

Positive
student
stories

A safe and
secure start
back

Welcoming
our Year 7
students

Welcoming
back Year 11
students

Fundraising
for
Macmillan

Meet our
Chair of
Governors

The Newsletter



Principal's Welcome



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our new look parent newsletter which aims to provide you with key updates from the Academy along with recognition of the great things our students have been up to. Other than my usual contribution, there's lots more input from other staff and members of our Governing body. This week includes an introduction from our Chair of Governors, Keith Halliwell.

We are now at the end of our first full week back and it's been brilliant to see how well our students have adjusted to their new ways of being in the Academy. Our new Year 7's continue to settle in and have made a brilliant start.

Our operational plans are working effectively and most importantly, it has been wonderful to see and hear the buzz of teaching and learning across the Academy. When I walk the school during lessons, I see students enthusiastically and attentively engaged with their learning, with staff who are passionate and glad to be back in front of their classes. The staff have a particular challenge in that they are having to move constantly between classrooms across our large site, but they too have stepped up brilliantly to this new way of working.

As you will know, we are operating simple, but strict safety measures to keep everyone as safe as possible. In short, these are rules that students must follow:

- only use their own unique year group entrance and exit
- only have lessons within their year group learning zone
- sanitise their hands on entrance to the building and lessons as well as on exit from lessons before break and lunch
- wear face coverings when in communal areas inside the building (They can choose to wear them at any other time)
- avoid touching other students at all times and do not get close to staff

Students in all year groups have been exceptional in their response to these safety measures and I am grateful to all of our parents and carers who are supporting them by promoting these key messages. Of course, we sometimes have to remind students to put a mask on or sanitise their hands and that's a perfectly normal part of establishing good habits. We will, of course, challenge any students who does not comply and any safety breaches will be dealt with very seriously.

Staff have also been instructed to teach from the front of the class so that they are at least 2 metres away from students and, of course, to distance from each other. This is an important element of our risk assessment and is critical in the event of a positive Covid-19 test.

You may be aware that some other schools in the area have had to respond to positive tests by isolating year group bubbles. At the time of writing, we have not received any positive tests, however, we do have a detailed contingency plan in the event that we do.

Our first response to any positive test is to speak with Public Health Salford, who will gather key information from us on the measures we have in place. They will specifically talk to us and the infected individual about their direct contacts, both in and out of school, particularly in the 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms. Based on the outcome of the initial conversation, we may need to instruct all direct contacts to isolate for 14 days. We will inform parents and carers via MyEd.

It is really important that if you are able to do so, that you download the MyEd app onto a smartphone or tablet device. All our communications this year will be via MyEd. Currently, 75% of our families have the app and we like to have as close to full coverage as possible. If you need any support in setting it up, please see the [website](#).

For any students isolating, we will make class resources available through Google Classroom and if it is a whole class or year group who need to self-isolate, we will aim to create online lessons. It is really important that all of our students are set up with their new Google accounts for this year. We have been helping them this week and to support them further, we have provided each student with a step-by-step guide which includes their unique username.

Most importantly, do try not to worry. As always, we will act swiftly in any such case and the measures we have in school to help everyone stay safe are working well.

It is fair to say that the current COVID situation in Salford is not good. However, I want our students to receive a great education, despite the challenge to normal life that everyone is facing and that will be our over-arching aim as we progress through this term and year.

Food ordering

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have either been sending their children with packed lunches or ordering using the Google form. The ordering is working well. However there are still some students who do not collect the food that has been ordered. If your child is in receipt of free school meals, it's really important that you use the order form too so that your child receives what they want. If they don't, we will always have generic grab bags available to ensure that no one goes hungry.

Water fountains

We have recommissioned all of the water fountains in each learning zone. This is to ensure that all students have free access to water during the day. They must only ever be used to refill a water bottle. Students must never put their mouth near the fountains as they may have done in the past. There is clear signage and we will give clear instructions to the students in school, but please emphasise the point at home too.

Drop off and collection

Please try to drop off or collect your child well away from the school gates. The level of congestion at the end of the day, in particular, is worrying and could create a significant problem for emergency vehicles if ever they were needed. Parking down Birch road or further up Old Clough Lane would be beneficial and is only a short walk for students.

Community Police Officers

From the start of September, schools in the local area have been joined for the equivalent of a day per week by members of the community Policing team. This is part of a local strategy to build community links and reduce future crime. We will work with them to promote good behaviour and attitudes from our students both in school and out in the community and we look forward to this on-going collaboration.

