



Maryhill High School

A Media Arts College



Autumn Newsletter 2 November 2009

Dear Parents,

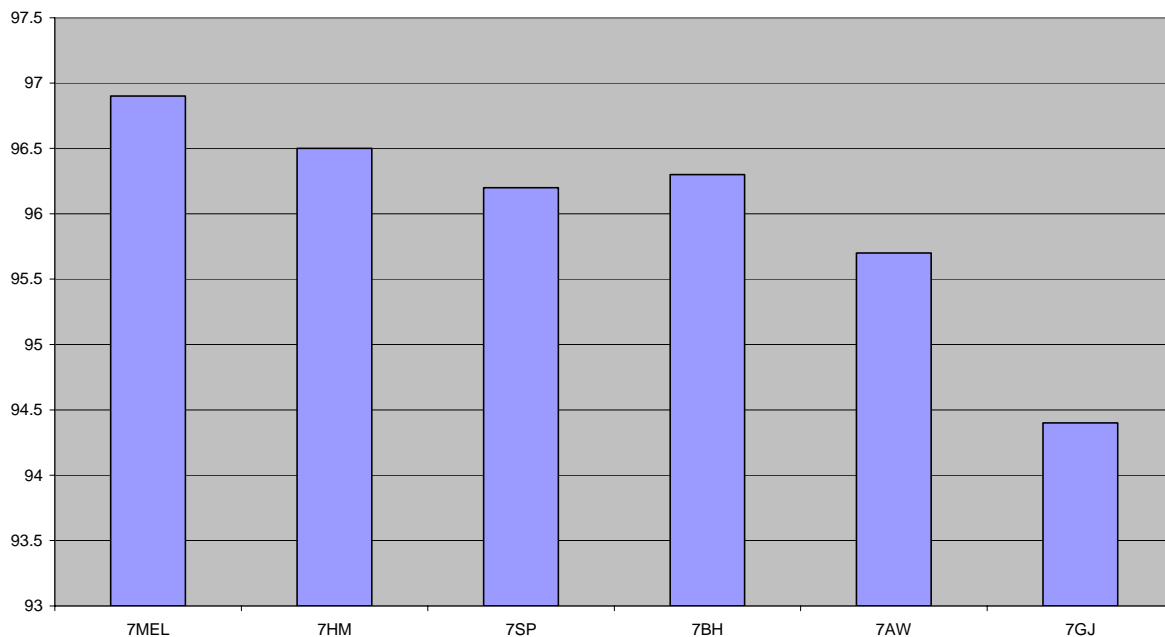
There will be an achievements newsletter later in the term.

Attendance

We are working hard to improve our attendance figures, which overall are at the national average but we would like to see improve. Your child's year group attendance figures are shown below.

There will be rewards each term for students and forms that beat our attendance target.

Year 7 Percentage Attendance



Students whose attendance drops below 95% are more likely to underachieve, so that is our target for every year. Last year's figure for the school was 93%. The figure would have been over 94% if no holidays had been taken in term time, so once again thanks to all families who make the choice to support the education of their child by not doing so, despite the extra costs to them. Mrs Skucha writes:

Dear Parents

As you are probably already aware attendance is a key issue for all schools since students can only achieve if they are in school to receive their education.

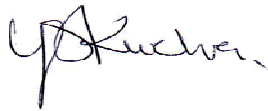
We take the monitoring of attendance very seriously and as a result we now have a full time Attendance Officer working in school.

In the light of this we would like to clarify the information you received in our latest newsletter regarding the reporting of student absence.

If a student absence is known in advance then it can be put into the MAP and the student can show it to our Attendance Officer in order that the absence be authorised. In the event of an unplanned absence (for example, illness) then it is essential that the dedicated telephone number be contacted 01782 296751 option 1 where a message service is available, alternatively 01782 296799 by 9am at the latest. This ensures that the school knows exactly where your child is and the appropriate codes are used in the registers.

We thank you, as always for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Y Skucha
Assistant Headteacher, Student Support

Benefits Update

We have received a note from the Newcastle –under-Lyme benefits office that will be relevant to some families:

With effect from 2nd November 2009, any payment of **Child Benefit** received in respect of a child or young person in a claimants household, will be fully disregarded as income, for Housing and Council Tax Benefit purposes. As a result of these changes, it is envisaged that some people, who previously were ineligible for help with their housing costs, may now qualify for assistance. Anyone who thinks they may qualify should contact Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Benefit section, on 01782 715500 or visit the Customer Services at the Guildhall in Newcastle, to complete a claim form.

Thank you in anticipation.

Jane Spencer

Benefits Manager, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

School Policies

Our policies cover all aspects of the school's work. Many of them have been reviewed and rewritten over the last three years. The ones that impact on your child on a day to day basis, like the Behaviour Policy, we send to you as part of the Parent and Student Support Pack. However, it is not possible to send hard copies of every policy to every parent although they are available on request, there are copies in the entrance foyer and over the next few weeks all will be published on the school website. One recent update has been our policy on **Sex and Relationship Education**. In response to parental requests, here is a list of the topics that are taught to the students in each year in science and Personal and Citizenship Education (PACE) lessons. Although it is possible to request that your child is withdrawn from these lessons, so far no parent has done so.

