

11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Y7 parents and carers

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you are as pleased as we are with the way our new Y7s are settling into Whitworth Community High School. Students are making an excellent start to their secondary school careers: teachers and associate staff are commenting on their sensible approach to the current arrangements in school; they are polite and considerate on corridors and in the dining room; and they are keen and enthusiastic in lessons. Thank you to Y7 parents and carers for arranging for students to arrive at school at the appropriate time.

You will be receiving our first full school Newsletter of this academic year, but I thought it would be helpful to write another Newsletter just for Y7 families this week.

### **CATs**

Y7 students will be doing their Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) on Monday 14th September. These are simply online, multiple choice tests which will form part of our target setting process and which also help us to identify student's strengths. Some students may be naturally stronger with language related tasks, others may be good at manipulating and visualising shapes for example. **If your child has some earphones or headphones, please ask them to bring them into school on Monday for the CAT tests.**

### **On-line work**

On the topic of online work, all Y7 students are completing a quick suite of computer literacy activities in their computing lessons. This is to ensure that all students are able to access work at home via Google classroom and other online platforms, in the unfortunate instance of any future Government-directed change from Tier 1 (all schools fully open) to Tier 2 where year groups may be in school on a rota basis. We very much hope that schools are able to remain fully open to all students, but these online platforms are also a vehicle for setting home learning.

### **Library Books, Accelerated Reader and dictionaries**

Students in Y7 will have an introduction to the Accelerated Reader programme, in order that we can measure and monitor their reading abilities, progress and commitment to reading. To support the purchase of new titles and to ensure sufficient library stock, we ask for a £3 contribution from all students, and this is billed via ParentPay. Any student who has ordered a dictionary should collect it from the school reception.

### **Excellent Start commendations**

Over the first few weeks of term, teachers are watching out for Y7 students who are making an Excellent start in each subject - by putting in maximum effort; going above and beyond what is expected; or by having a really positive influence and attitude in class. These students will then be rewarded with Excellent Start certificates. We would usually present these certificates at our Y7 Cheese and Wine and Information Evening, but sadly this event cannot go ahead this term. Instead, certificates will be awarded in Assembly.

### **Y7 Maths groups**

The Maths Faculty completed Maths baseline tests for Y7 in the first two days of term as they were keen to set students in order to ensure an appropriate level of challenge. This week, Y7 students have been placed in Maths ability sets based on their performance in those tests. However, to continue with this at present would mean that, should a Y7 student test positive for Covid-19, we might have to send home a significant number of students to self-isolate. We are therefore going to revert short term to Y7 students being taught Maths in tutor groups from Monday 14th, so that students are taught in their tutor groups across all subjects. Whilst all students in a year group are part of a large 'bubble,' teaching them in tutor groups would limit the number of students having to self-isolate if a Y7 student tested positive.

### **Covid-19 test**

If a student has a Covid-19 test, they should not attend school until you have the result to evidence to school, and students should then obviously only be sent into school if their test result is negative.

### **Y7 Parents' Question Time**

Whilst our Y7 students are settling in well, it may be that some parents and carers have questions pertaining specifically to their child, or about school procedures more generally. If you would like to send any burning questions you may have via email to Mrs Ellis at [y.ellis@whitworth.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:y.ellis@whitworth.lancs.sch.uk) we will put together a list of FAQs and answers and share them with Y7 parents. If the question is of a more personal nature, or specific to your child, I will ask a relevant member of staff to contact you and not include it in the FAQs.

Have a good weekend.

Best wishes



Mrs G Middlemas  
Headteacher

