



# WEST HILL SCHOOL

*Aiming High Since 1927*

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## **Subject: End of Autumn Term**

Dear Parents and Carers,

To begin, it is a reminder that we end this term on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December with students dismissed at 12:30pm. Thursday is also a non-uniform day, encouraging boys to wear Christmas jumpers and donations via School Gateway.

As our first term of the academic year draws to a close, it offers a chance to reflect on the many wonderful opportunities West Hill have created this year to date. As we build up to the end of the term our Form Tutors, Heads of Year and SLT Links have been celebrating a range of achievements, certificates and personal progress in our boys. We have purchased over 500 selection boxes - to hand out, not for us to eat - to deserved form groups and individuals. This is in addition to film and popcorn rewards and celebration breakfasts. All boys have a fresh opportunity to be recognised and rewarded next term. Thank you to our families for the support with our Christmas form hampers which will be delivered to the local food banks by some of our students and Mrs Barton this week.

Additionally, we owe gratitude to parents and carers. Our Friends of West Hill School, Parent Teacher Association is thriving in their fundraising at local events, hosting fairs in school and being shrewd business people; our last Winter Fair raised over £1,700 which comes straight back into the school to help us make school improvements (the school toilets and minibuses are on the list) alongside money being put back into curriculum opportunities for the boys with their donation towards to cost of the coach for our Year 7 pantomime - oh yes they did! If you would like to join this group of wonderful people, as much or as little as you can offer, it is welcomed. Simply attending our community events is also a great support but also a wonderful opportunity to see our school community in action. They can be contacted via the admin email account or on social media as *Friends of West Hill School*. Thank you to those parents leading this for us - even in producing our very own Old Boys' West Hill rum! There is an additional thank you to our families who have joined our Trustee Board, helping us to shape and lead our school to be the best it can be. A final thank you to those parents who have offered linguistic support in helping our Urdu and Punjabi speakers qualify for an additional language in their heritage language, offering time to support our learners achieve – shukaria.

In terms of gratitude, there is one additional person to mention. We only have one member of staff leaving us at Christmas and that is our Site Manager, Bob Sinclair. A huge thank you to Bob who has been with the school since 2009, arriving early and leaving late to enable our school to be the community that we are. Thank you, Bob and well wishes in retirement. We welcome Adam Barratt who has started with us to take the school forward on the next stage of our journey.

## **Co-curricular and Trips, from Mrs Anderton and Mr Lawton**

As you are aware from our ongoing work last year, we are actively working on increasing school-based experiences and affordable curriculum trips. From September, we have had visits from MP Jonathan Reynolds, college assembly visits from Oldham Sixth Form College, Laurus Rycroft, Tameside and Clarendon and Ashton Sixth Form College master classes in school. In school, we have celebrated the European Week of Languages, National Coding Week and excellent effort in the festive coding challenge, launched our Axiom Maths programme and celebrated the World Mental Health Day with yellow galore, also acting as our Year 11 students' first ever own-clothes day. In school, competitions have been around Black History Month, Mental Health, Duolingo, the FRIGHT creative writing, cross-country and a STEM inter-schools competition hosted by us (girls were present in the school!). We have had opportunities for Year 7 pantomime at the Stockport Plaza, RE Church Visits, Music performances for our Christmas Carol services but also fundraising in the community, GCSE Music Bridgewater Hall visits, North-West Computing Museum visits and Languages visits to the Christmas Markets. We will continue to prioritise opportunities to bring curriculum to life and thank all our staff for their organisation of such opportunities for the students. From January, we



are planning more inter-from competitions within academic and sports amongst the boys too, with support of our Heads of Year.

We held a successful presentation evening for last year's Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, with 35 boys receiving their certificates and badges, after spending the last 12 months working hard on their volunteering, physical and skills activities. We have now started with the new cohorts, with over 60 Year 9 boys taking part in the Bronze Award and 20 Year 10s on the Silver. Well done to all involved.

**Upcoming Next Half-Term**

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025:** return for normal school day.

**W/C 6<sup>th</sup> January:** Year 9 academic reports sent.

**W/C 13<sup>th</sup> January:** Year 7 academic reports sent and Year 9 option choices commence.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January:** Year 11 Celebration Evening 5-6pm (invitation only).

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January:** Year 9 Options Pathways evening from 5pm.

**W/C 20<sup>th</sup> January:** Year 8 academic reports sent and Year 11 mock period begins (2 weeks).

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January:** Year 9 Progress Evening 3:30-6:30pm (online event).

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February:** Year 7 Progress Evening 3:30-6:30pm (online event).

