



28 October 2024

Dear parent/carers

As we commence the second half term of the year, I wanted to celebrate with you, some of the wonderful achievements of our students. Our Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts have approached their studies and learning with real commitment, and it has been wonderful to see so many of them set high expectations for themselves and their outcomes. Our GCSE geographers spent wet and windy days completing their field work study in Blackpool and a fabulous group of musicians from across all year groups performed wonderfully for guests at a recent lunch time concert. We also held both our Secondary and Sixth Form Open Evenings: the students who volunteered their time to help were courteous, attentive and extremely polite with the hundreds of visitors we welcomed on site. Our students continue to be a credit to themselves and to the families as they embody our values of ambition, respect and compassion.

I also want to recognise the dedication and positivity of our new Year 7 cohort. They have quickly adapted to new routines and structures and are embedding themselves in the very special WHGS community. Many students are already taking part in enrichment and extra-curricular activities and are appreciating the opportunities to form strong friendships and positive relationships. There are lots of ways all our students can develop their skills beyond the classroom so please do encourage your child to take part in one of our many enrichment opportunities available. Full details are here; [Enrichment Timetable](#).

Y11 and Y13 Revision

This half term, our Year 11 and Year 13 students will be undertaking the first round of their mock examinations (11 to 22 November 2024). These are an important opportunity for students to consolidate their learning, reflect on their progress and receive vital feedback about their targets for learning. They are also an essential part of practising for their actual exams; we expect students to follow all exam procedures so that they are familiar with the rules and regulations.

It is hoped that students used the half term to suitably revise and prepare for these important examinations. The importance of revision cannot be under-estimated at this stage. There are lots of useful tips and reminders on our school website - [Secondary Phase Learning](#) - including video guides to support revision techniques, revision timetables, knowledge organisers and further links to recommended revision websites.

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.

Respect - Ambition - Compassion

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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.

Key Assessment Dates

Y11 & Y13 Mock Examinations 1	11 – 22 November 2024
Y12 Mid-Year Assessments	7 – 17 January 2025
Y7 – Y10 Mid-Year Assessments <i>in some subjects</i>	20 – 31 January 2025
Y13 Mock Examinations 2	5 – 14 February 2025
Y11 Mock Examinations 2	24 February – 7 March 2025
KS3 Internal Examinations	19 – 23 May 2025
Y12 Internal Examinations	2 – 13 June 2025
Y10 Internal Examinations	9 – 20 June 2025

Uniform (Years 7 to 11)

Since the start of the school year, many of our students have met the high expectations we expect of them regarding their uniform. They arrive at school looking smart, proud to represent the school and very much a part of the WHGS community. As a reminder, please see details below of our [uniform policy](#).

- School blazer with WHGS logo
- Plain white button up shirt to be worn with WHGS logo tie
- Black formal trousers (not 'skinny' style) OR
- Black knee length skirt
- Plain black tights OR
- Black/grey socks
- Plain black shoes
- Black V-neck long sleeved jumper with or without WHGS logo
- Headscarves worn by female students for religious reasons must be black or navy blue.

As part of this policy, it is necessary for me to remind parents/carers and students that the only jewellery which is acceptable for students, is a wristwatch and one pair of discreet stud earrings, which must be worn in the ear lobes only. Any other form of jewellery is not allowed – this includes necklaces. Any such items may be confiscated by the school and returned only to the parent/carers, similar to how we manage the use of mobile phones on site.

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Furthermore, **no nail varnish is permitted and neither false nails nor false eyelashes are permitted.** Similarly, **students are not allowed to wear hoodies** (not even as a replacement for a coat), baseball caps, bandanas or do-rags.

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

On behalf of all the staff and students, I hope you had a restful half term break.

Yours sincerely

Thom Copestake
Head of School (Secondary)