



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com

Executive Headteacher/CEO: Alun Williams

Registered Address: Norton Hill School, Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, BA3 4AD

Company No: 7365778

15th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Now that we have returned to school, I thought I would update you with how pupils have settled back into routines. I have to say that pupils in all schools have been exceptional and have returned eager to see friends and be working in classrooms. Some of the work produced in lockdown by a significant proportion of youngsters, is extremely good. Most pupils in secondary schools have made expected progress, which means we can really target the additional provision we have planned at a few children who need it, rather than whole cohorts. The picture in primary schools is a little less clear, but most primaries report that pupils have generally kept pace with learning during lockdown.

Teacher Assessed Grades for Years 11 and 13 (TAGs)

Year 11 and Year 13 pupils must continue working over the coming months for two key reasons: 1) They need to ensure they have been taught content that is going to be helpful to them throughout their lives and 2) We need to collect up-to-date evidence of their attainment before we can determine Teacher Assessed Grades. In most subjects, there will be written exam-style assessments. These may be slimmed down versions of GCSE papers, or an extended piece of project work. Subjects across the eight Trust secondary schools will moderate the outcomes and this will ensure a high degree of accuracy in formulating subject grades. As with last year, the process will be outlined in detail in our **Teacher Assessed Grade Policy**. The policy will be available on the Trust website and from schools before Easter. However, I felt it was important to share with you the following points as early as possible so that pupils and parents/carers know what to expect from the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership secondary schools:

- OFQUAL have said that we must base our Teacher Assessed Grades on assessments which could be specific pieces of project work or tests/exam scores. This is because we must be able to produce evidence that a pupil is working at a given grade if requested to do so by examination boards.
- Work completed before, during and after lockdown can be used in determining the teacher assessed grade, but only if deemed suitable by the school.
- Schools must share with pupils and parents/carers what assessed work will be used to determine grades. We aim to compile this in a standardised format for all schools before the Easter break.
- Most secondary schools will have already communicated to parents/carers how well their children are performing. This may have been via school reports received, mock grades or indeed parent/consultation events. **These grades may not necessarily be the final grades pupils are awarded for their TAGS.** This is because pupils still need to be taught subject content and must also be formally assessed in school between now and the end of May 2021.
- **We will complete the teaching of curriculum programmes for Years 11 and 13 by the 28th May.** After the half-term break (31st May – 4th June), we plan to run Post-16 induction courses or offer catch-up programmes for one or two pupils who need further support.
- I have asked all staff to be very careful when talking about grades to pupils, as we do not wish to confuse youngsters by referring to grades for specific pieces of work that may not represent an assessment of the full course.
- Moderation will take place across schools in the Trust to ensure that we are awarding TAGs appropriately and fairly.
- There will be a two stage appeals process and this will be outlined in the TAGs policy.





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Trips and educational visits

Trips and residential visits will not take place before the Easter break as per government guidance. We expect the guidance to be reviewed and there to be some relaxation of restrictions in the remaining Summer term. After the Easter break, there will be limited number of day trips in some schools, but no residential ones unless they are necessary to complete a specific qualification, such as Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, or a requirement for curriculum purposes. Some primary schools may also be compelled to run end of year trips, as they had already paid for this last year. In this situation, the trip will only take place if government guidance says it is acceptable and there is a thorough risk assessment in place to protect children and staff.

Returning of ICT equipment

During lockdown, the Trust loaned over 1500 portable devices to pupils so that they could undertake home learning. It is vital that these devices are now returned so they can be used to support learning in school.

Please ensure that your child has returned their loaned device by Monday 22nd March at the very latest.

Other news:

A warm welcome to the pupils and families of the Park Road ASC Support Centre currently based in Frome. I have visited the site now and was deeply impressed by the youngsters I met and the dedicated staff team who were working with them. Going forward, the base will be relocated to Glastonbury in a new £1.2 million state of the art facility on the St Dunstan's School site.

We are also signing off on the final stages of the transfer of Hayesfield Girls' School into the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership. I expect the transfer date (April 1st 2021) to be met, unless there is a sudden surprise related to due diligence. Once part of our federation, we will begin working on the Bath Hub, which we hope will support the sharing of best practice in teaching and learning as well as expand opportunities for all children.

Finally, I have been asked by the Trustees to compile a report on the positive aspects of remote learning. They are keen that any benefits from working virtually and from home are not lost. I have already shared with you that we intend to keep the parent consultation software, but there are many other positive features of remote learning that I may have missed. Therefore, I will be sending a short survey home for parents/carers to complete so that I can begin to determine the views of all stakeholders about what we should retain and what we should never do again!

Thank you for your continued support and help once again. The return of children to schools has been a delight. Speaking as the temporary Headteacher of Writhlington School, I never imagined that 99.2% of Year 11 would be in school attending in the first week back. National averages for this year group are closer to 92%. I concluded that either Year 11 were desperate to get back and see friends and staff, or their parents were desperate they went back to school! Either way – it is lovely to hear the positive stories from across Trust schools about the return of children.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
CEO

