



Message from Thom Copestake, Head of School

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and I wanted to use this as an opportunity to draw your attention to the increased reliance on social media we are seeing from the young people in our care. We know that social media can have a positive impact on your child's mental health: it helps us stay connected with others and what's happening in the world. But sometimes, spending lots of time online, 'doomscrolling' or just viewing difficult content can leave us feeling stressed, insecure or overwhelmed. It is hard to find a balance, but by understanding how social media affects your child's mental health, we can take steps to enjoy the benefits.



The positive impacts of social media

We know that social media offers a lot of great benefits for our students – it allows them to build a sense of community, keeping in touch with friends and family. Social media too can be a better reflection of how diverse and varied our society is – seeing themselves represented in lots of different experiences provides teenagers with positive role models. Social media can be a great way for students to stay informed about what's going on in the world and support causes they care about, becoming involved with activism and campaigning.

The negative impacts of social media

We do know, however, that there are numerous negative impacts of social media. Seeing other people's 'perfect' lives online can make teenagers feel that they're not good enough. They don't always acknowledge how many photos and videos are filtered, edited and staged to show the best parts of someone's life. Social media can also feel like an echo chamber, where we mostly see posts and opinions that match our own. This is because the algorithms are designed to show us content that we will engage with. This makes it harder for many people to hear other perspectives, which can then narrow our views or reinforce harmful behaviours.

Although mobile phones are not allowed to be seen during school time at William Hulme's, we know that our students feel that they need to keep checking their social media or reply to every message and notification. They can also have 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) if they don't check it all the time. This constant pressure adds to anxiety and stress. Social media too can easily pull teenagers into an endless scroll of sad news or upsetting content. This is called 'doomscrolling' and it can make people feel anxious, upset or even unsafe.

Tips for having a positive time online

- Set limits – most current devices allow you to set screen limits for certain apps which can only be overwritten by a pin number or password;
- Encourage regular breaks – arrange for your child to spend time in person with friends or family;
- Mute notifications – encourage your child to turn off their notifications for apps or to put their device into 'do not disturb' mode;
- Unfollow or mute accounts – check your child's accounts and advise them to unfollow those who push negative messages or make them feel bad about themselves;
- Encourage kindness – focusing on positive kind and supportive comments to others instead of negative ones;
- Avoid social media before bed – using phones or screens late in the evening can make it hard to sleep. Encourage your child to keep their device out of the bedroom and change the screen settings to turn off blue light in the evenings.

School closes for half term at 3.10pm on Friday 23 May. Have a wonderful and restful half term break with your families.

Mr T Copestake
Head of School (Secondary and Sixth Form)

English

As I write this, all our students are diligently getting ready for their English exams. No matter which year group they are in, WHGS students here can show off their skills in extended writing and draw on all the high-level vocabulary they have learnt, and this is so important for writing like an academic. It isn't all about exams, however! We have had some fantastic extra-curricular events in English this year. On World Book Day, Year 9 were visited by local author Danielle Jawando, who inspired the year group with a talk on her journey into writing several successful YA novels: select students in Years 8-9 also attended special writing workshops across the day in the Library. In the Spring Term, thirty Year 8 students were selected to compete in the Rhetoric By Heart speeches competition, judged X-Factor style by Mr Lemord, Ms Esdaille and a visiting author. We would like to congratulate Kareem for taking the top prize! Finally, our Year 7s, now experts in Classical myths, entered the Ovid For All writing competition in the Autumn Term. Well done to Tobias and Jenna for writing poems that were highly recommended by the Classics for All team.

While Year 10 are steaming ahead with their GCSE courses and taking the more advanced texts and revision demands in their stride, they should also be proud of certain students from the cohort who have excelled in national oracy competitions. Early in 2025 a team of four made it to the second round of the ESU-Churchill Speaking Competition, but were knocked out by the fierce competition present at the Fallibroome Academy in Cheshire. We are especially proud of one of the team, Hasnat, who has recently made it to the final of the Poetry by Heart competition and will be performing poetry at the Globe Theatre in London in July. Good luck, Hasnat! Academic rigour is the name of the game in Sixth Form English, where students continue to be guided by expert teachers in the study of literary genre and linguistics. Whether reeling off essays on Othello, debating the contexts of William Blake or working on coursework, our students who pursue English in Year 12 are building the thinking and communication skills to go far.

