

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you are now aware, Mr Marshall, our headteacher remains unwell (not Covid related). We wish him a speedy recovery and hope that he is with us again early in the New Year. In his absence and as we approach the end of a busy and challenging term, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for the work we do here at Mossley Hollins. The additional work incurred due to Covid-19 could not have been predicted and our thoughts go out to the many families who have been impacted by this terrible virus and to the many people still living with the long-term effects of Covid-19.

Our school is very different to the one we were used to learning in 12 months ago. Our daily routines have changed and now includes bubbles, lanyards, sanitisation stations, zones and adapted classrooms. However, I am so very impressed with the way in which our students have adapted to these changes whilst maintaining our core values of Manners, Hardwork and Honesty. I am so incredibly proud of the resilience that our students have demonstrated and their mature and sensible approach to their studies. In particular, I am very impressed with the mature response of our year 11 students as they readily accepted a longer day to minimise the risk of the covid restrictions on their progress.

The latest data for year 11 following the recent Pre-Public Examinations (our in-school 'Mock Exams') is very promising for most of our learners and we are confident that with continued hard work the students can achieve strong results in their examinations in 2021. In an increasingly competitive world, it has never been more important for students to achieve the highest grades possible to help them secure the best college places and other post-16 opportunities.

Our school, of course, is not just about results: amidst all the restrictions and changes we are still determined to provide high quality educational and character-building experiences for all our young people. The Year 7 students, who have settled quickly into our **Mossley Hollins Way**, have been afforded many opportunities for further **Character Development** and are working towards apprentice level in each of our four character pillars: **Learning; Participation; Service; and Leadership**. We are looking forward to the next set Character Awards' Ceremonies next term for year 7 and for year 8 students, many of whom are now working towards graduate level

A Popular and Oversubscribed School

In total, there were 585 applications for places at our school, this is another increase on last year. First choice applications from year 6 parents are in line with last year, with 252 1st choice applications. First choice applications have increased by over 25% in the past 3 years. This again means that we are significantly oversubscribed in year 7 for our class of 2026. We do not take our popularity for granted and work hard every day to live up to the high expectations that people have of us.

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A Vibrant and Exciting Place to Learn and Grow

I do hope that you have had the chance to read the weekly Newsflash each Friday. I am so proud of the achievements and efforts of so many of our students and of the time given freely by so many staff to ensure that, despite the Covid Pandemic, there is still a rich and rewarding extra-curricular calendar. Each week it is a delight to see the hard work of our students celebrated and to see their efforts are benefitting local charities and other caring organisations in and around our town. Year 7 and 8 students continue to be provided with opportunities to develop their character traits of learning, leadership, service and participation.

Other Autumn Highlights

There have been so many activities taking place in school over the last term, too many to share, but the list below provides a selection of these.

- Our year 11 students and their families were able to access a virtual Year 11 Parent Partnership Evening – to ensure that parents could support with the latest revision strategies from subjects across school.
- As part of our primary partnership – all of our modern foreign languages teachers have been teaching lessons either virtually or in person at our partner primary schools, in years 3-6. We also held our first ever virtual MCSP Spanish event with year 3 students from our MCSP partnership. This was a huge success and all partnership schools gave excellent feedback.
- Year 7 and 8 students continue to develop their character traits in leadership, learning, service and community. With the first group of Year 7 language ambassadors undertaking leadership responsibilities towards their leadership pillar
- Stunning Art work is showcased each week in the Newsflash. Likewise, the culinary flair of our students in our food and nutrition department and the creative work that we are seeing from students in design and technology lessons is incredible.
- The fabulous art work from our year 11 students from class of 2020 has been incorporated into a wonderful Calendar, which has been on sale over the past few weeks. This followed on from the wonderfully creative virtual art exhibition which was shared with parents recently.
- Whilst we could not have our traditional Service of Remembrance with the whole school on the apron, we were able to record a virtual service including the laying of wreaths from our community partners. Year 9 students then helped to mark this event by writing their own poems, some of which were shared in our Newsflash.
- In science lessons students have enjoyed learning about careers in the science sector.
- In PE lessons this term we students have been doing the mile run challenge which has now turned into the 2 mile and 5k challenge for some pupils. The route is on the school grounds and pupils run on different surfaces and inclines which makes it a tough challenge to complete. All Year 7,8 and 9 pupils have demonstrated excellent levels of fitness to improve their times over the past few weeks with some knocking 5 minutes off the time they got in the first week.
- Some of our dance leaders were due to teach dance with children in our partner primaries, undeterred by students self-isolating, our students took to teaching the dances virtually. Feedback from primary colleagues is that the year 6's are all enthusiastic and are really enjoying the dances.

- Computer Science students took part in a National Computational Thinking Challenge (The Bebras Challenge) Students completed a series of computational challenges and were assessed against students all over the UK. The results are below:
 - 107 students achieved Certificates of Distinction
 - 95 students achieved Certificates of Merit
 - 23 students finished in the top 10% nationally achieved a Gold Certificate
 - (Special mention to: Hannah Collier (Best in School ages 14-16), Brooke Bamford (Best in School ages 12-14), Alfie-Lucas Darraugh (Best in School ages 10-12))
 - Our talented students have been taking part in a number of competitions within our technology department, including:
 - D&T and Business Christmas decoration project Year 9
 - Christmas Cake competition year 9
 - Halloween cookery year 7
 - Bonfire Toffee apples year 7
 - Christmas Jumper Day poster competition Key stage 3
 - Year 7 Art club
 - Year 8 Mince Pie competition
- Mr Beardmore and the school band have been spreading some Christmas joy across the local community where they have been playing Christmas Carols, enduring the winter weather conditions. Our brass band have continued with rehearsals throughout this term, whilst following the latest guidance and our own risk assessment.

Christmas Holidays and the New Year

School will close at 3pm on Thursday 17th December.

Students will start back at the normal time on **Tuesday, 5th January, 2020**. All students are expected to be outside their classrooms ready to learn at **8.40am**. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late and there will be a series of escalating consequences for persistent lateness or absence.

Whilst we appreciate that children often wish to let school friends see their Christmas presents, especially electronic devices such as mobile phones and internet linked watches, please could you remind your child of the school's policy which clearly states that such items should be left at home or placed in the school office for safekeeping. Otherwise, they would be confiscated. Please may I also remind you of the school's uniform expectations. Please support school by ensuring that your child returns to school without any piercings, false nails, false eyelashes or extreme/coloured hairstyles in the new year. On days where your child has PE, they may wear plain black, grey or purple sweatshirts/tracksuit top without hoods and joggers/tracksuit bottoms but not leggings.

Staff return to school on Monday, 4th January to prepare for the term ahead and we will be working hard on our plans to further improve teaching and learning in 2021 and beyond.

On behalf of the staff and governors of Mossley Hollins High School, may I wish you all a very relaxing and peaceful Christmas holiday and a happy and successful 2021. Let us all hope that 2021 allows us to return to some sort of normality with fewer restrictions. Whilst the celebrations this year will be somewhat different to previous years, we must remain positive and remind ourselves that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Please stay safe and look after each other during the festive period. Thank you so very much for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs A Din
1st Deputy Headteacher