



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that I find you are well and that you have had a good start to 2017.

I am writing to you this February to provide you with some important information, some reminders in terms of school expectations and some dates for your diary.

OfSTED Inspection

As you are aware the school was inspected by OfSTED in the middle of November 2016 and the report was subsequently published in December. We are delighted by the outcome of the report which judges the school as a good school overall, good in every category and highlights many of the good and exceptional features of West Hill School. This has only been achieved by the hard work, dedication and teamwork shown by the staff, the boys, the parents and the governors. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity of saying thank you to all involved in making this happen.

Progress 8 update

You may recall that in my October letter I provided you with some information regarding the new main performance measure which schools are ranked by the Department for Education. In January this information was updated and published for all schools nationally. You can find details regarding our progress 8 figure by following the link below.

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=phase®ion=357&geographic=la&phase=secondary>

This updated information is a fantastic outcome for the boys, the school and places West Hill School in the top 25% of the highest performing schools in the country and shows that the progress made by the boys at West Hill School is above that found nationally.

Reminder about personal appearance

At Easter last year I wrote to you in relation to asking for your support in upholding our high expectations in terms of uniform and appearance and I gave some clarification in relation to footwear and haircuts along with a reminder regarding facial hair. Thank you to all of you who have supported us with this and in particular in terms of footwear.

Haircuts.

It has been noticed recently that a number of boys have had their hair cut at local barbers/hairdressers and have come to school either with a 'skin fade', a shaved top part of the head or a discernible line which has either been shaved into the hair or because there is a very distinct difference in length between the sides of



the head and the hair on top. A number of boys have then told us that they didn't ask for this but the barber/hairdresser did this as 'it looks good'. Can I remind you of what our school rules are in relation to this.

Hair should be neat, tidy and smart. If boys choose to grow their hair, long hair which falls below the collar line must be tied up and off the face. Fully shaven heads (hair must be cut with scissors not clippers) are not allowed and if the hair is shaven at the sides and back it must be no shorter than a grade 1 and this should extend no further up the neck and head than the top of the ear and there should be no discernible line between the shaved part and the main head of hair. Can I suggest that boys and or parents are very clear with local barbers/hairdressers when boys get their hair cut what is and is not acceptable by the school.

Facial Hair

Inevitably as boys mature into young men they will begin to grow facial hair. The school policy states clearly that boys' faces should be cleanly shaven. A number of boys have required reminding repeatedly of this recently. Can I ask that parents support us and ensure boys are cleanly shaven before they leave home to come to school in a morning.

A polite request from local residents and West Hill School.

As we ask that parents who pick up their son from school in a car to not come on to the school site I realise that parking on the surrounding roads to the school can be challenging, especially at busy times. However, can I ask parents who pick their child up from school and park on the roads near school, especially those who park up on Stamford Grove to please show the local residents the same common courtesy as they would expect from anyone parking where they live. The grass verge outside a number of the houses on Stamford Grove has been badly damaged and the school has been informed it has been done by cars parking there to drop boys off at school or to pick them up from school.

Advanced information

Prefect Interviews

As part of preparing our students to become good citizens and be ready for the world of work we try to give them various levels of responsibility at different stages in their school lives, for example, peer mentors, school councillors, team captains etc. However, perhaps the most important opportunity is the process of becoming a prefect, one that all boys will have the chance to experience during their time at West Hill. This term, all year 10 pupils have been briefed on the role of the Prefect and the application procedure. Potential candidates are now busy preparing their application form and supporting letters for the selection process. The next step for each candidate will be an interview with current prefects, governors and members of staff. In order to facilitate these interviews and make them as close as possible to a real life experience, school will close at 1.55 pm on Friday 7th April to allow them to take place. All interviews should be completed by 3.00pm

Pupils in years 7, 8 and Year 9b will be dismissed for the day at the end of period 4 (**1.55 pm**). Pupils in Years 9a, 10 and 11 will have lunch as normal between **1.25 and 1.55 pm**. If they are not involved in the interview process, they will be allowed to leave school once they have finished their lunch. A number of Year 11 pupils will be required to stay in school to complete their ECDL examination. Parents of the boys involved in this will be notified on an individual basis.



Year 11 Mock Examinations 6th and 8th March 2017

Year 11 boys will have GCSE mock examinations in Mathematics and English on Monday 6th March and Wednesday 8th March. As you will be aware the Year 11 boys are the first cohort to sit the new revised GCSE Mathematics and English examinations. The Department for Education and Ofqual have made it very clear that they wanted to increase the demand of GCSEs to match the standard of examinations in countries identified with the best education systems in the world. It is therefore even more imperative than ever that the boys take these examinations exceptionally seriously and prepare for them effectively.

Dates

School closes for Easter on Friday 7th April 2017 (please see information above in relation to closing times)

School re-opens Monday 24th April 2017 at 8:45am

School is closed for May Day on Monday 1st May 2017

School closes for half term Friday 26th May 2017

School reopens Monday 5th June at 8:45am

Yours sincerely

Mr A F Harrison