| Year | Term | Topic |
|------|--------------------------------|--|
| 7 | Summer Term 2 | Puberty/ Body Change |
| 8 | Autumn Term 2 Summer Term 2 | Family relationships Safe Relationships |
| 9 | Autumn 1 | Healthy relationships, not having sex until ready, different sexualities, contraception, introduction to STIs, teenage pregnancy |
| 10 | Autumn1 Summer 1 | Dangers of sex and alcohol STIs recap, contraception, body image and media |
| 11 | Spring 1 | Sexual health, detecting early signs of male, female cancers |

Road Safety

We have received a leaflet from the Road Safety Unit that I am reproducing here. It will now not be long before it is dark at both ends of the school day, so please take extra care if driving near the school then. **You are asked not to drop your children off outside the main gate or use this area as a turning circle, as this adds to the likelihood of an accident taking place. There has already been one near miss this term.** I would like to thank the majority of parents who do not do this. Likewise, I am pleased to say that the majority of students who have to cross the road use one of the crossings.

Can You See in the Dark?

Now that the clocks have gone back, the Staffordshire County Council Road Safety Unit is reminding people to take extra care when they are on or near our roads.

Once the clocks go back the days become duller and the nights get darker earlier and traditionally in October and November we see an increase in road crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists.

Here are some tips to help keep you safe

- Pedestrians: make sure you can be seen during the day by wearing bright clothing, fluorescent is best. At night, reflective material uses car headlights to make you more conspicuous.
- Cyclists: be as visible as possible with the addition of a working white light on the front of your bike and a red light with reflector on the back. Use fluorescent or reflective clothing as well.
- Motorcyclists: also need to be as visible as possible by wearing fluorescent or reflective clothing and using their headlights whenever light levels are low.

Everyone should take extra care during the winter months; driving in bad weather, dull days and at night takes a lot more concentration and can make you tired. Pedestrians and cyclists should ensure that drivers have seen them before stepping out into the road. It only takes a lapse in concentration to become involved in an incident, so taking a few extra precautions could make all the difference.



Medication

We are not allowed to give any medication to students that has not been first given to the office and labelled with the student's name and form. Parents whose children have specific needs should contact the Year Leader.

Snow procedure reminder

If we have bad weather and we are forced to close the school please remember that information will be broadcast on local radio. **Do not phone the radio station or the school.** If snow falls during the day we may have to close early. Please make sure your child knows what to do in this situation so that he or she can get home safely. If students need to remain at school until the normal finishing time we will supervise them.

Contacting the school

I hope that you are finding that the new phone system enables you to reach the person you want or leave a message easily. Your comments on how to improve this are welcome. Please also note that our number (01782-296751) is similar to other numbers so please dial carefully or store the number in your phone's memory to avoid your call going to a residential number.

Privacy Notice - Data Protection Act 1998 – this is the notice that was mentioned in the September PSSP.

We **Maryhill High School** are the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. We collect information from you, and may receive information about you from your previous school. We hold this personal data and use it to:

- support your teaching and learning;
- monitor and report on your progress;
- provide appropriate pastoral care, and
- assess how well your school is doing.

This information includes your contact details, national curriculum assessment results, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information.

We will not give information about you to anyone outside the school without your consent unless the law and our rules permit it.

We are required by law to pass some of your information to the Local Authority (LA), The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) www.miap.gov.uk.

If you want to see a copy of the information we hold and share about you then please contact the school office.

If you require more information about how the LA and/or DCSF store and use this data please go to the following websites:

- www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/yourdata and http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13856/DCSF%20what%20we%20do%20with%20Children's%20data%20v4%20final.doc

If you are unable to access these websites and need a hard copy, please contact the LA or the DCSF as follows:

- Data Protection Officer, Staffordshire County Council, Information Governance Unit, 1 A Bailey Street, Stafford, ST17 4BG.
- Public Communications Unit
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
website: www.dcsf.gov.uk
email: info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 0870 000 2288.

Connexions Services - Once you are aged 13 or over we are required to pass on certain information to the Connexions services. Connexions is the government's information and advice service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England.

We must provide both your own and your parent/s' name/s and address/es, and any further information relevant to the Connexions services' role.

However, you (if you are over 16) or your parents can ask that no information beyond name and address be passed to Connexions. Please inform **the school office** if you wish to opt-out of this arrangement. For more information about Connexions, please contact the Local Authority as shown above.

Uniform

Thank you for your continuing support. There has been great improvement in the attitude of the students. We shall continue to insist on high standards inside school, and I am pleased to say that the great majority of students are fully cooperative.

Parent Governor

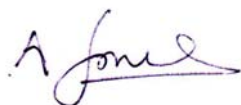
There is still a vacancy so I am calling for nominations again and a nomination form is attached to this newsletter. You may nominate yourself. We really appreciate the help and advice given to us by our parent governors so do consider getting involved. If you would like to know more about how the governors work or what is expected of you as a governor please let us know and we will ask Mr Mack (the chair of governors and himself a parent) to contact you.

This time the newsletter has been more of an information sheet, but you have a right to be informed properly, so if you have any suggestions of how we can improve our communication with you please do not hesitate to let us know (phone the school and select option 4 or email office@maryhill-high.staffs.sch.uk).

Christmas Dinner

There will be once again the amazing value delicious Maryhill Christmas dinner on **Wednesday 16 December**. Numbers are strictly limited and demand is likely to be high, so get your ticket from the Attendance Office now. The cost for 2 courses with all the trimmings is only £2.10

Please write a note in the MAP to say you have received this newsletter.



Dr A Jones
Headteacher