



Moorside High School

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write this letter really proud and very excited to be continuing as your child's Head of Year.

Year 8 was an enjoyable and successful year, for the vast majority of my year group. So many of the 240 students have developed myriad positive habits, which I am certain they will carry forward with them into Year 9.

There is no such thing as a 'big year' in school – each of the 5 years is vital in its own way. That said, Year 9 will see your child arrive at the significant checkpoint of choosing their GCSE options. Students will be provided with a plethora of information around the different GCSE options, which will enable them to make an informed decision regarding the subjects which they wish to pursue at GCSE (assemblies delivered by Heads of Department, cross-curricular links within lessons). However, if your child is not present within School, then they will be unable to receive this really important information.

This sentiment brings me on to your child's attendance. As well as being Head of Year 9, this academic year is my 7th one as a Maths Teacher at Moorside. If a student within one of my Maths classes achieved 90% on a retrieval activity, on a mastery task or on a mock GCSE paper, I would be really satisfied. This, however, is not the case were a student to achieve an attendance of 90%.

90% attendance, over a school year, equates to your child missing 4 weeks of school. This results in your child being up to 100 hours of learning behind their peers. By the time Year 11 arrives, this missed learning places additional stress on students as they frantically try to catch-up on missed content. There is good news, though – your child receives 5 hours of learning from subject-specialists each and every day. Our Year 11 GCSE data from last year once again clearly shows that the students whose attendance was at the level we aim for, either met their target grades or exceeded them.

I am acutely aware that there are members of my year group who are experiencing physical and / or emotional barriers to them attending school. There is a really clear and very robust support plan in place this academic year to support such students. This includes supports from your child's Form Tutor, myself as Head of Year as well as Assistant Principals and the Vice Principal. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you feel that your child needs some support in either maintaining or improving their attendance.

I am wholeheartedly proud of the young adults that my year group is developing into and there is nothing but excitement from me as I think forward to how this group will engage with the opportunities and challenges that Year 9 will bring.

Best wishes,

Mr. C. Birchall

Head of Year 9 | Maths Teacher



Principal: Mrs H Ryles-Dean • 57 Deans Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 0AP • Telephone: 0161 804 4022 • www.moorside.co.uk