



20 September 2024

Dear parent/carer

We have had a very purposeful and positive start to the new school year; it has been wonderful to see how our students have adapted to timetable changes, new classes and for some students, new subjects entirely. So many of our students care about their own ambition and success and this is demonstrated through their positivity and participation in lessons. We do hope this continues throughout the academic year.

Attendance

Attendance at school and in lessons is key to any child's success. We often talk to students about their child's knowledge and learning as a puzzle with many different pieces. Every lesson they are in school, they gain a piece for their puzzle; every lesson they miss, they lose a puzzle piece, and it is very difficult to get this back. The more puzzle pieces your child has, the more fully they understand their learning and can apply their knowledge.

We know that when students have an average attendance of 96% and above, they go on to achieve the highest grades at GCSE, particularly in their maths and English which are key to future success. A student with 90% attendance will miss approximately 19 days of school which is the equivalent of 76 lessons of learning; a student with 80% attendance will miss approximately 38 days of school which is the equivalent of 152 lessons of learning.

No amount of extra tuition or support will plug these gaps in learning – the only way students can gain their puzzle pieces is for them to be in school learning in classrooms with their teachers. Every lesson matters: success does not just happen in Year 11 or Year 13, it happens in every single school year – it happens every day that your child is in school and each day that puzzle grows and becomes more complex and more detailed, helping them to succeed.

Students in Year 11 and Year 13 have shown real commitment and dedication to their studies over the past few weeks; so many are already taking advantage of the extra intervention and support sessions offered by their class teachers. We would encourage all parents/carers to support their child in attending these sessions throughout the school year.

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Respect - Ambition - Compassion

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Equipment

All students should arrive at school equipped to learn. Students can purchase a pencil case from school with all the required equipment for a cost of £1.50. Payment should be made through ParentPay and the equipment will be ready for students to collect from the Finance Office. It is an expectation from this date that all students are suitably prepared each and every day. Students should have the following items:

- Pencil case
- 2 black pens
- 2 purple pens
- Eraser
- 2 red pens
- 2 pencils
- Ruler

The school pack includes all of these items should you wish to purchase via Parent Pay.

Litter

Over the past few weeks there has been an increased amount of litter left around the school site. Many of our students respect the school site and are attentive in ensuring waste goes into the bins. Staff do encourage students to manage the disposal of their own litter, but please do discuss the importance of this with your child.

Parking

You will know that WHGS is located in a built-up residential area and our local residents are very supportive of the education that we offer and of the students who attend. Please, however, be mindful of residents if you are collecting students or dropping students off in a morning. Do not block driveways or pavements and be conscious that dangerous parking puts students at risk. I should also remind you that stopping anywhere – even just to drop a student off – immediately outside the school is illegal. Please do pay attention to the yellow zigzag and double yellow lines indicating this.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Thom Copestake
Head of School (Secondary)

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