



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High since 1927

Headteacher: **Ms C Cronin (MA)**

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Thursday 4th September 2025

Dear families,

Let me begin with a huge thank you for sending your sons to us so smartly, prepared for school and for the excitement many have had upon their return with impeccable manners from our Year 7s. I would like to take the time to reiterate, for clarity, that all boys should attend with a bag, equipped with stationery to learn for the day. I would appreciate your support in ensuring this is the case as we have had a minority that have needed our polite reinforcements. So too, with helmets. Any boy cycling to school should have a helmet. If they remember to get on their bike each morning, they are expected to remember the helmet too. Any students arriving by bicycle without a helmet will have their bike kept in storage until a helmet is brought to school (whether that be the next day or a parent/carer bringing it to site). I appreciate the inconvenience, but it is better than the severe alternative as a life-threatening inconvenience. Once again, I truly thank the families who fully support us on this drive of safety.

School Changes

For families with our social media accounts, you will see that our site staff have been incredibly busy over the summer break. We now have a full fence perimeter and automatic gates for security. Our minibuses have had a well-needed respray and renovation so look excellent, both sets of toilets within school have been completely replaced and refurbished, a new classroom in the Hewitt Block has been created to avoid too many room moves for staff and boys and our Main Hall has been renovated and cared for, bringing its traditional features to life with a modern twist of sound absorbers as the acoustics are not helpful for assemblies. We will be installing outdoor recreational equipment into the school in October in-line with the student body vote, spending the money raised by our Friends of West Hill.

A Message from Friends of West Hill (formerly our Parent-Teacher Association)

To welcome our new families into West Hill and to welcome back our existing parents, we warmly invite you to attend our Family Quiz Night. The event will take place **Friday 12th September** in the **school hall at 6:30pm** and will be an evening full of fun, testing your knowledge and luck, with some lovely prizes. Tickets are £3 each or a family ticket for 4 at £10. Tickets will include a pie supper. Drinks (including alcoholic) and a tuck shop will also be available to purchase on the night. To purchase your tickets please click here:

<https://www.ptaevents.co.uk/westhillschool/index.cfm?event=event&eventId=101859>

We look forward to seeing lots of you there, raising money for the school and meeting new friends. To get regular updates on events and fundraising activities organised by the Friends of West Hill, please use this link to join the communication group on WhatsApp https://chat.whatsapp.com/BvAUcqSORIIAtnykd6oAaS?mode=ac_t

Communication: West Hill School App

Miss Mayall will be messaging and continuing the roll-out of the new communication platform via the West Hill School app. We appreciate the patience as we fully get to grips with the new platform and its features. Thank you to those families who volunteered to trial the app for us! Further details will follow as we embed the system.

Reminder of the Key Dates in Autumn

Monday 15th September: School photographs for Years 7, 9 and 11 only.

Thursday 25th September: Open Evening for Year 6 parents. Early school closure at 2pm for all students.

Wednesday 1st October: Inset Day, no students on site.

Thursday 2nd October: Years 9 and 10, parental Form Tutor consultation 3:30-6:30 on site.

Thursday 16th October: Year 7 and 8, parental Form Tutor consultation 3:30-6:30 on site.

Monday 27th-Friday 31st October: Half-term.

Thursday 4th December: Year 11 Progress Evening, online, 3:30-6:30.

Friday 19th December: End of term at 12:30pm.

Tuesday 6th January: Students return to school as usual (Year 10 Assessment Week).

**Parental Voice**

Below, you will find a summary of the parent/carer voice that was conducted in the summer term. Thank you to the families who afforded us the time to complete it. This is used to gauge the experience of our families and are taken from the Ofsted parental questionnaires allowing us time to act on any patterns that emerge. I will be sending out the autumn parental questionnaire in the coming weeks. For our new families, we run this at the same time as the staff and student voice to triangulate patterns so that our leaders can work at making the improvements needed.

In closing, I would ask an additional plea to families. Mobile phone use in school is strictly banned. Time away from a screen, socialising and remaining focused for learning is key. Additionally, without mobiles, we have a healthier culture and minimal incidences of bullying compared to a national picture. I am unwilling to compromise on my stance on phones. From 8:40am until 2:55pm students should not be on their phones. If they desperately need to contact you, we have the office and we have instructed students to approach a member of staff at break or lunch and ask permission to contact you, which we grant, we are not unreasonable. Too often though, I am encountering parents that are actively calling their child or offloading information to them, whilst they are in school which sometimes they struggle to digest. The child is then challenged on their use of their phone, as per our policy, and understandably they get annoyed at us as a parent has contacted them so therefore, they feel it just to override our policy. An understandable view from a young person. I appreciate that family life is busy, and communication is missed, but I am asking that you contact school directly in an emergency, removing a barrier that we do not need to create for your son, and to allow us to support him without needless confrontation.

Thank you for your time in reading and I look forward to a year of true excellence.

Kind regards,

Ms C Cronin
Headteacher

Your views	Our response
For boys to have access to the school gateway portal.	The West Hill School app will be downloaded by boys. This will hold their timetable, access to their reports and achievements/sanctions/attendance and home learning. We are looking to enrol them next week.
More consistency and clarity is needed around student targets and their academic reports.	Miss Staples, Assistant Headteacher, has begun her new role solely focusing on data, assessment and reports as we know these do not give enough clarity to families. More communication will follow directly from Miss Staples on the changes such as a removal of the house system and generic student targets of 4-6 or 6-8. Boys will have a personal target set and review points around boys overachieving and underachieving.
Communication is not always clear from the staff within the day with limited details on the gateway portal around an event that's caused a behaviour log.	Our new West Hill School app allows for greater access and details around incidences but also allows dialogue through the messaging portal from staff as well as allowing you to contact staff too.
Road safety.	We now have signs on Stamford Street indicating that there is a school. I am still liaising with Mr Reynolds' office around the signals and crossing itself. It is not a school's place to be a road crossing service (sorry to the parent that suggested this) but we have planned in further talks around road safety to our boys, I appreciate you doing the same to them. There is a limit to what we can do and responsibility does not sit solely with us as the school.

Key headlines:

95% of families stated that their child is happy at our school.

98% of families stated that their child feels safe at our school and that their child feels cared for by us.

97% of families stated that their child has not been bullied or, if so, the school has dealt with it effectively.

100% with SEN children agreed that they received the support they needed to succeed.

98% of families would recommend West Hill to another parent.