

PARTNERSHIP BULLETIN

Middlewich High School



Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Central Team Partnership Bulletin. We are delighted to share some of the key priorities and initiatives that our central teams have been working on this term. These projects are designed to provide valuable support to both staff and students across the school. Take a moment to explore the updates below from each of the key areas.

Lydia Naylor, Headteacher

ESTATES UPDATE

3G Pitch and MTFC

Following the withdrawal of support from Cheshire East for the Leisure Centre at MHS, we have been working with **Middlewich Town Football Club** to keep the **3G Pitch** open for local teams to use out of hours. This has taken a tremendous amount of work from both the school and football club to continue to make sure this fantastic facility is available to the community. **The sports hall** has also been able to continue operating outside of school hours and is anticipated to generate income which we can then look to invest towards new equipment for our students. **Thank you to Mr Brough, Mrs Townhill, Mr Townhill, Miss Holt, Mr Coxon and Mrs Stevens** for their continued help and support on both these projects.

New Heating Infrastructure

Last term, MHS were successful with a Condition Improvement Bid to the DfE. The competition for this funding is not to be underestimated. The Estates team have been excellent in accommodating all the necessary surveys and estimates could be completed allowing us to score top marks! The money awarded will be used to **replace the heating** around the original parts of school and in the drama block and will also assist us on our **net zero journey**.

Fire Doors

The project to replace the fire doors around the school is now complete. This has improved behaviour with less noise transfer from outside classrooms, allowing students to focus on learning. With new doors and new roofs in the art and science blocks we are anticipating a significant reduction in our heating bills this winter for these areas.

IT UPDATE

Microsoft Licenses Alignment

We now have in place a trust-wide Microsoft licensing arrangement, giving us more tools to ensure files and data are safe. One of the first new tools to be used was the phishing test system – **congratulations to all of you who passed the test!** We will run these tests throughout the year to help keep us all vigilant when opening emails.

Arbor for Education

As a trust we are moving away from SIMS and will be working with Arbor for Education from May 2026. Arbor is

a **cloud-based** MIS designed specifically for schools. It provides secure, DfE-compliant data management with seamless integrations to other EdTech tools, enabling schools to centralise attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, assessment and communications in **one platform**.

Google to 365 Migration

We are currently in the process of moving back to Microsoft 365 for support staff first and then curriculum staff. We will keep Google for teaching and learning but offering a more trust-centric and streamlined IT setup with Microsoft 365. Staff will be able to fully integrate with Teams/SharePoint and Outlook and collaborate with other colleagues and staff across the trust with ease. The project is due to be completed during the summer term.



Finance Team, from left: Hieu Hickey, Athene Atkinson, Angela Dillon, Liz Woods, Rosie Hay Rachael Ryder, Liz Whitehurst, Andrea Moores. Also in the team but not pictured Rachel Goulbourne and Lindsay Manford

FINANCE UPDATE

We are pleased to report that MHS finished the year **ahead of budget**. These are difficult times for our sector, and a full re-forecast has already been prepared for the 2025-26 financial year (Sep-Aug), taking into account the latest pay awards and additional funding as well as changes to staffing and non-staff costs. **All 2025-26 budgets have been confirmed** and uploaded to the finance system. The finance team are currently working on new developments that should give budget holders direct, live access to their budget reports, along with visibility of orders and invoices. The team are aiming to roll these out before Christmas.

Trips & Visits

The finance team continues to support with all the financial aspects of educational visits and school transport. This year we are operating two buses transporting **132 students**. Two overseas visits are planned, involving **95 students**, alongside other residential and **D of E adventures**, with a total of **188 students** involved. Work is continuing on a central charging and remissions policy. This is a statutory requirement for all 11-16 academies and we currently have one for each academy. The central policy will replace the individual versions, saving time for senior leadership teams and local governing bodies.

Compliance

Part of the benefit of the centralised model is that the central team takes a lot of the public sector compliance burden away from each academy. At the time of going to print, the annual budget forecast return has been submitted on time to the DfE, the year end process has predominantly concluded and the auditors have been and gone, all (hopefully) with minimal impact on the school and maximum efficiency.

HR NOTICES

Mandatory Training

The start of the academic year sees the organisation completing significant CPD and mandatory training updates. A big thank you to everyone who has completed the requirements and to colleagues for facilitating the in person sessions. Any certificates for completed mandatory training courses should be returned to humanresources@sjbf.org.uk

Performance Reviews

This year we have continued to roll out additional functionality within SAM People, including the appraisal process and values based objectives. Thank you to all staff and managers for taking part in this process.

Staff Consultative Association

Alongside the local staff forums, MHS nominates staff representatives who meet with the Foundation leadership once a term to champion the voice of their colleagues. The aim is to shape a better working environment and support communication across the Foundation. SCA Representatives will be talking to

colleagues to share information and gather feedback a The minutes are available on **The Brunner Free Library**.

Staff Survey

Following the 2025 staff survey, MHS has focused on improving **student behaviour**. A short pulse survey completed by over 50 colleagues indicates that student behaviour has improved across all measures. Particularly, student behaviour is rated much more positively, as is ease of obtaining support for student behaviour and feeling respected by students.

Health & Wellbeing

Earlier this term, we informed colleagues of our enhanced health and wellbeing offer, which can be accessed on a new digital platform called **Spark**. Amongst many services, Spark offers 24/7 access to a virtual GP, physiotherapy, children's mental health assessments and expert financial and legal information. Colleagues can access Spark from their phones, via an app or from a desktop. More information, including how to register, can be found on **The Brunner Free Library**.