



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High since 1927

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Monday 15th December 2025

Subject: End of Autumn 2025

Dear families,

In the usual manner, I wish to open the letter with thanks. I believe that we have the best job in the world - and the best school - and your support is a huge factor in this daily experience of our school. Thank you for supporting the events and initiatives, being patient with the new systems and processes alongside backing our community events and trips. Most of our boys attend school every day fully equipped for learning and dressed for the day ahead, whilst we support those who need some help to address these when here. Could I please reinforce road safety, as I do most letters, being on a main road it is imperative that boys are taking responsibility towards road safety by foot alongside helmet wearing for those on bikes. A reminder, whereby helmets are not worn, we make contact and ask for one to be brought to school, or we house bikes securely on site until a bike helmet is brought and the bike returned. We do this as we care about the safety of our boys, and to encourage lifelong responsibility over their road safety. We have a special school, with attendance above the national average of boys who largely, enjoy being here with staff who truly care about their growth and ability to achieve, belong and thrive.

Upcoming events next half-term for the diaries

Monday 5th January: Inset Day, no students on site.

Tuesday 6th January: Students return to school as normal and Year 10 in-class assessment week.

W/C 12th January: Year 7 academic reports sent home.

Monday 19th-30th January: Year 11 mock exams and Year 8 and 9 academic reports sent home.

Thursday 22nd January: Year 7 progress evening, 3:30-6:30 online only.

Thursday 5th February: Year 9 progress evening and options pathways, on the school site.

Friday 6th February: off timetable day - all learners in school but following an off-timetable day and Year 9 option choice window opens.

Friday 13th February: regular school day then break up for half-term.

Monday 23rd February: return from half-term for a regular school day.

W/C 23rd February: Year 11 mock exam results and academic reports issued.

Friday 27th February: Year 9 option choices submission deadline.

Student Voice

The voice of our boys matters as we teach boys how to collectively use their voice to make a difference. The new School Council meet this week to discuss the suggestions that come from form groups. Our School Council make a significant contribution to school life; *Form Councillors* discuss collated student suggestions with their Head of Year and then *Year Councillors* meet and work to get our response or action on these suggestions. They have already had numerous responses to student suggestions so far this year, from things such as requesting new footballs, to building their own breakfast, and cereal at the breakfast service in the canteen (a notable food theme). The contribution that all students make to this process is valued and appreciated.

Year 7s – A message from Ms Largey, Head of Year

The new Year 7 students have made an excellent start to their first term with us as West Hill. They have continued to show maturity, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude toward their learning. They have adapted well to new routines, new subjects, and a larger school environment, demonstrating resilience and confidence as they navigate these changes. It has been wonderful to see them building new friendships, engaging in class activities, and becoming active members of our school community. They have visited Warwick Castle with History and visited Stockport Plaza to watch Aladdin in pantomime this week with English. We are incredibly proud of their efforts so far and look forward to seeing them continue to grow and thrive throughout the year.



Reading at West Hill

So far to date we have loaned out a fantastic 1,402 books across school and our library competition is proving to be a very close race with a current battle for top position within Years 7 and 8 (7T, 7H, 8E and 8I). We are also taking part in the Carnegie Shadowing Awards next year, with more information to be advertised in January for boys' participation in this national programme. Students have also requested some new titles for our shelves which will be arriving in January.

Curriculum Updates

As a school priority, we have been working at creating more opportunities for our boys to bring learning to life through clubs, competitions, trips and visits. Below is a snapshot of some of these from our autumn term.

Maths

The Maths Team have been challenged by one of our Year 9 mathematicians; he has set us a daily advent calendar challenge and no, he has not been using the GCHQ ones! It has been lovely to receive a challenge in our email inbox every morning (weekdays only) thank you Albie (9T). Maths Puzzle Club has flourished this term, now welcoming a growing group of enthusiastic boys each week to tackle new and exciting challenges, while also providing a creative space for them to design puzzles of their own.

Axiom Project: A successful first term for our Year 7s and returning Year 8s. 100% of the cohort has completed the term and all are looking forward to their Christmas party celebrations. The students are becoming much more 'accepting, articulate and adventurous' in their exploration of Maths.