External visitors to the site

For the time being, please avoid coming into school unless you have a pre-arranged appointment. It is an important element of our risk mitigation to avoid too many external visitors. If your child forgets their lunch or PE kit, please don't worry. Let us know and we will work around it and make sure they get fed.

Thank you for all of your on-going support. My best wishes for a great weekend.

Matt Hacker

Student Highlights

Until the partial school closure, we were sending the fortnightly newsletter. This was packed full of our students' achievements both in and out of school. We loved celebrating how amazing our students are, and we want to build on that this year.

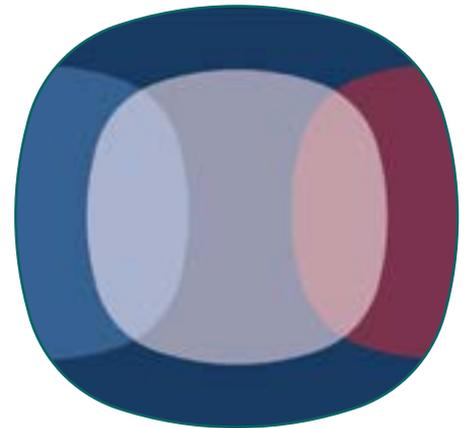
Over the closure period, the newsletter was paused, but we continued to celebrate our young people's excellent work, efforts, and resilience via our social media. So, for our first newsletter, we wanted to highlight some of the wonderful things our students did over the last six months if you missed them. If you did miss out, join us today on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. You will find us @WalkdenCoop.

We want even more student success stories to shout about this year, so if your son/daughter has achieved something, in or out of school, we want to know! Get in touch via walkden.info@coopacademies.co.uk



In May, our students and staff went head to head in the 'Do the Distance' challenge. Over the course of a week, the two groups battled to see who could run, walk, or cycle the furthest. It was a close run battle and the results can be found [here](#). The challenge proved so popular that Mr Tobutt (the PE teacher who had come up with the idea) decided to launch the Coast to Coast Challenge as part of National School Sports Week. You can read more about this [here](#).

Lockdown saw a surge in our students penning poetry and we published two anthologies on [our website](#). The first [anthology](#) was from Mrs Venables Year 8 English class and the second was created by Year 7 and 8 students in French. All Year 7 and 8 students were asked to write a Haiku as part of their home learning. Once all the poems were received, each french teacher chose their top 3 entries to send to Polly Glot Languages' Poetry competition. You can find our entries [here](#).



In June, our students teamed up with the wider Co-op Academies trust to participate in the #MyGreenChange campaign. Students got involved in different challenges, from writing recycling song lyrics to baking banana bread, designing green transport to creating recycled art. The response and the creativity from our students was phenomenal! If you missed the story, you can catch up and find the winners [here](#).

Positive Communications

The global pandemic was undoubtedly a time of great uncertainty focusing us all on re-evaluating our day-to-day lives. Here at Co-op Academy Walkden, we worked hard to ensure that we communicated with you during the uncertain times. From communications from Mr Hacker to MyEd messages, we did our best to keep you up to date within a constantly changing landscape.

The student interviews were a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with our families. They were appreciated by staff, pupils, and parents alike. It was so lovely to see you all and to hear some positive feedback. As parents, you commented that communication from staff had been a real strength, along with the consistency of the work being set. We were thrilled to hear comments like "Regular chats with his form tutor really lifted my son's spirits" and "The safety and concern for student well being has been a strength". You can read further positive feedback that we received below.

We also welcomed back our then Year 10 students towards the end of the academic year. Over 80% of our Year 10 students accessed English, Maths, and Science lessons. They were an absolute credit to both you and the school, displaying a calm and mature approach to being back in the building.

While this has been a difficult time for all, from a school perspective, being able to speak with so many of you was a positive. Thank you for your support.

| Mrs Earley | Assistant Head - Progress

What our parents said...

"The communication has been great and we received the Co-op vouchers which we are really grateful for".

"The support for my child is there if they need it"

"It's been wonderful that we can contact the school and speak to someone if we need to. That has been really helpful".

"It's been great to get praise from Art and also see the pictures on the website"



"The volume of work that has been set has been consistent".

"The school has been supportive and lots of work has been set"

"We've really appreciated the online work that has been set and the calls to check on well-being".

"We think that the students being allowed in school for a time has really helped".

