



Halfold, Whitworth, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 8TS
Telephone: (01706) 343218, Email: office @whitworth.lancs.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs G Middlemas B.Ed, MA (Dist)

Dear parents and carers

Welcome back! It has been a real pleasure to welcome our new Y7 students and to have all our other students back in school.

Firstly, thank you to everyone - students, families, colleagues and our governors - for supporting our plans for the full re-opening of our school. We all know that as we begin the 'new normal' there will be more changes to come, new guidelines to address. We know that our dynamic risk assessments, our flexibility and communication systems will remain vital to our ability to respond to and plan for these changes. We know that the 'new normal' in school is not perfect, but as a school we remain committed to ensuring the best possible provision for students and staff and to reviewing and revising our plans and systems accordingly.

Students have been brilliant so far - well-equipped, looking extremely smart, attentive in lessons and responsive to the health precautions put in place by the school. We have emphasised to students the importance of wearing a face covering in communal areas: corridors; lunch and toilet queues; as well as on the way into and out of school, in order to best protect themselves and others and students have responded to this very responsibly. Please check that your child has a face covering - face mask or visor - when they leave for school.

The School Day

Thank you to parents and carers who have been making sure that students arrive at school at the correct time for their year group 'bubble.' The staggered start is essential to a smooth transition into school. Unfortunately, some students have been arriving extremely early - well before their allotted time - and this creates congestion on Hall Street. Whilst I realise it is sometimes difficult to time one's arrival, especially if travelling on public transport, we really need parental support for the staggered start. The start times have been reiterated to students again today, and they fully understand the reasons for the staggered start.

A reminder of the start times:

Year 7 - 8:40am
Year 8 - 8:45am
Year 9 - 8:50am
Year 10 - 8:55am
Year 11 - 9:00am

We are also aware that families may have particular concerns when their child first starts at high school. Therefore, from tomorrow, Tuesday 8th, any Y7 student who has to arrive early will be able to come onto the school site from 8.15am, go directly to their locker and then to the dining hall as explained today. This does not mean Y7 students should deliberately arrive earlier than their start time, but does mean we can support families by accommodating their early arrival where necessary. All Y7 students should go to their locker on arrival and then wait in the dining room until the bell goes at 8.40am.

Year group 'bubbles' in school

Year groups are in 'bubbles' once they enter the school, there are obviously going to be occasions where, for example, year groups are on corridors at the same time. This is one of the reasons why wearing a face covering is important in communal areas. We have minimised student movement around school between lessons where practicable, whilst teachers are moving from classroom to classroom more to facilitate this. However, when students from different 'bubbles' pass each other on corridors they may well be in close proximity briefly. To minimise interaction between 'bubbles', lunch times and lunch locations are staggered; the start and finish of break time is staggered; as is the end of the school day.

Y11 Assemblies and Careers

Y11 students - a reminder that each Tuesday they will have an Assembly or careers/college presentation from 3.00pm and this is a compulsory part of their school day. This is in addition to the after school Intervention sessions which will be scheduled.

Extra-curricular activities

Our extra-curricular programme of activities begins this week, and we want as many students as possible to be involved in one of our many activities. For Y7 students particularly, it is a really useful indicator for parents that they are settling in and enjoying themselves. All students attending a club/activity need to wait in the dining room, with Ms Bowater, when their year group finishes lessons, until extra-curricular activities start at 3.00pm.

New colleagues

Welcome to Ms McVarish, Ms Pogson, Ms Badley, Ms Moreno, Ms Holdsworth, Miss Greenwood, Miss Upton, Miss Minto and Mrs Karim. I hope they enjoy working here as much as I do!

There will be a further Newsletter later this week, and, once we have had a full week with students in school, we will no doubt identify additional minor changes to improve our Covid-19 systems further.

Best wishes



Mrs Middlemas
Headteacher