

Dear parents and carers,

County Dance Competition

As a result of their victory at the Rossendale School Dance Competition, our troupe were invited to represent Rossendale at the Lancashire County event which was held in Blackpool Wintergardens Theatre last Tuesday. The students left school slightly early so that they could be at the theatre for the technical rehearsals. On the night our dancers performed incredibly well. They came 5th overall but they also won a special recognition prize for being the 'Judge's Choice' act. A special thanks must go to Sally Ann from Samba Dance who choreographed the routine.

The guest of honour at the event was Nadiya Byhkova of Strictly Come Dancing fame. Aside from her work on television, Nadiya is a two-time European and World Dance Champion. Therefore, our students were thrilled to meet her and have their photograph taken with her. Congratulations to everyone involved in such a joyous event!



Online Event for Parents / Carers of Boys

As part of their work with teenage boys, Safer Rossendale has secured council funding to deliver an online event for parents and carers of boys. The session will be run by Progressive Masculinity and will explore the current views of masculinity held by many young people and the socio-cultural influences shaping these views. The event will also suggest practical ways to create safe, non-judgemental spaces at home to engage boys and young men in conversations about masculinity, and to encourage a positive and aspirational understanding of what it means to "be a man" today. Please see information for the event below my signature.

Calendar

May 2026

5th May
GCSE
Examinations
Commence

22nd May
After school closure
for half term

June 2026

1st June
School Re-opens

8th June
Y7-10 Examination
fortnight
commences

July 2026

2nd July
Y6 Welcome Day
&
Y6 Welcome
Evening 6.30pm

Burnley Youth Theatre - Police Input

Last week, actors from the Burnley Youth Theatre group presented a piece of drama to all of the girls in year 9 and 10. The play was funded by Lancashire Police and Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership and was aimed at raising awareness about child sexual exploitation, grooming, gaslighting and coercive control. It was specifically created for high school aged students and was a really great piece of theatre to encourage girls to recognise early signs of abuse and raise awareness about exploitative and dangerous situations for both themselves and their peers. Whilst the piece was potentially upsetting it is important that young people are made aware of these dangers.

As the girls were watching the theatre production, the boys took part in a session in which they were educated about the dangers of 'county lines', which is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs use dedicated mobile phone lines to distribute illegal drugs into smaller towns and rural areas, often coercing and manipulating children or vulnerable adults to transport the substances and cash.

It is hoped that by tackling these issues in school, we might be able to prevent our students from being exploited by criminals.



Noughts and Crosses

As well as performances from Burnley Youth Theatre, a group of our Drama enthusiasts also went on a trip to Salford to see a professional performance of Noughts and Crosses at the Lowry. The story in this play culminates in a harrowing tragedy that mirrors *Romeo and Juliet*, highlighting the devastating impact of systemic injustice and segregation. The play is one of the texts that year 9s read as part of form time reading and was a fantastic opportunity to see it performed professionally. It had a huge impact on our students due to the creative staging and the gripping and intense atmosphere created. Many thanks again to Mrs White and Mrs Goff for providing yet another brilliant cultural experience for our students.



Joseph and The Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat

The cultural calendar is in full swing for our students at the moment! Following a series of fantastic outings, this week offered yet another chance to dive into the world of live theatre. The commute was short but the impact was huge as students headed to the Curtain Theatre in Rochdale, a wonderfully traditional local gem, to see Whitworth Amateurs bring the vibrant energy of *Joseph and The Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat* to life. It was a brilliant evening of local talent and high-octane storytelling that left everyone who attended buzzing with excitement.

Year 8 Mock Interviews

Yesterday, our Year 8 students participated in mock interviews as a vital component of their careers curriculum. These sessions offer an invaluable opportunity for students to build confidence, refine their communication skills, and gain a realistic understanding of the professional world in a supportive environment. By practising how to articulate their strengths and navigate formal conversations now, they are better prepared for future education and employment milestones. We would like to extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers who so generously gave up their time to provide expert feedback and guidance; your support is instrumental in inspiring our students and helping them prepare for the journey ahead.



