



Headteacher Update to Parents and Carers

Dear parent or carer

In our drive to improve communication, I am writing this letter to update you on the many things that we are implementing in order to drive standards at Newsome High School. During the last few weeks, I have had the pleasure of getting to know our students and have been into lessons and delivered assemblies. I have also had the pleasure of meeting some parents and carers to discuss how we can further develop the school to better meet the individual needs of your child. Your feedback is welcome and it is only with your support that we will ensure we meet our goal of becoming an exceptional school with outstanding results – something that I am absolutely dedicated to achieving. With this in mind, I have included an update on some key areas that we are working on over the coming weeks.

Behaviour and Teaching Developments to Support Learning

We are developing a range of initiatives to improve learning in school and make the very best learning environment for our students. Over the coming weeks we will be focussing on an initiative called 'Be Ready'. This involves ensuring that students are ready and equipped to learn. A separate overview of expectations regarding school standards is included in the attached document (named Be Ready). We are also reviewing how lessons are structured in a way that gives clear structure to the start of lessons and we will be exploring new and fresh approaches to ensure lessons fully support the different needs and abilities of our students.

Academy Conversion Update

Further to previous correspondence regarding Newsome High School joining the Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form Multi-Academy Trust, I can confirm that talks are still in progress with the DfE. In the meantime, we continue to take advantage of the close partnership with the trust and the National Leader of Education – Lorraine Barker. During my short time working at the school, I have seen the benefits and opportunities that this partnership brings and this will no doubt have a positive impact on Newsome High's school improvement. I will keep you informed of any progress made in this process but if you would like any further clarification – please get in touch with the school and I will be happy to discuss further.

School Branding

The specialist schools programme was a UK government initiative which encouraged secondary schools in England to specialise in certain areas of the curriculum to boost achievement. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust was responsible for the delivery of the programme. When the new Coalition government took power in May 2010 the scheme was ended and funding was absorbed into general school budgets.

Newsome High School was accredited as a Specialist Sports College in 1994 and has kept the name on its logo. In order to ensure clarity regarding the school, we are proposing to take this addition off the logo and revert back to our original name of Newsome High School. Although we have excellent sports facilities, this may give a false impression to the community. It is important however to keep our school name to reflect the community in which we serve. You may have noticed that the branding on school correspondence has changed to reflect our professional identity. I welcome any comments you have on the school name and the proposal to remove the misleading sports college off our logo. You can call the school or email using the information on our letterhead.



Safeguarding

Thank you in advance for your support in our decision for all students to remain on the school site during lunchtimes. I have been impressed with the maturity shown when discussing this with our students and their understanding that our school takes the safeguarding of our young people very seriously. We are now exploring how the school day can be changed in order to provide more opportunities during social times. More information on these proposals will be communicated to you over the coming weeks.

Communication

I have listened to feedback from parents noting the need to improve communication. With this in mind we are working on a series of initiatives to improve this – starting with our website. We are also putting together a communication strategy which will outline a series of actions that need to take place in order to ensure parents and carers are kept regularly updated. I have been holding a series of drop-in clinics for any parents or carers wishing to discuss issues with me in person. If you would like to attend these, please contact the school and an appointment can be made.

On a final note, I feel it worth mentioning that in the five schools I have worked in during my educational career, the community of all our stakeholders at Newsome is a huge strength, meaning we can make a huge success and drastically improve the life chances of our students. This success means rapid changes in order to achieve the rapid improvement needed. It is important that I have your trust and full support in order to achieve the above and the future developments in our journey to putting Newsome High School on the map.

Yours sincerely

Mr Dean Watkin
Headteacher