



Secondary Phase News

September 2026

Message from Kate Heaton, Principal



As we reach the end of our first month of the new academic year, it has been wonderful to see our school community come back together with such enthusiasm and purpose. The school has quickly settled into its rhythm, with students embracing new opportunities, building relationships and engaging fully in their learning. It has been a very positive start to the year, and we are proud of how our young people have represented our values from day one.

At WHGS, our vision is clear: **Belonging First, Ambition Always, Excellence Everywhere**. We know that students achieve their best when they feel they are part of something bigger than themselves. Creating a strong sense of belonging remains at the heart of everything we do. From there, we encourage every student to aim high, challenge themselves and make the most of the opportunities available to them. Excellence doesn't start with outcomes; it is about developing habits, character and a commitment to continual improvement.

This month, we are delighted to introduce our new and improved WHGS Way, which captures the essence of our school. At its centre are our core values of Respect, Ambition and Compassion, surrounded by four pillars that shape the experience of every student. Our four school Houses are represented within the graphic and reflect the qualities we seek to nurture in all members of our community.

More than a design, this graphic provides a visual representation of what it means to be part of WHGS. We want our students to be curious learners, thoughtful citizens and confident individuals who leave us equipped to make a positive difference in society.

As you read this newsletter, you will see many examples of these values in action. They can be found in the achievements of our students, the contributions they make to school life and the care they show for one another.

Together, these moments demonstrate what **Belonging First, Ambition Always and Excellence Everywhere** looks like in practice.

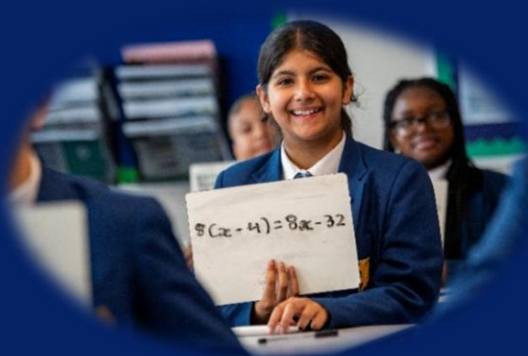
Thank you, as always, for your continued support. By working together, we can ensure every child thrives as a valued member of the WHGS community.



Curriculum Focus

Maths

The Maths Department has made a fantastic start to the new academic year. Students across Years 7-11 have settled quickly, with our new Year 7 students making an especially positive start. We were also delighted to welcome Year 7 parents and carers recently and share how families can support learning at home, including providing free revision guides. A reminder that SPARX Maths homework is set every Monday and is due by Sunday evening. Students can access additional support through our weekly intervention sessions, while Sixth Form mathematicians can attend Friday support sessions to help with studies and homework.



Year 11 students have already begun their programme of pre-seen exam papers, producing some very encouraging results. There is plenty to look forward to this term, including the UKMT Maths Challenges, the exciting *Inside Maths* theatre experience for Year 8, and the launch of our Maths trip to Disneyland Paris. Thank you for your continued support. It promises to be another exciting year in Maths!

Criminology

We are delighted to have launched our new Level 3 Criminology course, with our current Year 12 students already getting immersed in our crime prevention topic.

Students are currently exploring under-reported crimes in England and Wales, investigating why some crimes receive less attention and examining the experiences of both victims and offenders. They are also developing their understanding of the important distinction between crime and deviance, considering how behaviours are viewed and labelled by society.

As part of their learning, students are exploring real-life campaigns designed to raise awareness of under-reported crimes and encourage victims to come forward. This provides an opportunity to connect criminological theory with the world around them whilst also showing their creativity in designing their own campaign.

Our immediate focus is preparing students for their first controlled assessment in November, where they will apply their knowledge and research skills. Looking ahead, we hope to enhance their learning through visits to local courts, exploring the 'crime scene to courtroom' journey and bringing criminology to life beyond the classroom.

Business Studies

It has been a fantastic start to the year for our Business Studies students!

