



Dear Parents/Carers,



As the academic year draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to thank parents and learners for their support and commitment during the academic year. We have made real progress with our improvement journey this year, and I want to acknowledge the role that parents and carers play in this. I really appreciate your honest feedback as we strive to improve and the relationships that you build with myself and other colleagues.



The last few weeks have been a celebration of the very best of our school. A range of curricular and extra-curricular events over recent weeks have showcased a range of skills and talents in our young people. The most satisfying part of this job is seeing the personal growth in individuals, those who excel and those who have overcome barriers to find their time to shine. This year has been full of that.



Final Day of Term

The final day of the school year is Friday 19th July. School will close at 12.20pm. The 944 bus will collect learners at 12.30pm on that day. This will be a non-uniform day for our school community.

Departing Colleagues

As is always the case at the end of a school year, a number of valued colleagues are moving on. There are very few colleagues moving on this year, but we are saying goodbye to some long serving and respected colleagues. Mrs Wadeson is leaving us after two years to take up a position in another Bolton school. Mr Faulkner has led a number of students through the "Space to Bee" programme over recent years, he leaves us to pursue opportunities abroad for now. He tells us he will be back! Mrs Grady will take up her first maths teaching job after training with us this year. Mrs Newton is moving on to teach Geography in a Manchester school after 5 years service. We are also saying farewell to Mrs Prince who has worked at WHS for the last 18 years and to Mrs Sumner who has worked as a Learning Support Assistant here for 28 years. All have given incredible service to the school, and we wish them well in all they go on to do.

Return to School - September

Years 7, 10 and 11 will return on Wednesday 4th September at 8.30am. The school day will end at 2.15pm. All year groups will attend school on Thursday 5th September at 8.30am. The school day will end at 3.15pm.

Times of the School Day

Please note that the school day will now start at 8.30am - all learners should be through the gate by this time. The school day will now end at 3.15pm. Early closure on a Wednesday each week will be at 2.15pm. The bus network will support the times of our school day. Please can we request that parents and carers also support our punctuality focus when driving children to school.

Attendance

Every lesson matters for our students and so regular attendance to school is extremely important. Please continue to support this priority by avoiding making routine appointments during the school day and not booking holidays during term time. Our term dates are clearly published on our school website. Leave of absence from school will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and must be applied for in advance. A reminder that new attendance legislation takes effect for us from September which includes updated processes for the issuing of fixed penalty notices and prosecution for unauthorised absence, including holidays – please see the attached letter for more information.



Uniform

The overwhelming majority of learners wear our uniform with pride, and we are grateful for parental support on this. It is our ambition to further improve standards of uniform in September. When uniform is at its best in our school, so are learning and behaviour. We wanted to be clear on the expectations before closing for the summer. Our full guidance on uniform can be found on the school website [here](#). Key points to note regarding uniform are:

- every student must wear school shoes and not black trainers. If the footwear is made by a sports brand it will be deemed to be a trainer.
- every student must wear a tie.
- one ear piercing in each ear is permitted. Nose rings are not allowed.
- false eye lashes and nails are not allowed.
- make-up and hair colour must be natural looking and subtle.
- trousers should be a regular fit.
- skirts should sit just above the knee.
- hoodies must not be brought to school and will be confiscated at the gate.

I ask in particular, that parents do not allow piercings and extreme hair styles during the summer break if there is no time to remedy / remove these before the start of term.

Colleagues and visitors to school have recently commented on the length of school skirts. Some are not worn at an appropriate length for a working environment. I would ask parents and carers to support us in not buying skirts that have been selected for ease of rolling up. For those who do not wear their school skirt at an appropriate length the school may be forced to insist on some learners wearing only trousers for school.

Contacting Student Pastoral Teams

If you wish to make contact with your child's pastoral leads, please contact their SSL/SPL via their direct email accounts on:

Year 7: Mr Shaw/Miss Hill Y7pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 8: Mrs Aaron/Mr Hancock Y8pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 9: Miss Swift/Mrs Wharton Y9pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 10: Mrs Whittle-Darrock/Mrs Stocks/Mrs Wild Y10pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 11: Ms Walsh /Mr Barwise Y11pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Students in receipt of free school meals will receive vouchers using the usual system.

Whilst the school is closed for the summer the whsoffice@westhoughton-high.org email address will be periodically checked.

We wish all members of our school community and their families a wonderful summer break. Be safe and look after each other.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N S Coe
Headteacher



Attendance

Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period (1). This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Please see examples below for further clarification:

1. A penalty notice issued for any offence that begins prior to the 19 August will be issued under the existing rules. Therefore, it will (a) be charged at £60/£120, (b) not count towards the escalation whereby a second penalty notice within 3 years is charged at a flat rate of £160 and there is a limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years and (c) will be issued in line with the LA thresholds for the 2023-24 academic year. This is regardless of whether the penalty notice is issued before or after the 19th August.

For example, if a parent takes a pupil out of school without authorised leave of absence in term time for 10 sessions or more in July 2024 but the penalty notice is not issued until September the old rules will be followed, including being charged at the old rates of £60/£120. The penalty notice will not count towards the escalation.

2. A penalty notice issued for any offence that begins after 19 August will be issued under the new rules. Therefore, it will be (a) charged at £80/£160, (b) count towards the escalation, and (c) be issued in line with the new national threshold of 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

For example, a parent takes a pupil out of school for 5 days in the first week of the new term at the beginning of September 2024, the new rules will be followed.

Any term time holidays that are taken after the start of the 2024/25 academic year will be treated under the new legislation as the new rules apply to any offences committed from 19 August 2024, regardless of when the holiday is booked.

(1) A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once