A safe return

We want Co-op Academy Walkden to be a safe and comfortable place for all students and staff to work in and that is why we take health and safety very seriously. At this time, we have increased our health and safety measure to give you confidence now that your child is back at school. Here are a list of things that we have done to make sure our academy is ready for the return of our students and staff:



Increased frequency of cleaning especially of high risk hygiene areas such as toilets and door handles.

Sanitiser handstands available at all entrances to the academy and to educational zones.

Sanitisers and antiviral wipes in each classroom, and staff have been provided with personal sanitisers.

Availability of face masks and gloves.

Year groups have allocated bubbles within the academy zones, and these have been cordoned off where necessary.

Teacher desks/working areas have been demarcated to maintain the 2m social distance guidelines.



Food screens have been reinforced to improve food protection during break and lunch times.

Where possible all doors will be propped open to avoid touching of handles.

Reception screen to protect staff and visitors.



Welcoming our Year 7



| Miss Rogers | Head of Year 7

It has been a pleasure to watch how well Year 7 have settled into Secondary School so far. Despite it only being Day 4, watching their confidence grow and new friendships form is lovely to see.

As I said in my welcome letter to the children before the Summer, they are a special year group that have shown great understanding and maturity through what has been a difficult year for them all. Their understanding and mature attitudes have continued throughout their start at Co-op Academy Walkden as they adapt to their new learning environment.

I am excited to see Year 7 achieve great things this year and I look forward to speaking with more parents this year.

What our Year 7's said...

"Starting High School has been good! I love learning new things and changing lessons. I have already learnt lots of new things after being off school for so long". - Kenzie

"It's been great so far! I love that I get to move around to different classes. My favourite subject is English with Mrs Mundy". - Ruby

"I have loved every moment of starting High School! I am looking forward to meeting new friends and I am excited to see how my journey continues". - Radiyah



Have your say...



If you are a Year 7 parent, are you happy with the way your son or daughter has settled into the academy?

Have you got any positive comments? Do you want to thank a member of staff who has gone out of their way to make your child feel safe, secure and comfortable?

If so, let us know via email. You can contact us on walkden.info@coopacademies.co.uk. We'd love to publish lots of positive parent messages to our staff in our next newsletter.

Welcoming back Year 11



| Mr Healey | Head of Year 11

To see Year 11 enter the building, calmly, sensibly (and quietly) on Thursday last week was an excellent sight. It was the last piece of an exceptionally difficult jigsaw that has taken six months to put together.

I cannot imagine how tough this period has been for the students but Year 11 have attacked this new academic year with a real vigour. Their attitude to their education and the 'new normal' is nothing short of exemplary.

Long may it last.

What our Year 11's said...

"It was a relief to get back into school. It is different but interesting. Everyone is wearing masks and sticking to it" - Jacob

"I was excited to come back to school. I think that the school has done a good job with the bubbles and separating the year groups. It is strange but easy to get used to." - Patrick

"It was really weird at first but I am pretty much used to it now. I don't see much of a difference with the changes but I am feeling good about them." - Millie



Have your say...

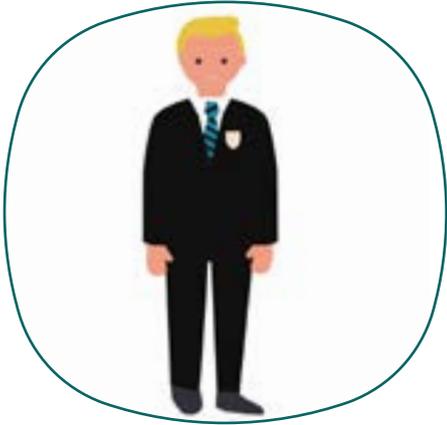


If you are a Year 11 parent, are you happy with the way your son or daughter has settled back into the academy?

Have you got any positive comments? Do you want to thank a member of staff who has gone out of their way to make your child feel safe, secure and comfortable on their return?

If so, let us know via email. You can contact us on walkden.info@coopacademies.co.uk. We'd love to publish lots of positive parent messages to our staff in our next newsletter.

Attendance Matters



| Mr Thomas | Attendance Manager

We're so pleased to see all of our students last week and we have got off to a good start with attendance. Last Friday, overall, 96.1% of our students were in attendance at the academy. We thank all of the parents/carers for their support and encouragement back to learning. We know that for their mental health, well being, and future success that attendance is important.

Over the next few months, we hope that your son/daughter will be in full attendance but we realise that this might not be possible. With any absence, we ask you to let us know as soon as possible. You can text the attendance team using the MyEd app or you can ring reception and leave a message. The new number for reception is: 0161 850 1625. Please ring or text before 8:30am, where possible.