Year 10 students have completed their first three 9-mark exam questions, making excellent progress across each piece of work. They are already developing greater confidence in applying their knowledge and building strong exam technique.

Year 11 students are currently exploring Marketing and External Influences on businesses, using successful global brands such as Nike and Apple to investigate the importance of strong USPs and powerful brand identities. Over the next two weeks, they will complete practice papers in preparation for their first mock exam in November.

Our Year 12 Business Studies students are also taking their learning beyond the classroom, visiting the Trafford Centre to investigate its marketing strategies and how it prepares for the busy Christmas shopping period.



Ethos and Culture

Our Year 7 Welcome Evening was a wonderful opportunity to meet so many parents, carers and tutors as we begin an exciting new chapter together. It was fantastic to see such a positive turnout and to experience the enthusiasm and support that our families bring to the school community.

The evening provided an opportunity for parents and carers to meet key members of staff, ask questions and learn more about life at WHGS. We shared important information to help students settle successfully into Year 7, including guidance on routines, expectations and the many opportunities available throughout the year.

A particular highlight of the evening was the introduction of our new Scholarship Programme, which will be fully launched after the October half-term. Designed to provide students with a rich and challenging curriculum, the programme combines study skills, Classics, and three dedicated 75-minute Period 5 sessions each week to be completed at home. Alongside this, all Year 7 scholars will participate in at least one school club, ensuring they benefit from a broad range of academic, cultural and enrichment opportunities that support both personal growth and academic success.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to such a positive evening. We are delighted to welcome our new Year 7 families into our community and look forward to working together to ensure every student thrives and achieves their full potential.



Sixth Form Focus

Our Sixth Form students have made an outstanding start to the new academic year and continue to play a vital role within our wider school community. As the most senior students in the academy, they are excellent role models for our younger pupils, consistently demonstrating our core values of Respect, Ambition and Compassion through their approach to learning, their conduct and their contributions to school life. We have been delighted to welcome our Year 12 students, who have quickly settled into the academy and brought enthusiasm, energy and a positive attitude to their vocational and A Level studies from day one. It was also a pleasure to welcome Year 12 parents to our recent Induction Evening, where we were able to share key information about Sixth Form life, expectations and opportunities. It was encouraging to see so many parents taking a keen interest in their child's studies and future success, highlighting the strong partnership between home and school that is so important in supporting students to thrive and succeed.

Our Year 13 students have also begun the year with real purpose, preparing diligently for their forthcoming mock examinations and making excellent use of their independent study periods to develop effective revision and study habits. We are pleased to welcome Mr Hughes to the Sixth Form team this year. Working closely with the Heads of Year, he will play an important role in both the academic and pastoral development of our students, ensuring that every young person is supported and challenged to achieve their full potential. Over the coming weeks, we look forward to supporting Year 13 students with their UCAS applications and next steps towards university, apprenticeships and careers, while beginning individual guidance meetings with Year 12 students to help them explore future pathways and ambitions. We are incredibly proud of the positive start our Sixth Form students have made and look forward to seeing them continue to lead by example throughout the year.



Supporting Learning at Home (Study Skills)

Students at William Hulme's Grammar School are taught the acronym SMART for effective study. By following these principles, they can ensure any revision or independent learning is effective.

Is your revision SMART?



Sustained

- Start early so you can revise little and often
- Organise revision with a timetable
- Space and interleave



Metacognitive

- Use corrective feedback to correct errors.
- Use elaboration to explain answers.
- Make a note of gaps and errors at the end of study sessions.



Active

- Use active strategies that cause hard thinking.
- Quizzing, explaining, teaching and note-taking/summarising are all active.



Retrieved

- Activate hard thinking by recalling knowledge from memory.
- Use brain dumps, flashcards, quizzing, mind maps ...



Transformed

- Make revision memorable by transforming it into different formats
- Use flashcards, brain dumps, teach someone...

You can support at home by:

1. Providing a distraction-free environment (put mobile phones in another room for the duration of the study session).
2. Offering a reward at the end of the study session (eg 30 minutes of their favourite activity, favourite food for tea etc).
3. Encouraging your child to use trusted resources online. This means teacher-provided or verified materials, not YouTube, TikTok or AI!