Computing

This term we have seen our lunch time coding clubs, particularly the KS4 coding club, grow. When we come back in January the KS3 coding club will have a short pause for the first half-term but don't worry - it will be back! Our full Year 11 Computer Science cohort was lucky enough to be invited to Ada College in Manchester for a day of escape room challenges and career links. For some of these students it was their first time heading into Manchester on the train and the day continued to be inspiring for all with career talks, a look into AI and what college life would be like studying there and as a result some of our students have submitted college applications to Ada. Some of our Year 9 students have also had the opportunity to complete 'A day in the life' of a BT employee when they took part in a 'virtual work experience'. This is something we are going to look to run again in term 2, so watch this space.

RE and IDP

Year 8 have been working hard with their fundraising for Reuben's Retreat in IDP (with a couple of notable mentions so far from Brodie H and Jack W). Further updates and totals will come at the end of the year as Year 8 work through their IDP rotation and all students get the opportunity to conduct some active citizenship. Thank you to all the students that have completed fundraising or awareness projects so far this year, and also to Mrs Sumner and Mr Cross for helping to facilitate these.

Spirited Arts

After some excellent work from students last year to the NATRE Spirited Arts competition, Noah in Year 8 was recently selected as one of the winners of the national competition. Noah chose 'What's the point?' as his category and his artwork and written entry can be viewed here: [What's the Point – NATRE](#)

Young Enterprise Club

The Young Enterprise Club did a brilliant job selling their hand-made decorations at the Winter Fair! We are looking for the next wave of entrepreneurs to join us in the new year to gain essential business experience, boost their employability skills, and develop an enterprising mindset that will set them up for future success – notably for those thinking of choosing GCSE Business options. Please direct your son to Mr Merlo in M12 for more information.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Recently, ten enthusiastic pupils from Silver Springs Primary Academy joined us for an amazing Spanish taster morning, packed with energy and excitement. They had great fun learning Spanish and exploring vibrant Spanish culture and more about the Spanish speaking world. This was their first experience of Spanish and the boys did a great job!



Music

The Music Department have had a busy term which has included teaching DJ skills to Year 9, using Garageband with our Year 8s to create film music to accompany a scene from a Wallace and Gromit film and working in groups to create an original composition using percussion instruments with our Year 7s. Our co-curricular timetable has been well attended at lunchtime and after school with many students involved. Our musical groups have performed at two community Remembrance services as well as providing a bugler to perform the last post at Dukinfield Town Hall. More recently, the Music Department have been performing at various locations in our local community and have produced our school Carol Service at St. Paul's Church with many of our musical ensembles involved. The church was full on both evenings, and our students demonstrated their excellent talent and skills supported by the community too.

Sporting Achievements

Another term of great achievements from individuals and sporting teams alike.

Tameside Basketball champions at Yr 8/9 and 10/11.

Tameside Cross Country Champions at Yr 8/9 and 10/11 making us overall champions for the 30th consecutive year!

Also, Altrincham School's cross country league champions.

All KS3 pupils have completed the sponsored cross-country with many beating their target times. Well done to the boys. As you may have seen on our newsfeeds, a huge congratulations to Year 11 Lucas R for attending the British Biathlon selection races in Austria.

Art

The Art Department has been incredibly busy this term and is full of eager, creative, hard-working students at break time, lunchtime and after school most days! The Nature Photography Competition saw some fantastic, high-quality entries to the photography competition from across the school. The 4 finalists will go to a student vote to choose the overall winner. Congratulations to all who entered.

The Christmas Card Competition saw a feast of festive creativity from students in all years! The winning entries have been printed and sent to local families and schools in Tameside. Well done to all who took part!

Year 11 students are currently working on their mock exam final piece. There has been a superb effort and attitude from all the students, and they have produced some excellent high-quality artwork which bodes well for next year's two-day final exam.

Design Technology

In Design and Technology we are working at bringing more opportunities to life to apply the skills our students learn within the curriculum with full Technology rooms most of the time. Some significant events have been:

- Participation in the Tameside Tracks project, as seen on our social feeds, improving our community.
- Remembrance Day displays across school, made by our students.
- Creative co-curricular opportunities for Halloween and Christmas.
- Excellent manufacturing outcomes in Year 10, with students successfully applying their theory to real, high-quality products.