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February:** Year 11 mock results issued and reports released. End of half-term.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February:** return for normal school day after half-term.

**Parent/Carer Survey**

For our newer families, each term we send a 'you said, we did' in response to the survey that you complete, this can be found overleaf.

The next term always passes very quickly and the mornings get lighter which makes everything feel nicer. When we return, our standard of the week that we are looking for will be being prepared for school with correct equipment, showing that we are ready to learn and be responsible over our preparation. I thought I would note this in case any boring/practical Christmas gifts make their way into stockings.

To end, I am incredibly proud to work with excellent staff and wonderful young men of the future and I wish you a wonderful rest and time with family.

Kind regards,

Ms C. Cronin  
Headteacher

## Autumn Term 'You said, we did' 2024

What's been said	What action is needed	When
<p>You appreciate the variety of trips abroad but would like more affordable and local trips tied to the studied curriculum, including cultural experiences.</p> <p>Communication into school. Some feedback showed that you don't always know who to contact in school or the difficulty in contacting.</p>	<p>Since December 2023, we have been working on our KS3 curriculum and opportunities to run trips within the curriculum. This needs a coordinated approach so that the opportunities for trips per year group and per subject are mapped across the year. We will then look at cross-curricular opportunities linked to the studied curriculum. From September 2024, we are working on setting aside a portion of the school budget to off-set the additional costs in recent years of travel (a previous barrier for our staff). This is now in place and trip opportunities are growing, but will take more time to be established in our curriculum. Our Languages Team are particularly pioneering affordable, local trips, as an example. We are also planning more cultural diversity events in school this year, to celebrate all learners and cultures. This will become an annual celebration and details will follow.</p> <p>Our current communication system is an older platform. As a school that has grown over the years, the current mechanisms of calling into the office, or emailing the admin email address not only affect your feeling around confidentiality, but also make it hard to reach the school at peak times (on the school run/travelling to work/lunch break). These times are also when our admin teams have all the boys entering school/in the office for first aid or collecting items/sorting their days. Our School Gateway App has clear functionality of messaging out but is limited in its ability for you to message into school and contact the staff you need, directly. We are currently reviewing the available apps and programmes that would enable faster and clearer communication which would be most convenient to most families, reducing the demand on the phones and admin email, which would still be available, but not used by all parents as the most convenient method of contact. We recognise that our systems worked when we were a smaller school, but now as a school of 850+ students, we need a system that can serve the needs of a larger audience. A new system would also allow for more detail around the reason for behaviour points or achievement points. Also, it would allow for feedback and in-class assessments and tests undertaken as most school-based apps now have this facility (also raised as queries from you).</p>	<p>September 2024-July 2025.</p> <p>January 2025 reviews of current providers. Aim for summer clarity and roll out in 2025-2026.</p>
<p>The vast majority of parents believe that any bullying experienced has been resolved or dealt with effectively.</p>	<p>This will continue as an ongoing body of work through our website-based anonymous reporting function, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and establishing their role in the daily school life, our curriculum alterations with far more active discussions on bullying, our heightened assembly focus on treatment towards others, alongside education-based interventions for the boys that present habits or social behaviours that are unkind towards others. We will continue with this work and maintain the level of support in school and continue to develop our policy and practice to foster a culture of true inclusion. We had 149 families responding positively around bullying, and 7 with a negative experience (2 of which were historical). Although we wish to get this to zero negative experiences, we are certainly on a journey to clearer practice.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We had less responses making year-on-year comparisons harder. We encourage all families to let us know your feedback as we do use it to review progress and next steps.</li> <li>Overwhelmingly, you stated that your child was happy and felt safe at West Hill.</li> <li>Overwhelmingly, you stated that we have high expectations of your child and they have a broad curriculum with co-curricular opportunities. In Year 11, we will be sending the P6 opportunities out so families know which extra learning opportunities are available and that no student feels torn between which to attend.</li> <li>Some parent/carer voice have asked for feedback on a personal level. This survey is anonymous. If you require information or detail please contact the school reception.</li> <li>The comment boxes had some praise to named staff, which was passed on to them and they were most grateful for the recognition of the support for you and your child.</li> </ul> <p><b>Myth dispel: both our break and lunch queues are finished within 8-10mins each day. No student, ever, cannot have food (as the Headteacher, I am at the front of the queue every day and can dispel this myth!) We had a few comments about students queuing and not receiving food as there was no time, but this is categorically not a true reflection of the school day.</b></p> <p>Thank you to those who answered. Other personal comments and feedback (around reports, Year 6 into 7 transition activities, PE kits/fixtures and home learning clarity) are taken on board by staff who lead those areas.</p>		