Scholars' Graduation

On Tuesday, a group of Year 10 students attended a graduation ceremony at the University of Sheffield to celebrate their completion of the intensive nine-week Scholars' Programme. This initiative, a key component of our Able, Gifted, and Talented (AGT) provision, concluded with a campus tour and a formal event to reward the students' dedication. The participants are to be commended for their exceptional performance, particularly during their final presentations, which were evaluated by PhD candidates. We are incredibly proud of their academic achievements and hard work throughout the programme.

Teaching and Learning Update

At Whitworth Community High School, we're committed to delivering the highest quality teaching for your child. As part of our ongoing professional development programme, we occasionally record lessons on video. These recordings are used exclusively for staff training and reflection, helping teachers refine their practice and share effective teaching strategies within our team. All videos are stored securely on our password-protected school system and are never shared outside the school. Pupil privacy and safeguarding remain our top priorities throughout this process. This approach enables our teachers to continuously improve, ensuring your child receives the excellent education they deserve.

AGT Cyber Security Master Class

Last week, a selected group of Gifted and Talented Year 8 pupils had the exciting opportunity to attend a cyber security masterclass at Rochdale Town Hall. Throughout the event, they demonstrated exceptional teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills while engaging with complex and thought-provoking challenges in the field of cyber security. We are incredibly proud to share that their hard work and dedication paid off, as they were named the winning team. This achievement reflects their enthusiasm for learning, their growing understanding of an increasingly important area of technology, and their ability to rise to new challenges. They represented the school with great pride.



Tourettes-Action Training for Staff

We were very lucky to have Lucy Toghill from Tourettes-Action presenting to all staff on Wednesday evening. She delivered a really insightful presentation about strategies that teachers and TAs can use in school to support students with any kind of tics or other tourettes-like symptoms. I was lucky enough to meet with Lucy prior to her doing her presentation. This enabled me to inform Lucy of our school-specific issues, which she was then able to address when she spoke to staff.

Shawforth Mural Unveiling

Wednesday saw the official unveiling of the Shawforth Mural. Located just behind the old chapel, this project saw a number of our Year 9 and 10 students working alongside alumni Amy Callaghan in researching the history of the local area, including key characters, and developing designs. We were delighted to be involved in the project and look forward to working with Amy again in the future!



Banksy 'A Genius Mind' Exhibition

Whilst Banksy was busy planning his most recent artwork- as has appeared in London this week - some of our Year 9, 10 and 11 students were busy visiting an exhibition of his work in Manchester. The exhibition provided a great insight into Banksy's motivation and intentions and featured more than 200 recreations of his artwork. It certainly provided food for thought as it showcased his unapologetic and sometimes controversial approach of highlighting social and political issues in today's society and across the world.. A great time was had by all that attended. Some pupils even channelled their inner Banksy whilst creating their own stencilled tote bags using spray paint at the end of the exhibition!



Alumni Success

This week I am focusing on a young man called Payton Walker who has recently shared an update on his further education with Mr Williams. Sadly, Payton narrowly missed out on the entry requirements for Rochdale Sixth Form. However, he excelled on a computer game design course at Hopwood Hall and managed to earn a place to develop his design skills at Manchester Metropolitan University. Payton is now in his penultimate undergraduate year of study and is considering a postgraduate qualification in teaching.

Sport Update

Mr Cawley and his sports teams have been making use of all of this fabulous dry and sunny weather in the last few weeks. Our under 15s girls football team won their semi final of the Rossendale Cup against Haslingden High School. In the league, the Year 10 boys beat All Saints by 5 goals to 2, whilst our Year 8s drew their All Saints fixture. Last night the Year 11 boys were victorious against Ader Grange. A particularly strong second half meant that WCHS won by 2 goals to 1 which means that our Year 11s not only earned a place in the final of the Rossendale Cup but they are also Rossendale Premiership Champions!