Sixth Form – Music

Music Showcase - Tuesday 6 May

After months of hard work and practice, the L3 BTEC Music students provided a fantastic and entertaining programme of music which was filmed in readiness to be sent off for marking by external examiners.

As part of the Showcase, KS4 students provided support with vocal and band ensemble acts. Upper School Vocals performed 'Ain't No Mountain High Enough', our Year 10 band gave their own rendition of 'Sweet Child of Mine', complete with a stunning guitar solo by Jonas.



In addition, members of the All-Stars Cuban Band performed 'Beggin'. This left the stage set for Chandan (keys 1), Petra (vocals), Matthew (guitar) and Amelie (keys 2) to perform their three given pieces, including 'Seventeen' from Heathers the musical, 'Golden' and 'Bennie and the Jets'. With all three songs, students are required to interpret and change the songs stylistically into a varied arrangement, both in genre and musical features and devices, using techniques on their given instruments and voices.

Technical problems did not stop the group from giving the most professional performance they could. A huge thank you to Mr Lambert (bass guitar and band skills teacher) and Mr Mullen (drum and percussion teacher) who also played within the group. Also to Mr Leaning, for all things technical in terms of sound and lighting.

A joyous occasion celebrating, in some cases, nine years of musical development as we have watched our students develop their musical skills from the Primary Phase to this point. Well done to all.

Year 13 Update

Our Year 13s have been celebrating their time at William Hulme's with their annual "Spirit Week," where festivities included dressing up in their old William Hulme's uniforms, dressing in cultural wear and finally dressing the same as another student in an effort to "twin." The Sixth Form Team even joined in! They then celebrated the end of their A-level journey as a year group before their external examinations started on Monday 12 May, in their leavers' assembly. Highlights included a musical performance from our students and lots of awards celebrating success for Sixth Form Students. Our Year 13s have worked incredibly hard this year and we wish them all the best in their A-level examinations - we know they can achieve what they deserve.

Year 12 Explore Life Beyond School at Lancaster University Fair

On Friday 2 May, our Year 12 students were given the opportunity to attend the UK University Search Fair hosted at the picturesque Lancaster University campus. Blessed with warm, sunny weather, the day provided the perfect backdrop for an inspiring and informative visit.

Held in the impressive Great Hall, the fair featured a wide range of university exhibitors. Students engaged in meaningful conversations, explored course options, and gathered valuable insights into higher education opportunities. The entire campus was open for exploration, allowing students to gain a genuine sense of what university life could be like.

Importantly, this trip offered a contrast to the urban universities many students are familiar with, such as Manchester and Leeds. Experiencing a campus-style university setting gave students a fresh perspective - several even reconsidered their initial plans to stay at home for university, expressing newfound excitement about living and studying in a campus environment.

The visit wasn't just eye-opening for students - staff also thoroughly enjoyed the experience, making the day a memorable and rewarding outing for all involved.

Next half term promises a busy and exciting schedule for Year 12 students, starting with their final trip of the year to the University of Leeds Open Day on Friday 13 June - a fantastic way to wrap up the Summer Assessment period.

In addition, there will be two dedicated drop-down days packed with valuable insights and opportunities. On Tuesday 1 July, UCAS Preparation Day will welcome visiting university representatives who will offer guidance on choosing the right course and institution, navigating student finance, securing bursaries and scholarships, and crafting a compelling personal statement. Students will also have time to continue their research and begin work on their UCAS applications.

Then on Monday 7 July, Personal Statement Day will give students the chance to complete the first draft of their personal statement. They will also hear directly from PriceWaterhouseCoopers about exciting career routes through degree apprenticeships.

