



MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

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HEIDI THURLAND B.A Hons *Headteacher*

Dear families,

In light of the current financial pressures on families as a result of public social distancing and lock down measures I have taken the decision to review the phasing timescales for the new uniform as follows:

- New intake students (current Yr6 students) will be expected to wear the new uniform and PE kit. Due to the extreme financial pressures COVID-19 is placing on a wide range of families we have taken the decision **for this year only** to provide **ALL new intake** Yr7 students with a free blazer and a free tie. This will represent a saving of £35.50 for every child starting with us in September (based on junior sizing). Ties & house badges will be given to students on their first day in September.
- Students in current Yrs 7&8 will **not** have to purchase the new uniform/PE kit until **Sept 2021**, if you wish to purchase the new uniform in Sept 2020 you can do so but this is entirely at your discretion.
- Current Yr9&10 students will **not** have to purchase the new uniform/PE kit at all. This is because at the point of whole school implementation current Yr10 will have left and current Yr9 will be in Yr11. I would never ask Yr11 students to purchase uniform for one year. However should students in Yrs 9&10 **wish** to purchase the new uniform this is entirely at your discretion.
- From this point forward if families choose to replace uniform via SWI it will be the new uniform that is stocked (orders live from 15th June). However, we do have a small amount of stock in school of the current uniform which students can access should they need replacements (sizes are limited however). Please contact our admin team for further information from June 2020 regarding ordering should you need it.

Moving forward all students will benefit from further cost saving measures as we have reduced the number of compulsory items/costs for students in the following ways:

- First tie given to all students free as the uniform is phased in (Sept 2021 for current students in Yrs7&8 or at point of replacement). Replacement ties are available from school at a lower cost than previously
- Free first house badge given to all students
- The only compulsory branded uniform is the school blazer & PE T-shirt
- We have increased the range of PE kit but also reduced the compulsory items to a t-shirt, one choice of bottoms & school socks (reduced price from previous school socks/also unbranded). All other items are optional. We have also taken the decision to remove branding from the following items of PE kit: Shorts, Skort & Tracksuit bottoms. The leggings do have an MHS logo on as requested by students as does the optional half zip training top & t-shirt. The increased range of bottoms to choose from allows families to choose if they

wish to wear something that is branded or not. The overall cost of the new PE kit is cheaper than the current kit.

- In order to keep costs down the approved uniform is only available from Sportswear International (as it is currently). We have been out to tender to source the most competitive supplier.
- The overall cost of the new uniform in its entirety is cheaper than the current uniform

What are Students Expected to Wear/Where do we buy it From?

Compulsory School Uniform (from our supplier): School blazer

Compulsory School Uniform (available from school): School tie (1st one free), house badge (1st one free, replaces house ties and has reduced the cost of ties, each house is represented by a coloured star pin badge to be worn on the lapel of the blazer)

Compulsory School Uniform sourced by families as per uniform policy: White shirt, black trousers, black shoes

Optional Uniform (from our supplier): School skirt, school jumper

Compulsory PE Kit (from our supplier): PE T-shirt, socks, a choice of 1 item from the following range: shorts, skort, leggings, tracksuit bottoms

Optional PE Kit (from our supplier): Quarter Zip training top (for cold weather), additional bottoms as required

Compulsory Branded Items: Blazer, tie, PE T-shirt

Optional Branded Items: Leggings, Half-zip training top, skirt

Unbranded Items: Shorts, skort, tracksuit bottoms, school jumper, school PE socks

Why the change? Our new uniform is better value, better quality, improves standards, improves comfort, ethically sourced and also sustainable. The decision to move to white shirts is specifically to enable families to source shirts at a lower cost and more easily. Families are able to source black tailored trousers at their own convenience. The school skirt is an optional item (from our approved supplier), it is a much improved style and is also made of 100% recycled materials. The school jumper is unbranded and also optional. The school tie is made of 100% recycled materials, in 18-24 months the school blazer will also be made of recycled materials. We believe this addresses our social responsibility in terms of climate change. We will be one of, if not the first school nationally to have addressed this. This helps to 'future proof' our uniform against any future directives to review sustainability.

Why have you changed the school logo? We have revised the school logo, we have retained the oak tree but have used one rather than three as this is a stronger, clearer image. The tree represents growth, resilience, legacy and strong community roots. In the previous logo we did not feel that the students were represented, in the new logo there are five stars around the tree. Each star represents the Houses which staff and students are part of. We feel the revised logo represents the uniqueness of MHS – strength, tradition, growth, community and of course expectation of excellence. Our students are stars and we are aiming for them!

Where can we buy the uniform? We will continue to use Sportswear International. This is a company parents are familiar with, through our tender process they were the most competitive in price and logistical capacity. All optional and compulsory items will only be available through this company.