Staff

At Christmas this year, we say some fond farewells to staff who move on to pastures new. Mr O'Hanlon has joined us for autumn term this year on supply in Science and is off to his new role not too far away. We thank Mr O'Hanlon for joining us this term and supporting our boys, and the Science team, as Ms Muhammad joins us from January as an experience Science leader with a specialism in Chemistry. Additionally, we say goodbye to Mr Whitaker within our ICT support team, he has brought ideas and initiative to our SharePoint and student online database and will be missed. Lastly, we say farewell to Mr C Wilson in our Computing team. Mr Wilson is an avid lover of festivals and leaves us heavy-hearted to pursue this field of work further. He has been a wonderful teacher and Form Tutor and will be missed greatly. Mr Macdonald joins us in Computing in January with years of experience and passion, alongside ensuring 8T have another passionate Form Tutor.

Parent/Carer Survey

A huge thank you to those families who completed the autumn survey for us. This is useful to triangulate patterns and for us to understand the parental experience, in order for us to enhance it further. The final page of this letter has the summary of key things to note and responses to this. The overwhelming majority was positive, alongside some



constructive ideas too, we thank you for this. As a school, we are due an Ofsted inspection in the next 18 months and the questions they send you as families are the exact same as the ones we canvass from you. We would appreciate your completion of the surveys when this occurs in order to give an inspection team the full experience and idea of how we work as a school as they only have two days in our school and may miss some of the extra things we do.

When we return after Christmas, we commence the spring term. This is a notoriously fast term with the Easter break and Ramadan contained within it and notably for our Year 11 cohort time rapidly accelerates on the build up to exams. For our parents of Year 10 and 11 boys, please support your son's revision schedule in completing guided tasks and revision as shared by their class teachers, ready for January's assessments – of course alongside a healthy amount of rest and festivities.

Kind regards,

Ms C. Cronin

Autumn Term 'You said, we did' 2025

What's been said	What action is needed	When
Not all families are sure of who to contact when assistance is needed for their child.	Annually we will start the year with a list for each year group of key contact staff and their role, to aid communication and directed messages to relevant staff. For now, we will send this in January with an updated list for the remainder of the year to aid this.	January 2026 and then annually every September.
The new West Hill app can have an overwhelming amount of information and home learning is not consistently on the app.	This is our transition year into the new West Hill app, so we knew there would be transitional issues for us to work through. We too, as staff, are learning how to use the app. We will continue to fine-tune the app in order to make it less overwhelming, but we also appreciate that when you go from zero information, to a regular amount in a school, it can feel even more overwhelming. We are working with our staff across the year to gradually move the setting of all home learning on the app to aid student and parent organisation. The use of the app can also be improved to inform of any extra curricular cancellations and which PE kits are needed, as outlined by parents.	Ongoing this academic year.
Lockers are needed for boys.	We appreciate the request for lockers but unfortunately, we are not a site that can house lockers anywhere – our site does not have the space at this point, to add them. With many of our buildings being older builds, the corridor space is not wide enough for our boys and we have been around the site looking for potential spots but would only be able to make available a small amount, therefore creating an issue around equity to these. Most form rooms have stock cupboards where items can be kept, if necessary.	
<p>We also had some wonderful ideas from families about curriculum and trips – we will take these on board and have fed ideas to relevant staff leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overwhelmingly, you stated that your child was happy and felt safe at West Hill. Overwhelmingly, you stated that we have high expectations of your child and they have a broad curriculum with co-curricular opportunities. Overwhelmingly, you stated that the school supports your child's wider personal development. Overwhelmingly, you stated that your child had not been bullied or where they had encountered it, it was handled effectively. Overwhelmingly (99%) you would recommend West Hill to other families – thank you. 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. <p>Below were some comments that came from families, from your sons, that do not reflect the daily experience we see and monitor:</p> <p>Myth dispel 1: both our break and lunch queues are finished within 8-10mins each day. No student, ever, cannot have food. Leaders are on duty in both canteen spaces every day and we can affirm that there is always enough hot food for all boys, even after the queues have finished. We had a few comments from families about students queueing and not receiving food or missing out because of the queues, but this is categorically not a true reflection of the school day. On occasion, at break, there may only be toast left at the end of service, but this is more rare than frequent.</p> <p>Myth dispel 2: we do have a staffed, prayer room available to all boys at lunch time in A3.</p> <p>Myth dispel 3: boys are allowed to use the toilet between lesson changeover. Staff use professional judgment and whereby requests to go to the toilet are rare from a student, and clearly genuine, staff allow students to leave lesson. However, where this is immediately after a break or lunch time, it is not permitted as students have had the time to do so, in social times (queues do not prevent this occurring at social times, we monitor this throughout).</p>		