



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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July 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

As we rapidly approach the final weeks of this academic year, I should like to thank you for your help and support in what has, once again, been a very busy and successful year for West Hill School and its students.

I am sure that you would all also join the school in wishing those staff who have left us during the year or those who leave us at the end of this term, on to new ventures, all the very best for the future and thank them for all of their hard work and the dedication they have shown both the school and your son(s).

I would also like to take this opportunity to provide you with a number of reminders.

Attendance

As you are aware, the government is determined to tackle poor school attendance and the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced amendments to the law which came into force on 1st September 2013. These amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. The most recent Supreme Court case has reinforced schools' and local authorities right to fine parents who take their child out of school during school time for a holiday if appropriate. We ask that parents support West Hill School in our efforts to help your son gain the best possible outcome from his education by not asking for leave of absence from school in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Pupils need to attend school regularly and missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both secondary school and their future life outside. The current Persistent Absentee threshold is 10% absence. This means that if your son's attendance falls below 90%, i.e. misses 19 or more days in a year for whatever reason, he will be classed by the government as a Persistent Absentee.

On a very positive note, our whole school attendance is currently running at 95.38%. I would ask all parents to refer to our school website www.westhillschool.co.uk for information regarding the protocols for reporting absence and illness, attending medical appointments and applying for leave of absence.

Hair and facial hair

Haircuts and style should be formal, neat and tidy. Unusual or extreme hair styles are not allowed. Long hair which falls below the collar line must be tied up and off the face. There should be no discernible line between the shaved part and the main head of hair. Razored lines, patterns or designs are NOT allowed on the head or eyebrows. Additional information is on the website. Boys are expected to be clean shaven.



Boys not adhering to our uniform and appearance policy will be sent home to correct their appearance/uniform where this is appropriate or will be isolated until the issue is rectified.

Shoes

Please ensure that before you purchase shoes for the new school year they are formal, plain, black and made of a material that can be polished. If the shoes have laces they must also be black. Casual, canvas shoes and hybrid shoes, which look similar to or like trainers, are not acceptable.

Further details were in a previous letter, which can be found on the website. Please also avoid shoes that are partially black but have a band of material that is a different colour. If you are at all unsure in relation to whether a particular shoe is acceptable, I would suggest you either refer to our website, contact school prior to closure or err on the side of caution.

I should also like to remind parents that tracksuit tops and “Hoodies” are not part of school uniform and are not allowed to be worn in place of an outside coat. Earrings and other jewellery are not allowed. Only wrist watches may be worn.

I should like to remind all parents that uniform can no longer be purchased from the school. Blazers, ties and PE kit can now be purchased from our approved stockist Debonair in Ashton-Under-Lyne. Debonair’s store is located at 82 Old Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne. You may also purchase PE kit online from Kit Traders: <http://schoolsuniform.co.uk/>

Cycle Permits

Any pupils who would like to cycle to school in 2019-20 will need to have a valid cycle permit. This is a set of conditions to ensure that pupils cycle to school safely. If you agree to these conditions then please sign the permit. Pupils should not cycle to school until this permit has been signed and a space has been allocated.

Parental Concerns and expectations regarding behaviour.

Can I first thank the vast majority of parents/carers who actively work with us in partnership to ensure that the education we offer is of the highest standard and that your son(s) have the best educational experience possible. As a school we accept there may be occasions where as parents/carers you have genuine concerns and frustrations regarding an aspect or aspects of the provision we provide and as such you have the right to voice those concerns and we would expect that to be done in a respectful and polite manner.

Can I remind parents/carers that to ensure the school operates in the most effective manner possible, we would ask that when parents/carers have a concern that parents/carers do not turn up to school without making an appointment via the school office with the relevant member of staff. Staff of the school have duties which they cannot simply stop doing to meet with parents. Many have teaching loads which mean they are not available for most of the day, this also includes times prior to the start of the school day and at the end of the school day. Thus to enable us to address your concerns as quickly and as effectively as is possible, we must insist that you make an appointment first. Parents as a rule will not be seen without an appointment except on very rare occasions and in very specific circumstances. In terms of who to contact and make your concerns known, please refer to our complaints procedure on our website.

While the vast majority of parents work well with us and when they have concerns conduct themselves as we and you would expect, there have been occasions over the last year when parents/carers have demonstrated behaviour both on the telephone and on the school site which has not met our and the vast majority of parents



expectations. As Headteacher I have a duty of care for all pupils and adults in the school and take this responsibility extremely seriously. As Headteacher of West Hill School I and the Trustees will not tolerate aggressive, confrontational and/or abusive behaviour towards our staff. Any parent or carer who is aggressive, confrontational or abusive will be asked to leave the school site immediately and may face a banning order. Where the behaviour is deemed to be possibly illegal in nature, the police will be informed.

Closure for the summer break - Non-uniform Day

School will close for the summer break on Friday 19th July. Classes will be dismissed by their Head of Year and school will be closed by 12 noon. The dining room will be open for those pupils who wish to have lunch on the school site. On payment of £1 boys may attend school on the final day of term in smart casual wear that is non-offensive, we advise that clothing which supports any particular sports team is not acceptable. Jewellery and hats may not be worn. All proceeds will be donated to our nominated charity.

Dates for the Academic Year 2019 – 2020

The new academic year starts on Wednesday 4th September 2019.

Boys in the new Year 7 will start at 8.45 am.

Pupils in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 should report to school in good time for registration at the beginning of period 3 (11.25 am).

A comprehensive list of holiday dates are on our website and important events will be issued early next term.

Please keep this portion of the letter for reference.

Finally, I hope you all have an enjoyable summer break and I wish you, your son and the school all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. A. F. Harrison
Headteacher