



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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

Address : Thompson Cross
Stamford Street
Stalybridge
Cheshire
SK15 1LX
Tel : 0161 338 2193
Sports Hall : 0161 338 9292

E-mail : admin@westhillschool.co.uk
Website : www.westhillschool.co.uk
Twitter : [@westhillschool](https://twitter.com/westhillschool)

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the first half-term in Autumn draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to offer some updates of events at West Hill alongside taking the time to thank you for your support over the past 7 weeks. I am in full swing of holding 1-2-1 meetings with each boy and they are a pleasure to meet, know and support. Having walked into Stalybridge after school with the boys weekly, they live our school motto of respectful and responsible and I am proud to walk and talk with them as they showcase our ethos.

Our boys arrive to school each day dressed smartly, proudly and respectfully. The vast majority of our boys are punctual and eager to begin the day of learning, equipped with their bags, planners and equipment to access learning. Thank you for your support in ensuring that their education and their independence continues to grow. I ask for your continued support in ensuring our boys are punctual to school and that we maintain our strong attendance record.

This half-term sees a departure of two members of staff here at West Hill, Mrs Heap and Mr Cookson, who have invested a combined 48 years of their lives serving our school community. Our school community is richer and stronger from their years of service and I would like to acknowledge their service to our boys and wish them all the best in their future steps.

Throughout this half-term our school community has welcomed the new Year 7 cohort who have made an excellent start to their school journey at West Hill, alongside completing their initial Form Tutor consultation evening. We have had excellent starts for Years 8, 9 and 10 and notably our Year 11 boys who have risen to the challenge and responsibility showing exemplary behaviours - so much so that we have extended our prefect team to give more boys the opportunity to lead and experience prefect responsibilities.

This half-term has been busy, with a range of experiences from our: Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver award parent/student meetings; Open Evening to our next generation of West Hill boys; new Character Curriculum within daily form time; weekly Headteacher recognition and rewards; re-establishing our parent forum for captures of parent voice and for community events; partnerships with the Joe Neild Conservatory Foundation; visitation and hosting of copious sporting fixtures; selection of annual charities for student-led events this year; partnership with local councillors to give our boys a voice about the future of Stalybridge for its young people, collection of 1,209 voices from student, staff and parent surveys and said "Tschüss" to our Berlin trip for staff and students.

The remainder of our Autumn term is a busy one for our boys with the following key dates upcoming. Each one will have separate information to follow but we are raising the dates as a reminder:

- 21st November: Year 11 GCSE Success Fair
- 23rd November: Duke of Edinburgh presentation evening
- 30th November: Year 11 Parents' Consultation evening
- 9th December (Saturday): West Hill hosts its new Winter Fair on-site to support local charities
- 12th and 13th December: Carol Concert at 7.30pm in St. Pauls Church, Stalybridge
- 13th December: School Christmas Dinner served in the canteen
- 19th December: school closes from 12noon on this day, school switchboards will be closed from 12:20pm
- 3rd January: Inset Day: school open for staff only
- 4th January: school re-opens at normal time for all boys to return after the Christmas break

From our parent survey, there was a mixture of awareness of the curriculum being studied at West Hill. Our school website is the main conduit for this information including the learning maps which highlight the topics being undertaken per half-term. The pathway to follow is our West Hill School website, selecting the 'School Life' tab at the top of the screen, 'Curriculum' from the drop-down list and then 'Subjects' from the menu on the right-hand side.



Each subject studied holds their curriculum rationale alongside their curriculum maps. Alongside this, our school VLE is rich with lesson resources and revision aids. If you are unsure on this, please contact your child's Form Tutor for guidance.

This has been a hugely positive start to the year and one we wish to continue to build on. Overleaf, you will find a summary of the parent/carer comments from the 447 views we canvassed in Autumn's parent/carer voice. This is hugely valuable for us to cross-reference against our student and staff voice to ensure that we are moving forward and communicating clearly on core patterns emerging. Mostly, my reflection is to review our modes of communication out and in to school, to ensure that clarity is given. This is something we are undertaking and reviewing with leaders and all staff. Thank you for your time in completing this and more detail is listed overleaf.