Finally, Year 12 will round off the summer term with a week of Work Experience, with placements secured across the North West - a brilliant opportunity to gain real-world insight and develop valuable professional skills.

Personal Development

Law and Politics

Local MP, Mr Afzal Khan recently came to visit WHGS Law and Politics students before heading back to Parliament. The sixth form students were able to meet their local MP and ask lots of questions. Mr Khan was very impressed with WHGS student interests in politics and the range of questions they asked. He said students asked some serious and challenging questions. Students questioned the MP on a range of topics, asking him about his experience working in law and politics, his experience as a politician, his views on Gaza and how he represents his constituents. Students critiqued the Labour party's policies of cutting the winter fuel allowance and cutting benefits to those with disabilities. Mr Khan emphasised the importance of democracy and the UK's political system. He addressed concerns about the economy and the influence of wealthy individuals corrupting the political system. He shared his experience of visiting Pakistan as well as his views on the political system there. Students responded to Mr Khan's open and honest responses to their questions. His visit has inspired students to research work experience opportunities within local government.



Year 9 Maths Enrichment

On Friday 9 May, 30 enthusiastic Year 9 students, accompanied by two sixth formers and staff, headed to Leeds for a day of mathematical exploration and problem-solving.

The first stop was Escape Hunt, where students were placed into mixed groups, each supported by a sixth former or a member of staff. Their challenge? To escape themed rooms by working together and solving a series of puzzles using logic, teamwork, and of course — maths! All groups managed to escape successfully, with Aban's group achieving the fastest escape time of the day.

After the excitement of the escape rooms, the group moved on to Maths City, where students had the opportunity to explore interactive exhibits which demonstrated how maths applies to the real world. From geometry to problem-solving, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Miss Adamson also noted how fascinating it was to see the cross-overs between Maths and Geography, adding another dimension to the day's learning.

Overall, it was a fantastic and engaging day, filled with fun, learning, and a great sense of achievement.



Careers

We held our final KS3 Careers Drop Down Day for the academic year on Tuesday 13 May 2025. The turnout was amazing with local employers, such as GMP, CBRE, HMRC, local colleges and Higher Education (HE) providing CEIAG guidance and Post 16/HE options to our KS3 students. Our students thoroughly enjoyed the event, utilising the sessions to gain valuable knowledge and insight into the world of careers from the community. Each year group stated that they would like to attend more Careers Drop Down Days in the future to support their ambitions. Students and staff praised the employers in attendance for their time and commitment; the feedback overall was fantastic!

Thank you to all that took part to make this event a huge success.



Revision and Study Skills

Last week students attended assemblies on how to study effectively. The focus was on becoming 'self-regulated' learners. This means studying in a way that is active and takes note of strengths, gaps and targets. As students progress into college and university, there will be a requirement for more self-study. Therefore, getting into good habits with this now means that students will have a much smoother transition into further and higher education while also improving their outcomes in every subject.

We talked about the analogy of **pilots**, **passengers** and **co-pilots**. A pilot is in control of their learning, using active strategies and setting targets. A passenger, however, is passive and does not use methods that will take their learning to the desired destination. We can use co-pilots (study buddies) to support us in reaching our destination by studying together and learning from each other.

Tips on how you can encourage your child to study like a pilot:

1. **Test** your child using resources such as flashcards, Cornell notes or by asking them questions about their learning. This could be as simple as saying "Tell me three things you know about . . ." or "Tell me three vocabulary words from the topic . . ." or "Tell me the three most important facts from . . ." or asking them to talk for one minute non-stop about a particular topic!

2. Allow your child to **teach** you about their current topic.
3. Encourage your child to **tell** you what they have managed to recall from memory in a study session and where the gaps or errors were. This will help ensure their next study session focuses on those gaps and is purposeful.

