



MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

HEIDI THURLAND BA (HONS 1ST CLASS) NPQH HEADTEACHER

December 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

How quickly time passes, it doesn't seem like five minutes since I wrote to you all at the end of the first half term. Nationally, there is much discussion about the disruption to education and the cost of this on our young people, especially our Yr11 students. I am delighted therefore that we have come through 16 weeks of term pretty much unscathed. The only way this has been achieved is due to the exceptional work and cooperation of staff, students and our wider community – so a massive thank you from me.

In the last two weeks of term we supported students isolating in Yr8 by running live lessons for the first time in the school's history. This has been a learning curve for all of us as our teachers and students have had to adapt to new ways of working. I have been delighted with the way in which families, staff and students have embraced new ways of working, supported each other, exercised patience and most importantly continued to focus on their learning.

As we look ahead to the New Year I do believe we can start to feel some optimism that there is light at the end of the tunnel with news about vaccines and improving treatments for COVID19. As always – whatever is happening around us at MHS, we will continue to provide exceptional education and care for our young people no matter what the challenges may be.

I have been delighted to see our reading culture 'take off' this term. Every student in school has been involved in reading weekly; I have congratulated students on becoming millionaire readers, as well as recognising students who have greatly improved their vocabulary through Bedrock. It has been fantastic to have discussions with students about their favourite stories and to see them getting 'lost in a book'. I do hope that you take advantage of the recommended reading we recently shared on social media. Without doubt, reading is one of the most powerful things a young person can do to improve their chances of success later on in life.

Attendance at school has been excellent with the school sustaining 93%, this is in comparison to a national average of 83%. I cannot thank you enough for your trust in the school, it is fantastic to see just how much our young people value their education and their determination to be here every day; it is a privilege to work with such talented, positive and resilient students and staff.

Attitudes to learning once again continue to demonstrate our culture of pride, ambition and respect. Many thanks to all families who have supported such an excellent term in relation to student standards of uniform; their ambitious commitment to engaging fully in their learning and their resilience in coping on a school site accommodating Covid-safety. The excellent attitudes to learning are reflected in our highest achievement for Silver and Gold badges. Students wear their badges with pride and student voice have been instrumental in refining our reward system, reflecting their leadership qualities.

I am sure as parents you will be wondering how we will approach progress evenings and of course for our Yr9 students the options evenings that are scheduled to take place in the New Year. We have spent time this term researching the best way to achieve this. I am delighted to let you know that we have invested in video conferencing software which will enable us to hold virtual progress evenings. Having reviewed the impact of these at other schools we believe that this will actually improve the experience for all. The

software is called School Cloud and works very efficiently to timetable virtual meetings with teachers and carers. The 5 minute appointments are timed and allow a discussion about student's progress in the subject. Teachers will inform of work ethic and attitude to learning also. The software requires a computer or smart phone to access the School Cloud platform via the internet. Instructional videos will be available on our website, which will explain how to book appointments and take part on the consultation evening. We will write to parents in the New Year in line with their scheduled progress/options evening. We will of course accommodate parents if ICT resources are an issue. As always if at any time you wish to discuss the progress of your child please do not hesitate to contact our admin team who will pass your enquiry onto the relevant member of staff.

I have worked closely with Governors this term to complete our due diligence process in relation to the proposal to join the Sir John Brunner Foundation. I am delighted to inform you that on the 14th December the Governing Body passed a resolution for Middlewich High School to join the Sir John Brunner Foundation. We have therefore submitted our Academy Order and in the New Year will begin a six week consultation period with all stakeholders to ensure everyone is clear on the ethos and values of the Trust we intend to join in September 2021. These are exciting times for the school as we are taking tangible steps to realise our ambition for excellence. It is my absolute determination as the Headteacher of Middlewich High School to ensure that our students receive an excellent education that matches the quality and ambition of the best schools in the country.

We have some staff leaving us at Christmas. Sarah Dean, Sam Kerr and Denise Kenny in our finance team are all moving on to pastures new. Denise and Sarah have worked here for 16 and 6 years respectively and we are very thankful for their lengthy service to our community. Sam has played a key part in setting up our PTFA and supporting our finance team. We also say farewell to Kate Emery and Kathryn Ford who have supported our SEND students and has made a valuable contribution to our community. I am sure you will join me on passing on our thanks to all these staff and wishing them well for their futures.

This afternoon we are aware that the BBC has announced that there will be a staggered return for students in January. The early implication is that exam groups (unsure if this applies to Yr10 but certainly Yr11) will be on site with other year groups receiving remote learning. As yet we do not have any official advice on this. When we do we will communicate this with families.

I hope that all of you remain safe during the festive period, please see our website for support should you need it while school is closed. As per DfE requirements if a student in your household tests positive over the Christmas period within 48hrs of being in school please make us aware by contacting covidemergencies@middlewichhigh.cheshire.sch.uk . We will be monitoring this from 18th-23rd December 10am-1pm daily. After this point positive cases should be reported into national track and trace. If you have a concern about symptoms/positive test result prior to our return to school please make us aware on the 3rd Jan via the same email and we will advise you accordingly. If in any doubt do not send your child to school on Monday 4th Jan until you have spoken to staff for advice.

I do hope that all of you are able to enjoy a restful Christmas we look forward to seeing you all again on the 4th of January.

Wishing you and your families a merry Christmas and a happy New Year (full of hope & optimism!),



Headteacher
Middlewich High School
Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All''