The key to good attendance is self care and a large part of self care, as we have been made more aware of over the past six months, is hand washing. Students must keep up washing and sanitising their hands regularly, especially before they are going to eat. Singing the song "Happy Birthday to you" twice over, whilst washing their hands, is the ideal amount of time to kill off any nasty bugs or viruses.

Literacy Corner



| Miss Kane | English Teacher -Catch Up and Enrichment Lead

Word of the week

We are offering up the challenge to use our word of the week at home! Perhaps you could make it a competition with your family? Who can use the word in the funniest of sentences? This week's is:

Cajole - to deceive by flattery; coax

Summer Reads

Over the summer, the Literacy Department have been busy looking for the best recommendations of new young adult fiction. Each newsletter, starting next time, we will share a book that we have loved reading, and are both enjoyable for yourselves and your children. We are pleased to announce the winner of the reading bingo that was introduced over summer was: Zoe in Y7. She will receive her exciting prize shortly!

Governor voice



**| Mr Halliwell | Chair of
Governors**

I am delighted to contribute to this first newsletter of the term as a member of Co-op Academy Walkden's governing body. I became a governor when Walkden High School converted to being part of the Co-op Academies' Trust and I've been proud to play my role as Chair of Governors since then.

I have worked for Co-op food for nine years and I am currently on secondment at Angel Square in Manchester. Being involved with Co-op Academy Walkden highlights to me one of the many benefits that being part of a co-operative organisation brings.

The last six months have been exceptional in terms of the adaptability and resilience staff, parents, and students have had to show. We are still far from normal, but I want to praise all members of the community at Co-op Academy Walkden for their positive, proactive attitudes during this time.

I want to say a special welcome to our new Year 7 students and their families and a warm welcome back to our Years 8 to 11. Having worked from home for the last six months, alongside taking care of my son in Year 9, I'm well aware of home schooling's realities and the transition back to school. I would also like to congratulate our leavers this year who did not have the farewell they were expecting. I wish them well in their future endeavours.

I know that there are robust plans to keep all students progress on track. Students' attendance and support from parents, now we are back in school, have been excellent so far, and I thank you for this.

I must recognise the planning and hard work from Mr Hacker and his team that has made this possible. This is continuing from the great commitment I saw during lockdown. Thank you to you all on behalf of your governors.

One of our roles as governors is to oversee the vision, ethos, and strategy at Co-op Academy Walkden, to achieve the best outcomes for our students, in line with Co-op Values. We take this responsibility very seriously and our priority this year is to continue to support Mr Hacker with the changes he is bringing in.

We will continue to listen to parents this year and should you have any questions for me, I can be contacted via the main school email. I'm looking forward to a year of progress in what I believe is an excellent school.

Macmillan Cancer Support



2020...the year of doing things differently, being pioneering! Throughout the year, we run several awareness campaigns and charity fundraising events at Co-op Academy Walkden. We want our students to learn about equality and diversity, do what matters most by pledging to fight social injustices and show they care by supporting their peers. It's an important part of the Co-op values that we promote and it is an important part of Walkden.

We had planned, as our first fundraising project, to hold a Macmillan Coffee Morning to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support but due to COVID-19 restrictions we can't. We still wanted to do something to raise money for Macmillan Cancer support. So, instead of a coffee morning, we are holding a virtual quiz, with the prize of a coffee morning hamper worth £20.

The theme of the quiz is CAKE! There are 7 rounds of culinary questions, split into school subject areas, so you will find a round on the history of cake, one on cakes in literature, one on cakes from around the world and of course....a food tech round! You can find the link here

<https://walkden.coopacademies.co.uk/cake-quiz>

You can attempt the quiz alone or you can team up as families or friends! We don't mind (as long as you are all socially distanced!). All we ask you to do is to donate at least £1 to our Just Giving page before you hit submit.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/walkden-cake-quiz>

All entries must be submitted via the [Google form](#) by noon on 1st October 2020. There will be a prize for 1 x winner of the quiz. The prize is a "Coffee Morning Hamper" full of co-op goodies, worth up to £20.

The winner will be the entry with the most right answers. If there is a tie, a random draw will take place to find the winner. The winner will be informed via email before October half term.

The quiz is open to all staff, parents, community members and students so please promote and pass the links on to any friends or family who might be interested too!



Co-op Academy
Walkden

0161 850 1625

walkden.info@coopacademies.co.uk

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[@WalkdenCoop](#)

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