rule states that phones must be switched off during the school day. Phones are not to be used as a means of telling the time. We are currently adding to our school behaviour policy the inappropriate use of smart watches linked to phones. We are seeing an increasing number of pupils using smart watches to communicate with others. If these watches are used in this manner, then the mobile phone sanction will be put in place.

Firefly

Firefly is now live for all students. If you have not yet activated your parent account, you can do this now by clicking on the 'New to Firefly' link on the Firefly tab at the top of our school website, and entering your email address. If you do not receive an activation email after you have done this, please contact [Mr Banks](#) as there may be an issue with the email address we have registered for you.

Key dates for Half Term 4

There are numerous events taking place next half term to support you with your child's learning and progress. Please note the relevant year group. We will communicate to remind you of event pertinent to your child.

Event	Time and Date
Year 8 Pathways Evening	6pm, 24 th February
Year 9 Pathways Evening	7pm, 24 th February
Year 11 GCSE Information Evening	7pm, 1 st March
Pupil Ash Wednesday Liturgy	2.00pm, 2 nd March
Year 8 Reviews to go home	7 th March
Year 8 Parents' Evening	6.30pm, 8 th March
Year 7, 9, 11 Reviews and Year 10 Reports to go home	16 th March
Year 9 Parents' Evening	6.30pm, 17 th March
Rewards Days	30 th March
Charity Afternoon	31 st March

Wishing you a happy half term break.

Kindest regards

Mrs N Oddie
Headteacher