



Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

Dear Parent / Carer,

It is hard to believe that we are already four weeks into the new academic year. This year promises to be another exciting one, building on the successes of this summer and focusing on new initiatives to support your child in their learning journey.

### **High Expectations**

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our drive on raising and maintaining high expectations. The vast majority of students have returned to school looking smart and ready to work. I know that these high standards reflect a wider commitment that will enable us to continue establishing a positive learning environment in school.

### **Bicycles**

More students are now seeking to cycle to school. This is something that we are happy to support, however, please can you ensure that your son/daughter is fully aware of their responsibility while using the roads and their responsibility in respecting the rights of pedestrians. Students may use the school cycle storage areas next to the student entrance or next to Green Acres. **I would advise that bicycles are only left if they have been securely stored using a lock, school cannot accept responsibility for any thefts that may occur from these storage areas.** In addition, please be advised that students will no longer be allowed to bring their bicycle into the school building for storage from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October – we simply do not have storage space within offices and classrooms to facilitate this.

### **Reading and Literacy**

As you may be aware, the reading ability of a student has a massive impact on how well they can access the curriculum and GCSE examinations. At Newall Green High School, we place a huge value on reading, and have a number of 'reading for pleasure' initiatives and interventions in place to help improve the reading ages of all our students.

Students will have their reading ages tested twice per year and these will be recorded in their planners. Generally speaking, a student's reading age should be in line with their chronological age. For example, a student who is 11 years and 5 months old should have a reading age of *at least* 11 years and 5 months. This reading age should increase in line with the increasing age of the student. However, this doesn't happen by chance. It only happens if students are reading challenging texts regularly and are receiving the appropriate support if they are behind.

### **What is school doing to improve students' reading?**

- All students are expected to have a reading book in their bags at all times.
- Reading records and rewards give students opportunities to track their own reading progress and be motivated to read more.
- Students have a Literacy assembly every half-term and Library lessons once per fortnight.
- Forms tutors read aloud to their forms each week.

- Students read for at least 10 minutes per day as part of our '**Take10**' reading initiative across the curriculum.
- Students follow an online vocabulary programme called **Bedrock** in school and at home as part of their English lessons.
- Students who have a reading age significantly below their chronological age, or those who are really struggling with their reading will be identified for further **intervention** and support.
- Some students are withdrawn from Spanish lessons to receive additional literacy support.

### **What we would like you to do to help...**

As a parent you can have a powerful impact on your son/daughter's progress. Please encourage them to do their '**10 minutes of Home Reading**' each day and remind them to change their reading books regularly. Write in their planners when they have done this and encourage them to keep a record of the books they read in the planners.

Sit through a **Bedrock** lesson with your son/daughter to see what is expected of them. Encourage them to complete two sessions of Bedrock at home per week [one session is part of English homework].

If your son/daughter is using **LEXIA** in school, they are also able to complete sessions at home as it is online based – all students will know how to do this. So, encourage them to complete additional sessions independently at home.

### **Oracy Lessons**

Your son/daughter has a weekly Oracy lesson. This is a lesson that aims to develop their cultural literacy and knowledge of the world, their speaking and listening skills, and their confidence in communication. Ofsted say that our Oracy curriculum is 'innovative' and we are one of only a few schools in the North-West who are leading the way with an Oracy curriculum.

If your son or daughter is in Year 11, you may be thinking: why do this now when they have GCSE exams this year? The simple reason is that we want to ensure that all our students are given the opportunities to develop life-long skills so they can be confident in college and job interviews, work independently and with others, and to help them to become active citizens in society. Our Year 10 and 11 Oracy curriculum is closely linked to our GCSE English curriculum: we are developing students' ability to develop articulate, convincing arguments both in spoken and written form - writing to argue is worth 25% of GCSE English so this is a crucial skill for students to master.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please also note as a reminder to my previous letters and communications, that we will continue to enforce a strict mobile phone ban on the school site. We are aware that the vast majority of students already comply with this rule and we appreciate the support from the huge number of parents who have worked with us.

### **Homework Club**

To support students, we have staffed a homework club that runs every night after school from 3.00pm – 3.45pm in the ICT room. Your child will be able to access all of the homework packages and the staff present will also be able to provide any support needed on particular aspects of the curriculum.

### **Cultural Reward Trips**

Our partnership with Timpsons continues this year and this is enabling us to offer several experiences over the academic year. Here is a taste of what is on offer over the next few months:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
October	Forest School at Quarry Bank Mill				Waterstones Bookshop visit
November	Excellence Mystery Reward	Excellence Mystery Reward	Excellence Mystery Reward	Waterstones Bookshop visit Excellence Mystery Reward	An Inspector Calls Play Excellence Mystery Reward
December	The Grinch at the Lowry	Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime	Snow White Pantomime	Snow White Pantomime	The Bodyguard Musical
January	Waterstones Bookshop visit	Waterstones Bookshop visit	Waterstones Bookshop visit		

Please keep an eye out for the individual permission slips for these rewards and remember to return them to school promptly.

### **Planners**

All students have all been given a school planner where they can record their homework in the diary section. Pages 8 and 9 is where students can record their rewards and any detentions they have been given. Please can you check their planners for homework and sign them off weekly. If they have lost their planner, they will need to purchase a new one for £1.50.

### **Key Dates**

22 <sup>nd</sup> October	Prize day (a separate letter will be sent to successful students)
25 <sup>th</sup> October	Break up for October half term at 3pm
5 <sup>th</sup> November	Students return to school after half term at 8.40am
11 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> November	Big Test Week for Years 7, 8, 9 and 11
29 <sup>th</sup> November	School closed to students for INSET
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Parents Evening for Years 7, 8 and 11
20 <sup>th</sup> December	Break up for Christmas at 1.15pm.
7 <sup>th</sup> January	Students return to school after Christmas at 8.40am

Finally, I would like to thank parents for their continued support.

Yours sincerely



Head of School