Safeguarding and Online Safety

Online Safety and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly common part of everyday life, with many young people using AI-powered tools for learning, entertainment, and social interaction.



Whilst AI can offer many benefits, it is important for parents to be aware of the potential risks. AI-generated content can sometimes be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate, and children may struggle to distinguish between what is real and what has been created by AI. There is also a growing risk of scams, misinformation and deepfake images or videos being shared online.

We encourage parents to have regular conversations with their children about using technology responsibly, thinking critically about online content, protecting personal information, and reporting anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. By working together, we can help young people enjoy the benefits of AI while staying safe online.

If you have any concerns about your child's online safety or would like further advice and support, please contact the school safeguarding team.

Parents can also access our online safety newsletters, which contain practical guidance, resources, and advice on keeping children safe online, at <https://www.whgs-academy.org/parents/safeguarding/online-safety>

Careers

Careers education continues to be a key focus across the academy, ensuring that every student is supported to make informed decisions about their future. This term, our Year 11 students will continue to benefit from individual one-to-one careers guidance meetings, helping them to explore their strengths, aspirations and next steps after GCSEs. Students will also receive tailored support with applications, including applications to our own WHGS Sixth Form, which will open on 1 October. Careers guidance interviews are also available for our Year 12 students, supporting them in making informed subject and progression choices as they begin to consider their future pathways. Later this year, Year 12 students will also visit Lancaster University, helping them to explore higher education options and gain a valuable insight into university and campus life.

Careers is not confined to standalone events and guidance sessions; it is embedded throughout our curriculum, ensuring that students in all year groups develop an understanding of how their learning connects to future opportunities. Our Key Stage 3 students will also benefit from a range of careers-focused experiences designed to support their future option choices and raise aspirations from an early stage. These include our annual Careers Fair, where we welcome employers, universities and training providers into the academy to meet with students, share insights into their professions and answer questions about the qualifications, skills and experiences required for a wide variety of career pathways.

Throughout the year, students will have access to a wide range of enriching careers opportunities, including university visits, partnership work with UA92, careers fairs and encounters with employers and industry professionals. We are particularly excited to welcome alumni and professionals from a range of sectors into the academy to share their experiences and provide careers assemblies, including speakers working in medicine and law. These experiences are designed to broaden horizons, raise

aspirations and help students develop a clear understanding of the pathways available to them.

We are also looking forward to welcoming prospective students and their families to our Sixth Form Open Evening on 8 October, which will take place alongside our Secondary Open Evening, with Sixth Form activities beginning at 5.00 pm. This event provides an excellent opportunity to learn more about our thriving Sixth Form provision, meet staff and students, and explore the academic and enrichment opportunities available.



Key Dates:

Date	Activity / Event
28/09/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
28/09/2026	Y12 Course Change Evening
29/09/2026	Y8 Netball (home)
29/09/2026	Y11 Football (home)
30/09/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
30/09/2026	Y10 Photography / Art Trip (away)
01/10/2026	Y12 English Trip (away)
05/10/2026	KS4 Girls Team Badminton (away)
06/10/2026	Y7 Sports Afternoon (home)
07/10/2026	KS3 Girls Football (away)
08/10/2026	Secondary and Sixth Form Open Evening
12/10/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
13/10/2026	Y7-Y11 Inclusion Boccia (away)
13/10/2026	Y7 / Y8 Netball (away)
14/10/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
15/10/2026	Y13 Parents' Evening
16/10/2026	Y10 / Y11 Set Works Concert (away)
19/10/2026	Culture Day
19/10/2026 - 23/10/2026	Y11 French Mock Exams
19/10/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
21/10/2026	Y11 Career Meetings
22/10/2026	Parent Course
22/10/2026	Y7-Y11 Inclusion Fun Run (away)
22/10/2026	Y7 / Y8 Netball (away)
23/10/2026	Term Ends for Students (3.10pm)