

Our Ref: DWt/LPu

10th January 2025

Dear Parent/Carers,

Thank you for a really positive first week back. As is the norm this time of year many of our youngsters have told me how cold it is, and I have reminded them that it is winter so should dress accordingly as this is an annual event. Good to know they have picked up the British tradition of discussing the weather.

I have taken the time in assemblies this week to go through what we are trying to achieve for all our young people at our Woodlands School, I do this at the start of every term, so all are clear where we are trying to get to. Going through our core values of Aspiration, Resilience, Opportunity and Excellence, and being clear on our expectations which, should all follow, will give them a much greater chance of success.

I am well aware that their brains are wired to take risks and make mistakes, it is our job, collectively, to ensure that they don't keep making the same mistakes over and over but instead learn from them.

Consultation of the two-week October half-term for 2026-2027

Thank you to all who have contributed so far, it is important we get your views. As part of our consultation for the two-week October half-term Miss White and I will be hosting a live YouTube Q&A session on Wednesday 15th January 15th at 6.00pm. The link is below:

<https://youtube.com/live/i6xGajmJSSE?feature=share>

One point raised that I will address here is that some primary schools have two weeks for May half term. The reason we cannot have two weeks then is because GCSE exams start in May, and we need our youngsters in to prepare and sit those exams.

Punctuality

As you will be aware from my previous letters, we have made some slight amendments to the school timings as shown below:

8.35am-8.40am- Transition time

8.40am-8.55am- Tutor time

8.55am-9.00am- Transition time

9.00am-10.00am- Period One

Given 'transition time' has been built into the school day, it is the expectation that all are sat down in their classroom for the start of each session, far from unreasonable I am sure you will agree. As of next Monday 13th January 2025, youngsters who are not sat down in their classroom by the time the bell is sounded to mark the beginning of the session (including Tutor), will be recorded as late and will

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receive a 30-minute after school sanction. Every individual incidence of lateness will result in a separate 30-minute detention. Failure to attend a detention will result in the sanction being escalated.

Our intention is to ensure that all recognise the importance of punctuality to each session and in doing so we are aiming to make the process as clear as possible. It is very disruptive to learning when the teaching must stop as someone arrives late to class. We will also recognise those who consistently arrive to lesson on time by using in house initiatives as this is key to success.

Those who arrive after 8.40am, which should be hardly anyone, are expected to present themselves to the member of staff on the 'late gate' who will record their name. Anyone who arrives after 9.00am is expected to go straight to Pupil Services via Reception to sign in. This ensures that we know who is on-site and that all are safely with us. This has now been shared with all our youngsters and they know that anyone who makes the decision to not follow the process to keep them safe will receive a 60-minute detention from the attendance team.

I am grateful for your support with this as we continue to ever focus on our core purpose of teaching.

After school sanctions

Over the past two years we have worked hard to establish a whole school centralised sanction system so if youngsters do fail to meet our standards, which is rare for the vast majority, they face the consequences promptly and are able to move on from their misdemeanour. Last term saw us receive an increasing number of requests from parents and carers asking us to reschedule detentions for extra-curricular/social commitments. As you will appreciate, a sanction should not only be used as an opportunity for our youngsters to reflect, but it should also cause inconvenience to act as a deterrent moving forward. We also give 24 hours' notice and inform you via the Satchel One app.

If we are rearranging sanctions around extra-curricular activities/social events, this does not serve the purpose of a sanction and we will thus be unable to action parental requests to reschedule sanctions for these reasons from this point forward. If a sanction is not attended due to an extra-curricular/social commitment outside of school, the sanction will be escalated. We really value the importance of extra-curricular activities outside of school and such commitments should serve as an incentive for all to avoid accruing sanctions. The best thing to do is for our youngsters not to get a detention in the first place.

Should we be rearranging sanctions this just does not reflect what the situation is like in the real world, the world we are preparing them to enter. Actions have consequences and I feel sure that you agree that should any of our youngsters receive a fine or are required to attend a course due to a transgression of the law, the police will not just allow to rearrange. We appreciate your support on this matter. After all, you do send your youngsters to us to learn.

Key dates for your diary:

Monday 13th January – Friday 17th January

Year 8 Option Assemblies

Monday 13th January to Friday 31st January

Year 8 Option Taster Sessions



Thursday 16th January

Year 8 Parent/Carer Evening – 4.10pm – 7.00pm

Tuesday 21st January

Year 11 Hospitality and Catering Exam

Thursday 23rd January

Year 11 Preparing for Success Evening – 6.00pm

Monday 27th January to Friday 31st January

Year 11 Mock MFL Speaking Exams/Walking Talking Mocks

Thursday 30th January

Year 10 Parent/Carer Evening – 4.10pm – 7.00pm

Monday 3rd February to Friday 14th February

Year 11 PPEs

Wednesday 12th February

Jack Petchey Speak Out Final – 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Friday 14th February – Monday 17th February

Year 11 GCSE German Trip

Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February

Year 11 Holiday Intervention

Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February

Half Term

Mrs Heseltine - Assistant Head Teacher - Cultural Capital

Reminder: Year 11 Preparing for Success Event - Thursday 23rd January 6.00pm-7.00pm

Please can you complete the MSForms Survey link below to let us know if you can or can't make the Year 11 Preparing for Success Event on Thursday 23rd January. Thank you to parents and carers who have already completed this ahead of today's deadline:

[Reply Slip & Seat Reservation for The Y11 Preparing for Success Event](#)

The event covers:

- How to support your son/daughter before and the during exams
- Effective revision practices and methods
- Key exam information, practices and regulations
- Key post-16 information, application guidance, and updates
- Exam Stress Support - Mental Wellbeing during the exam period

There will also be an opportunity to meet with Heads of Department and Faculties should you have any subject specific questions, all pupils who attend the event will receive a reward, and there will be light refreshments provided.

Mrs Jordan – Associate Deputy Head Teacher – Year 8 Options

Thank you to all who attended yesterday evening' Year 8 Virtual Options presentation along with a Q&A. I aimed to clearly set out how the process works along with a timeline of events. All have now been emailed the details.

There are hugely important decisions to be made and I do hope the programme of events and support ensures that all make the right choices moving forward.

Once again, please see the timeline of events:

- Monday 13th January - Friday 24th January:** Options Assemblies.
- Friday 24th January:** Options Forms sent to parents/carers via e-mail.
- Monday 13th January - Friday 24th January:** Options Taster Sessions (lunchtimes).
- Thursday 16th January:** Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening.
- Thursday 6th February:** deadline for final Options to be submitted (via Microsoft Forms).
- Monday 24th February - Monday 3rd March:** Options Assessments (for specific subjects).
- Thursday 27th March:** Options choices confirmed to pupils and parents/carers.

DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time next half-term:

Please find below a reminder of the DEAR timetable:

- Wednesday 15th January - Period 5
- Thursday 23rd January - Period 1
- Thursday 30th January - Period 2
- Thursday 6th February - Period 3
- Thursday 13th February - Period 4

Moving forward

Although I cannot say that I agreed with Henry Ford's political views I think the below speaks volumes.

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

Best wishes,



Mr David Wright
Head Teacher