Finally, we are beginning the launch of a Facebook page at West Hill on <https://www.facebook.com/westhillschoolofficial>. There are two accounts (an historical account that we are attempting to shut down) but our new page has the West Hill School badge and 'Aim High' as its icon. From our parent/carer survey, this was the most popular social media choice to follow the events from our busy school days and for us to broadcast information (alongside School Gateway and Twitter). This is not a communication with school mechanism, the main method remains email to admin@westhillschool.co.uk. A reminder that the first port of call is your child's Form Tutor alongside our Heads of Year for each year group:

Year 7: Mr P Evans

Year 10: Miss D Largey

Year 8: Mr J Lawton

Year 11: Ms D Kenworthy

Year 9: Ms L Corrigan

Yours sincerely,

Ms C Cronin
Headteacher



You said	We are doing
Only 28 parents/carers from 447 disagreed that their child is happy at West Hill.	Encouraging those parents that have disagreed to contact your child's Head of Year so we can understand, support and move this forward so that your views are more in-line with the majority of other parent experiences and views.
Only 12 parents/carers from 447 disagreed that their child feels safe at this school.	
Only 16 parents from 447 didn't feel that their child is cared for at this school.	
12 parents/carers from 447 felt the behaviour at West Hill was 'Unsatisfactory'.	
10 parents/carers from 447 didn't feel that West Hill promotes positive behaviour.	
60% parents prefer progress evenings to be on-site, 40% prefer online.	We are going to further our discussions with parents on this regarding purpose and reach a final decision shortly.
Quiet spaces for meditation and/or prayer.	These are available during social times already, with the timetable shared in form time.
Quiet space and separate toilets for Year 7 toilets.	These both exist already. Year 7s have separate toilets at social times in our Main Block that other year groups do not access, monitored by our Prefect Team.
Further details and updates on sporting fixtures.	Our school website, school calendar now has this updated with times and locations of sporting fixtures. Additionally, our PE team explicitly ask boys to write this in their planners (notably Yr 7).
Bullying incidences occur within West Hill and aren't dealt with.	We would encourage this discussion with your child's Heads of Year and Form Tutor, but also feel we need to clarify what constitutes bullying as a definitive guide to our students and consequently ensure parents are secure in our Anti-Bullying Policy through our communication. When we have delved into some beliefs in students that their peers are bullied. This is often a fall out between friends or independent acts, not repeated behaviours. Our internal records show minimal accounts and reports of bullying so need to hear from parents/carers/boys if they feel this is not the case.
Advise parents of all clubs available after school.	These are available on our school website, curriculum, co-curricular section.
To inform parents when after-school clubs are cancelled.	Where possible, we will aim to do so but often it is due to staff absence that day rather than deliberate cancellation.
Greater rewards and acknowledgement for boys doing the right thing.	We are working on our rewards systems at present to ensure more frequent rewards alongside looking to end of year rewards trips (as voted for by student voice). This is now a working party and actions should be in place before Christmas.
More affordable school trips and end of year reward trips.	
Homework: the quantity and knowledge of days it is set	We will work on this clarity for home. Additionally, on tracing days homework is being set. Information to follow.
Offering places on the sports teams to more boys.	PE have formed A and B squads now to introduce and train more boys, alongside getting more experience.
Details on which PE kit is necessary for each day.	The issue is just with Yr 7 due to the baseline tests we conduct at the start of the year. However, all boys are sat down and told to write in their planners which kit is required for which upcoming lesson. The only time boys should have two kits or two pairs of footwear is if they were taking part in an extra-curricular club or the weather was suspect and the fields might be too wet to go outside. In the first lesson of all other year groups the boys are sat down and told to write the words 'inside' or 'outside' on their timetable so they know which kit to bring.



Lockers requested to house items.	With our school building being very full this requires greater thought on how this could occur in school. Pending.
Greater halal, vegan and gluten-free range in the canteen.	We are working with our catering team to clarify the offer and ensure it's inclusive for all.
Boys' segregation of packed lunch and hot food in the canteen/main hall.	Our site is not large enough to have all students sit in the canteen, therefore we provide a hot food and cold food offer in both seating areas so that boys can sit with friends whether they have packed lunch or bought meals.
Helmets should be worn to school when on bikes.	This is part of our policy and in the boys' planners as an agreement. This responsibility sits with parents to ensure boys are wearing helmets when travelling to school/leaving the house and with the boys themselves. Boys do not cycle into the school grounds; they walk their bikes when on school grounds.
Greater opportunities to visit the school (notably Yr 9 parents denied this through covid).	We are working on our events and opportunities for the year to ensure each year group have multiple opportunities to do so. This will be communicated shortly.
Uncertainty of who to contact in school.	Our communication lead is forming a personalised list of 'key staff and members of staff' for each parent/carer that will be sent via School Gateway. This will now occur at the start of each year to aid parents/carers with who to contact in school.