



Dear Parents/Carers,

A very happy new year to all of our families, I hope that the festive season has brought some relaxing time with friends and families. The school term has commenced well and I wanted to take the opportunity to keep parents up to date on a number of matters.



### Change to the School Day - January

From 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 our school day has more formally started at 8.45am. Students make their way to their form rooms **ready to start learning at 8.45am**. I must stress the importance of building good punctuality habits. During the first week back we are working to iron out any issues in the new systems (including the timing of the school bus) and intend to run fully with expectations around punctuality to school and lessons from w/c 16<sup>th</sup> January.



The new school library is now open daily from 8am until 4pm to support self-study for students. This may be of particular interest to our Year 11 students as they prepare for their upcoming mock examinations.



### Change to the School Day - September

Thank you to all parents who shared views around the proposed changes to the school day from September. The planned changes are designed to ensure we are compliant with national expectations and also meet the needs of our own school and its future development. Based on the questions raised I plan to record a briefing for parents that details the plans more fully and answer many of the questions raised. This will be available for all parents to view on the school website and via a synergy link later in January.



### Snow

It is rare that snow in the UK is extreme enough to result in the closure of the school, however, it can happen and I want to make parents aware of what will happen should the weather present challenges significant enough to consider school closure. It is impossible to outline what will happen in every scenario, detailed below is a basic outline of the plan the school will follow.



7.00am Notify parents that the start of school will be delayed until 9.30am (pending final decision)



7.00-7.30am Site inspection / risk assessment. Assess staffing levels

7.45am Notify parents of decision to open / switch to online learning

Adverse weather presents a challenge for any Headteacher making the final decision. The safety of students and staff is paramount which means that both the physical state of the site and the safety of everyone making a journey in difficult conditions must be considered. If the school is forced to close, we will endeavour to communicate swiftly and clearly with parents and will switch to a remote learning offer until face to face schooling resumes.



### Anti-Social Behaviour Outside WHS

As some of you will have read on social media, the police have recently secured prosecution following the anti-social behaviour of a number of youths outside our school gates. This presented us with some challenges in the autumn term and we were thankful for the continued support of our local police officers who worked tirelessly with the school. During the latter half of the autumn term we enhanced end of day staffing (and were supported by the police) to ensure that there was no disruption caused by youths not connected with our school. It was unwise to comment publicly at the time as the issue was a mostly community based police matter





rather than a school issue. Instead we worked closely with students and families who needed extra support in ensuring they could make their way home undisturbed.

I am pleased to report that the actions of the police have had a positive impact and thank parents who have worked with us for their understanding and support. Whilst the first term has presented some challenges I was mindful not to cause unnecessary worry to so many students and parents who were completely unaffected by this issue.



I would ask all parents to remind their children that behaviour beyond the school gates is covered by the school's behaviour and exclusion policies and that it is everyone's responsibility to keep away from negative influences in the community. Specifically, I would ask that students are reminded that recording other people without their consent on a mobile phone and sharing it with others is a criminal offence. I want to reassure parents that when members of our school community have been found to act in this way that the school has taken appropriate action.



### Working Together

In the run up the Christmas I asked that parents supported the improvement of the school with a focus on five simple strategies. I would again ask that in this new term, parents return to the points below in discussion with their children.



1. **Mobile Phones.** Not calling/accepting calls from children during the school day. Whilst phones are allowed in social areas at break time, students should never be making a call on a phone during the school day.
2. **Uniform.** Checking your children leave for school in full school uniform.
3. **Attendance.** Taking a 'bracing approach' to attendance, encouraging your children to attend school daily.
4. **Punctuality.** To both school and lessons. Too many students chose to visit the toilet after the bell at the end of breaks or in the first few minutes of a lesson after a break time. Please support us in challenging this as it is disruptive to the running of the school.
5. **Equipment.** Please ensure that your child arrives in school with basic stationery, a school bag, their planner and PE kit, when appropriate, each day.



### Communication Strategy

As promised in the autumn term we will shortly send out by post a summary of communication channels used by the school and when they are most effective. I hope this will help to streamline communications. I have observed that when many parents call the school, they will often ask for myself as Headteacher. In most instances our team will direct parents to a different colleague in the first instance as it is rare that I am best placed to deal with your query. Please be understanding with our reception team if this is the case. I would also like to remind parents that they should never make a call direct to, or accept a call, from their child during the school day and ask that you trust our judgement, particularly in relation to sickness and attendance at first aid.

Wishing all of our families a happy and successful 2023, with thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N. S Coe  
Headteacher