It will be too late to report in this newsletter but the week will end with two 3pm Friday afternoon fixtures between our Year 7 and 9 boys football teams against All Saints. We wish our boys the best of luck.

There is an update below showing where all of the local teams are up to in the Rossendale Champions Cup. Thank you to all of the local businesses who have sponsored all of the matches.

Champions Cup Finals 2026

	Mon 11th May- Tues 12th May-	Yr 7 Boys Rossendale PVC Systems Cup	ko 3.15	Whitworth	vs	Team 2
	Wed 13th May-	Yr 8 Boys M.Ashworth Contracting Cup	ko 3.15	Alder Grange	vs	Team 2
	Thurs 14th May-	Yr 9 Boys Joshua Laws Butchers Cup	ko 3.45	Alder Grange	vs	Team 2
	Fri 15th May-	Yr 10 Boys Inspire Sport Cup	ko 3.45	Alder Grange	vs	BRGS
		Yr 11 Boys Inspire Sport Cup	ko ???	Team 1	vs	BRGS
	Mon 11th May-	U13 Girls Jute Sports Cup	ko 4.45	TVLA	vs	Team 2
	Tues 12th May-	U15 Girls Jute Sports Cup	ko 4.45	Alder Grange	vs	Whitworth

Venue: Whitworth Valley FC
 Medal Sponsor: Ormerod Plumbing & Heating
 Trophy Sponsor: Muldoon Financial Planning

Super Summer

After three previous County Cup final appearances, Summer T (Year 11) and the Haslingden Girls & Ladies U16 Cyclones have finally been crowned Greater Manchester County Cup champions. This team is the definition of grassroots football; the girls all hail from the Rossendale Valley and have grown up playing together since the U12s. They are incredible ambassadors for our local high schools, and we couldn't be prouder.

The victory was a true test of grit, with the girls coming from behind three times before ultimately clinching the win on penalties. Summer is pictured below with her teammates and WCHS alumni Grace Sampson, who serves as the club's physio. Huge congratulations to the Cyclones on an outstanding, hard-fought performance!



Celebrating Student Success

Regular readers of my newsletters will know that I love to share stories about the talents and successes of our brilliant students both in and out of the classroom. If your child has had success with their hobbies and pursuits, please get in touch to let me know so that I can include them in the newsletter.

Year 11 Exam Preparation

As you can see, there is lots going on in school, and I haven't even mentioned the fact that our year 11 students are in the final stages of the preparations for their GCSE examinations, which formally begin on the 8th May. All of our Year 11s were given a document this week which contains lots of strategies to alleviate stress and anxiety during what will inevitably be a tough time for them all. They were also given a copy of the first week of the collapsed timetable which details how we are going to maximise their time in school during the examination period. It goes without saying that I wish all of our Year 11s the very best of luck.

And finally

I hope you all have an enjoyable Bank Holiday with your friends and families. Let's hope that the warm weather continues so that we can all enjoy the extended weekend.

Best wishes

Handwritten signature of Mr A Oliver.

Mr A Oliver
Headteacher



Calling all parents/ carers of boys in Rossendale.

Safer Rossendale has been running a pilot course helping a group of local teenage boys, improve their self esteem, connect them with local male role models and improve their mental health. We know that parenting teenagers is difficult and everyone could do with helpful tips and support when it comes to tricky conversations. Rossendale Borough council have given us funding to run a once only online session run by Progressive Masculinity.

This 75 minute parental support session was created by staff who are also parents and understand the pressures and challenges facing parents in today's world. The session focuses on three key questions:

- What are the prevalent views of masculinity amongst many of our young people?
- What socio-cultural factors are shaping these views?
- How can we create safe, nonjudgemental spaces in the home to engage boys/young men on the topic of masculinity and to encourage an aspirational view of what it can mean to 'be a man' in today's world.

The details

7th May 6-7.15pm

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 939 273 542 171 2

Passcode: 95HM9u

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

[Learn more](#) | [Meeting options](#)

This meeting should not be recorded.

Thank you and see you there

Dr Emma Gladwinfield and Councillor Samara Barnes