



February 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Newsome High has been busy to say the least so far this term. Trips, external speakers, award ceremonies, mock exams, student leadership recruitment and much more have taken place in order to enrich our education provision.

Communication

Our website has been brimming with the latest events in school and we use this as a main tool for informing parents and carers about what's on in school. We also use this to inform you about upcoming parent's evenings. We have had some teething problems with the software we use for booking but please bear with us - we are rectifying this. If you haven't had chance to familiarise yourself with the school website - please do as this platform is a very useful communication tool between school and home. As always - we welcome feedback on anything else you would like including.

Progress Measures

National validated school performance figures have been published for all schools and I'm pleased to say that the school is on an upwards trajectory in terms of progress. Staff are working hard to improve this further for this academic year and beyond. A range of intervention sessions are being held throughout each holiday period and teachers are kindly giving up their time to support students - please keep updated through the website for more information.

School Curriculum and GCSE Options Processes

Parents have asked about the options process and when this will be commencing. We have been working on a new curriculum for our students that enable them to show progress. Historically, there have been instances where students have been studying up to 13 qualifications and underachieving in many. Our new curriculum design will streamline this so that students can focus on achieving their full potential without being stretched too thinly. Information will be shared over the coming weeks with regards to the options process.

Parent Voice Feedback

Thank you to all those who completed the Parent Survey sent out in December - your views are valuable to us. Feedback was generally positive - giving a collective 4 stars out of 5. Parents highlighted the need to improve discipline in school and this is currently being developed. More information regarding this is included below.

My child is happy at this school.	★★★★★(3.9 out of 5)
My child feels safe at this school.	★★★★★(3.9 out of 5)
My child makes good progress at this school.	★★★★★(3.8 out of 5)
My child is taught well at this school.	★★★★★(3.7 out of 5)
My child receives appropriate homework.	★★★★★(3.7 out of 5)
This school ensures the pupils are well behaved.	★★★★★(3.5 out of 5)
This school deals effectively with bullying.	★★★★★(3.5 out of 5)
This school responds well to any concern I raise.	★★★★★(3.7 out of 5)
I would recommend this school to another parent.	★★★★★(3.5 out of 5)



Improving Discipline

Over the course of next half-term, we will be introducing the Assertive Discipline Strategy (AD). This will come in the form of a new behaviour for learning policy which outlines student discipline systems and procedures so that expectations are crystal clear for students, staff and parents. Colleagues are currently putting the finishing touches to this and we aim to introduce this in the coming weeks. This will of course be shared with parents and carers when this is implemented.

Standards

In education, the term 'high expectations' refers to any effort to set the same high educational standards for all students in a school. The concept of high expectations is based on the belief that a failure to hold all students to high expectations denies them access to a high-quality education, since the educational achievement of students tends to rise or fall in direct relation to the expectations placed upon them. In other words, students who are expected to learn more, follow the school rules or perform better generally do so, while those held to lower expectations usually achieve less. When joining the school, I have realised that this is a strong focus area for us to ensure our school becomes exceptional in every area.

With the above in mind - the ever growing increase in social media apps and technology has seen a couple of instances where apps such as Snap Chat have been used inappropriately and disrupted learning. Mobile phones are not to be used in school and policies regarding this will be outlined with greater clarity in our new policy.

There have also been some instances where there have been misunderstandings in the rules relating to toilet usage. Students are allowed to use them in lesson time but the systems have changed where a key is required from student reception. As noted in a letter earlier this year, too many students were inappropriately using the toilets straight after social times and for long periods of time during lessons - missing long periods of learning. As with any tightening up of systems, some students have misinterpreted our expectations when discussing with their parents. I can assure you that staff use their professional judgement when giving permission and bear in mind medical and personal needs of students.

Student Passports are an important learning and communication tool to support organisation. All students at Newsome High are required to have one at all times and this should be used every lesson to record notes. There is a section for parents and tutors to sign so a record of learning is kept each week.

School Staffing Arrangements

Unfortunately we have suffered a number of colleagues falling ill and having operations this term which has led to some groups having temporary staff. Rest assured that we select the best quality and highly qualified colleagues to teach so your children are in good hands. If you have any questions relating to this, please contact the Head of Department for that area.



I am pleased to say that we have also had a number of colleagues that have stepped up to new posts over the past term, resulting in a new and re-aligned Senior Leadership Team. We are also expecting a new Assistant Headteacher that is due to join us in April. I have listed our current team below and their specific areas of responsibility.

- Miss Rachael Dodds - Deputy Headteacher for Standards
- Miss Marie Brown - Assistant Headteacher for SEND and Achievement
- Mr Steve Mitchell - Acting Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour
- Mr Tim Carr - Acting Assistant Headteacher for Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Miss Leanne Morgan - Associate Leader for Achievement
- Mr Rick Lunn - Associate Leader for Safeguarding and PSHCE
- Mr Joel Hinchcliffe will be joining us after the Easter holidays as Assistant Headteacher for PDBW

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Dean Watkin
Headteacher