

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we begin a new academic year, I am delighted to continue my journey alongside your child as their Head of Year 9. Year 8 was an enjoyable and successful year for the cohort, and I was incredibly proud to see so many students make progress, develop positive habits and grow in confidence. I am excited to see them build on these foundations as they move into Year 9.

I believe the restructure of the year group will have a positive impact not only academically, but also socially and emotionally. It provides our young people with an opportunity to develop new relationships, build confidence and strengthen the skills they need to thrive as they progress through their secondary education.

There is no such thing as a 'big year' in school — each of the five years is important in its own way. However, Year 9 does represent an important milestone as students begin to make decisions about their future GCSE options.

Throughout the year, students will receive a wealth of information to help them make informed and confident choices about the subjects they wish to study at GCSE. This will include assemblies led by Heads of Department, information shared through lessons and opportunities to explore how different subjects can connect to future careers and pathways.

However, for students to benefit from these opportunities, they need to be in school. Your child receives five hours of learning from subject specialists, alongside their Personal Development session, every day. Every lesson provides an opportunity to learn something new, develop a skill or take another step towards their future.

Our Year 11 outcomes continue to demonstrate the importance of regular attendance, with students who maintain strong attendance being more likely to meet or exceed their target grades.

At Moorside High School, we have high expectations for attendance and strive for every student to achieve **96% or above**. As a working parent, I fully appreciate that balancing work, family life and school commitments can sometimes be challenging. We also understand that illness and essential medical appointments can make absence unavoidable. However, wherever possible, we would ask that routine medical and dental appointments are arranged outside of school hours, during school holidays or at the beginning or end of the school day. Good attendance is about more than simply being present. Punctuality matters too. Arriving on time ensures that your child is ready to learn from the beginning of every lesson and does not miss valuable explanations, instructions or learning.

We will continue to work closely with students through their Personal Development lessons to help identify and overcome barriers to attendance. Our aim is for school and home to work together so that every young person has the support and encouragement they need to attend regularly and make the most of their education.

The impact of absence can quickly add up. 90% attendance over a school year equates to approximately four weeks of school missed and can mean around 100 hours of learning lost. By the time students reach Year 11, missed learning can create additional pressure as they try to fill gaps in their knowledge while preparing for their GCSE examinations. Supporting your child to attend school every day is therefore one of the most important ways you can help them to succeed.

At Moorside High School, we have high expectations for attendance, punctuality, uniform, appearance and behaviour. These expectations help us create an environment where every student feels safe, valued and able to learn.

We also recognise that expectations work best when they are accompanied by strong support. I am aware that some

young people can experience physical, emotional or other barriers to attending school regularly. For these students, we have a robust support network in place. If you feel that your child is experiencing difficulties with attendance, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We would much rather work with you early to understand the situation and provide support than allow attendance difficulties to become more established.

Further information about our school expectations, including uniform, behaviour and the government's requirements regarding mobile phones, can be found on the Moorside High School website.

I am wholeheartedly proud of the young people this year group is becoming. They have already shown that they are capable of achieving great things, and I am incredibly excited to see how they respond to the opportunities and challenges that Year 9 will bring. This year is about developing independence, confidence, resilience and ambition while continuing to make positive memories along the way. I want every student to look back on Year 9 with a real sense of pride in what they have achieved and the person they have become.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your child throughout the year. With high expectations, strong support and a positive partnership between home and school, I am confident that Year 9 can be a fantastic year for every member of the cohort.

I wish your child a happy, successful and memorable Year 9.

Best wishes,

Mrs R Gandy
Head of Year 9