Why are you only using one supplier? We carried out a tender process with a range of suppliers, in order to be able to ensure quality and cost effective pricing strategy we are using a sole supplier. This enables the supplier to gain economies of scale which they would not be able to achieve with smaller order numbers. This ultimately means that we have been able to negotiate hard on price and reduce costs to families.

Did you listen to students, parents and staff? Yes we did – the final uniform is quite different to the initial proposal, which was always part of a consultation phase. We have listened carefully to stakeholders regarding their preferences, cost, quality and phasing. I do believe the decisions made fully reflect the feedback received from stakeholders.

What about proposed legislation? The result of this decision means that we will have given parents two full academic years notice on uniform change. The DfE guidance is one academic year, supplier choices must be financially justifiable and the school must have endeavoured to reduce compulsory and branded items. We believe as a school we satisfy all the current and proposed legislation and we have worked hard to ensure best value and best quality. The overall cost of the uniform will be cheaper than the current uniform and much improved in quality and sustainability.

What about families who are struggling financially? In Sept 2020 all new intake students will receive a free blazer and tie – this is a **direct response** to COVID-19. We will review needs of students in the future as uniform comes into effect in 2021 for students in current Yrs 7&8. The phased implementation means that Yrs9&10 are not under any obligation to buy the new uniform. We have reduced the overall cost of uniform to help support all families moving forward. Our decision to defer new uniform to current Yr7&8 students until Sept 2021 is to **directly support** families during a difficult period.

Are the skirts compulsory? No. Students can choose to wear black trousers that families can independently source. The approved school skirt is available through SWI and students who *choose* to wear a skirt with the new uniform must wear the new design.

How has the PE range changed? In the past students have had to purchase a pair of shorts/skort, a t-shirt, hoodie and alternative outdoor top. Often our students despite buying shorts/skorts have then gone on to buy leggings or tracksuit bottoms and have not worn one or more of the previously compulsory items. The new range allows freedom of choice from shorts/skorts/leggings/tracksuit bottoms. We have introduced a unisex training top which is optional. All students are expected to wear the PE t-shirt, socks and a choice of bottoms. We have improved the design of the socks so that they are more durable, they are also less expensive. The kit itself dries quickly and is breathable, designed for performance and in my view more comfortable and much smarter – a professional sports look which our children deserve. We have reduced branding so that only the T-shirt, leggings & Quarter Zip top have the school logo. Students requested branding on the leggings as they felt this would look more professional. The logo remains on the t-shirt for safeguarding reasons. Throughout their school careers students take part in school competitions/sports festivals/trips, having the name

of the school on the t-shirt helps us to quickly identify our students and is an essential aid to safeguarding.

Where can I see the new uniform? Our new uniform can be viewed on the website via parent zone/uniform; the complete pricing for new uniform is included with this letter (new intake & Sept 2021 costed separately). Please be aware we had to complete our uniform photo shoot very quickly due to the closure of the school. In due course we will be taking professional photographs to better showcase the full range. My thanks to our lovely models for being willing to showcase the new uniform at short notice!

What about sizing? Originally we had arranged for SWI to come into school to provide sizing for all year groups. However at this point I do not know what the situation will be in terms of social distancing/lock down. We will keep the booking with SWI for as long as possible in the hope that we will be able to offer a sizing opportunity to new Yr7 students. However the company has a full exchange service so if we are unable to provide a sizing opportunity you will be able to return uniform and have it exchanged if it is the incorrect size. I will let families know in due course if we are able to offer an on-site sizing opportunity.

I know you have offered to pay for blazers for Yr7, but I do not need that assistance and would rather the school kept the money for something else – can you do this? We are going to apply a discount code for new intake families to use, if you do not wish to use this code you do not have to. This information will be sent out as part of our new intake transition pack, we are just finalising details with our supplier.

My child is not in Yr7 will I get a free blazer if I buy the uniform in September? No, there is no obligation for you to buy the new uniform until Sept 2021 and only if your child is in current Yr7&8. We are only providing a free blazer to new intake this year due to COVID-19 placing additional pressure on families. All students will however benefit from a free first tie & house badge when the uniform is implemented for other year groups. If you choose to replace the uniform prior to the 2021 implementation for current Yrs7&8 please contact our admin team and we will ensure you receive your free tie & badge.

When will we be able to purchase the new uniform? The new uniform will be available to order from June 15th 2020 online.

I am a new intake parent will you be writing to me separately? Yes absolutely, this letter is intended as an overview only. I will write to you in due course with more detail on how to claim your free blazer etc. Please anticipate some communication from me after Easter.

If you have any queries please contact the school via the admin email.

Regards,



Heidi Thurland
Headteacher
Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All