Sharples SCHOOL

A Science Specialist College

Winner of the Manchester Evening News "School in the Community Award"

Hill Cot Road
Astley Bridge
Bolton
BL1 8SN

Telephone: 01204 333253
Fax: 01204 333250
office@sharplesschool.co.uk
www.sharplesschool.co.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to a new half term at Sharples, one that has already had an action-packed start.

Last week during the half term holiday, 113 Year 11 students travelled to Spain to enjoy a revision and culture trip in Barcelona. The students were superb and had a brilliant time alongside some key preparation for next week's Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs).

Already this week we have celebrated Bonfire Night and Diwali with a range of activities for students to get involved with. I would like to extend my best wishes to all families celebrating Diwali this weekend.

On Sunday this week we will once again welcome members of the local community of Astley Bridge to Sharples as we will host the Remembrance Day Service. The Royal British Legion Club of Astley Bridge and their pipers band will make their way from Belmont Road to Sharples at approximately 10am. We invite families to line the street leading up to school to welcome the parade.

Important dates for your diary this half term include Friday 27th November 2026 when we will be holding our annual Diversity Day. This is always a favourite day in the Sharples calendar for students and staff, and we look forward to seeing students dress in outfits which represent their heritage, countries of ancestry or just something that is unique to them. As this is an annual day to celebrate the diversity and individuality of our Sharples students, once again we ask that no flags are brought into school on this day. We will be holding our popular Diversity Day stalls at lunchtime, with food, drink, crafts and gifts on sale from 50p. Parents/Carers can buy books of vouchers via MCAS for £5 each. The vouchers will be delivered to students via forms on the day, and these can be spent in multiples of 50p at the stalls. Cash will also be accepted on the day. All proceeds will be donated to the charity OXFAM.

Friday 4th December is a training day for staff, which means the school is closed to all pupils on this day.

Finally, we would like to remind all parents and carers of our procedures regarding appointments during the school day.

We fully appreciate that some medical, dental and hospital appointments cannot be arranged outside school hours. However, wherever possible, **routine appointments should be made outside the school day** to minimise disruption to learning and protect pupils' attendance.

We have recently experienced a significant increase in the number of pupils being collected during the school day for appointments. We are also seeing an increasing number of parents arriving at reception without prior notice, or contacting school only a few minutes before they expect their child to be ready for collection. This makes it extremely difficult for us to manage pupils' attendance records accurately and safely, as well as causing considerable disruption to lessons and school staff.

With immediate effect, we ask parents and carers to follow the arrangements below:

- Wherever possible, please arrange routine appointments **outside school hours**.
- Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, **school must be informed in advance**. Please do not wait until you are on your way to school or have arrived at reception.
- Parents/carers should provide **evidence of the appointment**, such as an appointment letter, text message or email confirmation.
- Please give the **date, time and nature of the appointment**, together with the time you expect your child to leave school and, where appropriate, return.
- **Parents/carers should not arrive at school unannounced to collect a child during the school day unless there is a genuine emergency.** We cannot guarantee that a pupil can be located and brought to reception immediately where advance notice has not been provided.
- Pupils should attend school **before and/or after their appointment wherever reasonably possible**, rather than missing a full morning or afternoon unnecessarily.

Important information about registration

Please also be aware that our **morning register closes at 9.15am**. If a pupil is not present by this time, they will receive an absence mark for the morning session.

Our **afternoon register closes at 12.35pm**. If a pupil is not present by this time, they will receive an absence mark for the afternoon session.

For this reason, we strongly encourage families to consider appointment times carefully and ensure pupils attend as much of the school day as possible. For example, an appointment later in the morning should not normally result in a pupil missing the whole morning, and pupils should return to school following an appointment where there is sufficient time to do so.

Good attendance is essential to pupils' learning, progress and wellbeing. Even where an absence is authorised, **time away from school is still time away from lessons** and contributes to a pupil's overall attendance figure.

We appreciate that there will always be circumstances in which appointments during school hours are unavoidable, particularly hospital and specialist appointments. Our aim is not to make these situations more difficult for families, but to ensure that unavoidable appointments are managed safely, efficiently and with the minimum possible disruption to pupils' education.

I look forward to sharing more updates in the coming weeks as we move towards the Christmas break. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours Sincerely



Caroline Molyneux
Headteacher