Below is a reminder of the acronym FAST, which outlines the principles of effective study:

- **Focused:** ensure revision is distraction-free, in a quiet and calm environment. We should also give ourselves corrective feedback, making a note of gaps and errors to go back over in the next study session.
- **Active:** the most effective revision involves thinking hard. We can do this through trying to recall knowledge from memory.
- **Sustained:** the best revision is 'little and often' to ensure that we remember learning in the long-term. We should avoid cramming and instead spread our study out over several shorter sessions.
- **Transformed:** in order to demonstrate understanding of our learning, we should practise transforming it into different formats such as flashcards, mind maps, quizzes, brain dumps etc.

Sun Awareness

As the weather starts to improve across Manchester, it is important that our students and families stay safe – particularly when the forecast is for hot sun. Please see details below from Manchester Healthy Schools. Further information can be found here; [Sun Awareness](#)

How to choose a SUN SCREEN



Sunscreen is an important part of skin protection from the sun. Follow these tips to choose the right one for you and your family.



Sunscreen
SPF 30+
UVA
★★★★
water resistant
12M



Use 6-8 teaspoons of sun screen to cover the body and reapply every 2 hours.

Choose an SPF rating of 30 or higher.

Choose a cream with UVA in a circle symbol and at least 4 stars.

Choose a water resistant cream but reapply after you've been in water.

Check the expiry date. This symbol means you can use it for 12 months from opening.

Find out more on the NHS website: 

Why is sunscreen so important?



Sunscreen stops your skin getting burned in the sun.



Sunburn can lead to:

- Skin cancer
- Wrinkles and ageing of the skin.

Sunburn doesn't just happen on holiday. You can burn in the UK, even when it's cloudy.



Check the UV rating to find out if you should apply sunscreen. If there is UV 3 or higher think about using sunscreen. You can see UV rating on most weather apps.

Sunbeds can cause skin cancer. The UV radiation can damage the DNA in your skin cells. If you want a tan use fake tan from a bottle or a spray tan.



Find out more at [Skcin.org](https://www.skcin.org):



Key Dates:

Date	Activity / Event	Time(s)
19/05/2025-22/06/2025	GCSE / A-Level Exams continue	Various
19/05/2025-13/06/2025	Y7 / Y8 NGRT Testing	Various
19/05/2025-23/05/2025	Year 7 to Year 9 Summer Term Assessments	Various
20/05/2025	School Show – A Night at the Musicals	4.00pm-5.00pm
23/05/2025	End of Term	3.10pm
26/05/2025-01/06/2025	School Holidays	
02/06/2025-13/06/2025	Y12 Internal Examinations	Various
09/06/2025-20/06/2025	Y10 Internal Examinations	Various
13/06/2025	Y12 University of Leeds Visit	All Day
19/06/2025	WOW Factor	3.30pm-5.00pm
23/06/2025-24/06/2025	Y9 DTP / ACWY Immunisations	Two Days
25/06/2025	GCSE / A-Level Contingency Day	All Day
25/06/2025	Summer Concert	6.00pm-7.30pm
01/07/2025	UCAS Preparation Day	All Day
03/07/2025	Y12 Business and Finance Careers Trip	All Day
04/07/2025	INSET Day (School Closed for All Students)	
07/07/2025	UCAS Personal Statement Day	All Day
07/07/2025	Y10 History Trip	All Day

Date	Activity / Event	Time(s)
08/07/2025	Y12 Business Studies/Economics Visit	All Day
08/07/2025	Henshaws Visit	12.00pm-2.00pm
09/07/2025-10/07/2025	Y12 HE+ University Visit	Two Days
10/07/2025	Y8 End of Year Trip	All Day
11/07/2025	Y10 End of Year Trip	All Day
13/07/2025-17/07/2025	Y7-Y10 Maths Trip to Paris	Five Days
14/07/2025-18/07/2025	Y12 Work Experience Week	All Week
16/07/2025	Y9 End of Year Trip	All Day
17/07/2025	Y7 End of Year Trip	All Day
17/07/2025	End of Term Rewards Event	1.55pm-3.10pm
18/07/2025	End of Term	2.00pm
21/07/2025-02/09/2025	School Holidays	