



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As our first half-term of the academic draws to close, I am taking to opportunity to outline some key takeaways from our first 8 weeks together. Before I begin so, I wanted to take the time to recognise the passing of a serving teacher in our school community who sadly passed away last week. As per our School Gateway communication, Mr Dean of our Technology Department, died from a heart attack last weekend. Mr Dean joined West Hill in July 2020, with a passion for design and years of work within the design industry... mixed with a sharp and witty humour. As you can imagine, this week has been a tough one for our whole school community and we appreciate the messages of support, and cards, that have been received. We will, in turn, relay this to his family. When we return from half-term, with a little more healing time for our West Hill family, we will begin the coordination of a student and staff memorial group; this group will work together in creating a permanent memorial in school so that Mr Dean's memory lives on, celebrating his life and the impact he had on young people throughout his career.

We return to school on Monday 4th November 2024, for a normal school day. Our uniform code resumes with trousers only, summer shorts are no longer to be worn, with the reintroduction to shorts in our summer term. On the thread of being prepared for school, I would like to ask that all families check that boys are fully equipped for learning and a top-up of pens/pencils occurs, where needed, so that all boys are ready to learn. Additionally, for any parents/carers of boys who cycle into school, it is a reminder that bike helmets should be worn by boys – notably those who may cycle via busy roads. It is not our duty to check this in the morning, but we ask that you ensure the safety of your son on his way to school.

On the theme of school travel, we have an increasing safety concern from our parents/carers at drop-offs and pick-ups. We fully appreciate that West Hill is placed on a busy main road, but we must ask that families are considerate to our neighbours and student safety. We do not have the central driveways as drop-offs or collections as it is a safety issue. These are pathways in which students walk to and from school, so should not have additional traffic turning around. We have received increased photographic evidence from neighbours of pathways being completely blocked on Stamford Grove, forcing pedestrians to walk into the road, parking on double yellow lines and some incidences whereby families are littering whilst dropping-off/collecting. As a school, actions like this not only bring the school into disrepute, but they do not model positive behaviours expected. Additionally, it becomes time consuming when fielding complaints and responding to them, for things that should not be occurring. Please be mindful if you are one of our families acting in this way. If, on duties, we continue in this manner, I will contact the council and ask for warden support, something I do not wish to do but safety must come first.

Upcoming Events next Half-term

W/C 4th November: Year 10 Assessment Week

Monday 11th November: Remembrance Day at West Hill. We allow boys who belong to an external, voluntary uniformed-organisation to wear their uniforms on Monday 11th. Any boys in cadets, scouts, St John Ambulance etc.

From Monday 18th November: Year 10 and 11 assessment reports issued.

W/C 25th November: Year 7 Assessment Week.

Thursday 28th November: Year 11 parents, virtual Progress Evening.

Saturday 30th November: Winter Fair 12pm-4pm. Organised by Friends of West Hill School with all proceeds raised for the school.

Thursday 5th December: Year 8 Celebration Evening (more details to follow).

W/C 9th December: Year 8 Assessment Week.

Tuesday 10th-11th December: Carol Concerts (more details to follow).

Thursday 12th December: Year 7 Celebration Evening (more details to follow).

Thursday 19th December: 12:30pm dismissal of all students for holidays.

Monday 6th January 2025: return for normal school day.



Throughout the month of November, our staff will be fundraising for Teenage Cancer Trust as they participate in Movember. Boys will be spoken to about this, and opportunities that they can join in, by Mr Williams who is leading the team effort. For any families who can donate, we would greatly appreciate the support for a worthy cause that some of our boys in school benefit from. Our social media pages will be updated with a direct link to support.

Additional Form Tutor Consultation Invitation

This year, we have introduced an additional on-site consultation with Form Tutors. From the parent/carer surveys, we recognised a gap that existed for parents/carers to attend the school site and speak to staff in person. The online format of the progress evening is far more efficient and logistically-friendly, so we did not want to lose this format, but we appreciate the need to talk face-to-face with staff who see your child each day. Therefore, for all parents of Years 7-10, we have added a Form Tutor Consultation evening in the year. These are held face-to-face with your child's Form Tutor and offer the chance to review your child's holistic performance, conduct and wellbeing. We have had a successful Year 7 and 9 event already and will host the Year 8 and 10 later in the year.

Co-curricular, from Mrs Anderton

A great start to the year with so many of our students participating in a wide range of co-curricular activities, during their lunch break, after school and even the weekend! As well as the return of sport, art, music, languages and anime, this year we have seen the introduction of new clubs such as the 'Simpson's Appreciation Society' and table tennis. Clubs such as darts, boardgames and jigsaw have seen such growth that we have opened up additional rooms and days to accommodate. I am delighted that so many students have taken the opportunity to study further, making use of our quiet spaces such as the library, the LSU and M11 to revise and complete home learning. It has been great to see so many students and staff taking part together each Saturday morning at the Park Run at Stamford Park, too.

These activities of course would not be possible without our dedicated staff body who use their time to organise and host activities, clubs and events. We will continue to review our offer by looking at numbers and taking feedback from students. For more information about our co-curricular programme please visit West Hill School - Co-curricular.

Curriculum Updates

Our staff have been working hard to review and improve our KS3 curriculum for all. The curriculum section of our website will be updated in January with our updated long-term plans so that families can be greater informed of current and upcoming studies. At the start of the year, Mr Butterworth sent copies of the homework schedules so that families were aware of which evenings home learning should be completed, by subject. Please support us in supporting your child to use this schedule. Their success is our success.

Parent/Carer Survey

As per last year, each term we like to invite our families to complete a 5-minute survey on West Hill School. We complete a similar survey with the boys in lesson and our staff so that our Senior Leaders can review patterns and ensure we are addressing the areas of need alongside celebrate joint successes. Please complete the following when you can spare us 5-minutes of your time. Last year's feedback led to significant changes so all voices matter. If you have a concern, please do write to us separately as per the email on the letter heading, as these surveys are anonymous and are not the format for raising concerns. Survey link: <https://forms.office.com/e/GCz9Vr3kte>
This link will expire on Friday 8th November at 12, noon.

To end, here is to our celebration of some excellent starts from our Year 7 cohort and the scores of achievement points from our boys for their living of our 3Rs, alongside a reflection and gratitude to the service the school has received from Mr Dean in his time with us.

Kind regards,

Ms C. Cronin
Headteacher