



Newsletter

Hallfold, Whitworth, Rochdale
Lancashire, OL12 8TS
Tel (01706) 343218
www.wchs.co

Spring Term 1
Friday 30th January 2026

Dear parents and carers,

Year 10 Parents' Evening Positive Feedback

As you will know, we hosted a parents' evening for our year 10 cohort on 21st January. The date was specifically chosen so that teaching staff could address progress in the mid year exams with students and their parents/carers. It was a really successful event and this was reflected in the brilliant feedback forms received. Many thanks to all of the parents/carers who attended and a special thanks to those who took the time to respond to the questionnaire. The next parents' evening will take place on 4th February for our year 8 students and their parents/carers. Appointments can be booked online through Edulinkone.

Year 11 Intervention

Pre and post school intervention for our year 11 cohort is now well underway; attendance has been excellent. Students have bought into the notion of these additional sessions which are put on by subject specialists free of charge. Parents should be aware that students are booked a week in advance by their teachers and the information is shared online. Please note that the intervention is designed to be completed in addition to personal revision. Hopefully, if students continue to work as well as they are, GCSE outcomes will be strong again in the summer.

Rochdale Sixth Form - Former Student Success

I was pleased to welcome Karl Smith, Principal at Rochdale Sixth Form College to our school last week. He brought with him details of the amazing post-16 outcomes achieved by some of our former students. An amazing 50% of the students from WCHS who went on to study at RSFC achieved grades that enabled them to secure places at prestigious Sutton 30 universities, recognised nationally for academic excellence and competitive entry. It has been a pleasure for me to share this good news with their former teachers here at WCHS who played a huge part in their secondary school success.



Calendar

February 2026

Year 8 Parents' Evening

4th February 2026
4.00pm - 6.00pm

After school closure- Half Term

13th February 2026

Year 7 Parents' Evening

25th February 2026
4.00pm - 6.00pm

March 2026

2nd Year 11 Mock Exams Start

2nd March 2026

Year 7 Parents' Evening

18th March 2026
4.00pm - 6.00pm

Student Leadership Rewards Assembly

At Whitworth Community High School, we prepare students, not only for their GCSE examinations but also for their future careers. As such, students are encouraged to develop leadership skills so that they can become successful and responsible citizens. This morning, I hosted a special rewards assembly to recognise all of the students who regularly undertake leadership roles in school and those who have undertaken leadership training. Students received certificates for being involved in the following leadership initiatives:

- Prefects: Including senior prefects, and head / deputy head students
- School Council Members
- Expert Readers: These are the students who lead form time reading
- Sports Ambassadors
- Music Leaders: Including music technicians, sound and light and technicians and ensemble leaders
- Youth Enterprise Group Leaders
- School Shop Leaders
- AGT Leadership training participants

Newly Appointed School Council Member

On a similar theme, I am pleased to announce that Logan W in year 8 has been selected to represent his peers as a new member of the School Council. When a vacant post became available, there was a lot of interest in the post. Nine students wrote letters of application to express their interest. Logan was selected due to his exemplary conduct in school, his participation in extra curricular activities and for his outstanding letter of application.



Critical Thinking Session

Pupils in the AGT scheme from Years 9 and 10 recently enjoyed an engaging critical thinking session delivered by Lee Crabtree from Rochdale Sixth Form College. They explored what critical thinking really means and put their new skills into practice through lively activities and debates, including the thought-provoking question: *“Is school the best place to learn?”* Many pupils shared strong opinions and fully embraced the challenge. In an age dominated by social media, where extreme views can easily take hold, critical thinking enables us to see multiple perspectives clearly and to question what is presented as fact, making it an essential and empowering life skill. Because critical thinking is about asking the right questions, it is also considered a “super skill” sought after by Russell Group universities and leading UK employers, helping prepare our young people for future academic and working life.



Reading

At Whitworth, strong reading skills are the foundation for success across all subjects - and for life beyond school. All students in Y7-9 have a reading book as part of their everyday equipment and there is dedicated reading time built into their timetable during their Literacy (Bedrock) lesson.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of books borrowed from the library are being returned damaged. From now on, we are asking students to keep their reading books in their Ready to Learn packs or in a plastic wallet to help protect the books from any water damage. If a book is returned damaged, a £5 charge will be applied via ParentPay so that we can replace the book for other students.

We are always looking to increase our book stock with engaging reads for our students. If you have any age-appropriate books that you could donate to the school library, we would be very grateful. We are particularly looking for age-appropriate thrillers by writers such as: Anthony Horowitz, Robert Muchamore, Chris Ryan, Malorie Blackman, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Alan Gibbons, Patrick Ness and Matthew Reilly.

Please send donations into school and leave them at Reception. Alternatively, students can hand books in to Mrs Pickering in the library.

Maths Research Initiative

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has launched a new Maths Anxiety Programme, and we are delighted to be rolling this out to the majority of our Year 7 cohort. This is a fantastic opportunity for both our students and our school to take part in a high-quality research project that aims to improve pupils' confidence, wellbeing, and outcomes in maths. Throughout the programme, students will take part in structured sessions designed to help them better understand and manage feelings of anxiety related to maths. The research project will run for 16 weeks, and session 1 has already been successfully completed by our Year 7 students.

I have placed a poster below my signature that is linked to this project. It gives ideas for parents and carers regarding how you can help your child if they have maths anxiety. For me, the top piece of advice is for parents/carers to try not to say things like "I was never good at maths" or "I hate maths" in front of your child because these comments can make children believe that maths ability is fixed; this can discourage effort in this subject.

Sports Ambassadors Dodgeball Officiating Course

Earlier this week, 16 of our brilliant Sports Ambassadors attended training on how to officiate dodgeball matches. They worked with official representatives from British Dodgeball to complete a formal officiating qualification. Our newly qualified student leaders will put their new skills to the test in next week's year 5/6 primary school finals which are being hosted at WCHS next week.



Sports News

Only two of our teams have taken part in competitive fixtures since my last newsletter. Our year 10 boys B team competed in the 7v7 football tournament. They finished second after losing the final in a dramatic penalty shoot out. The year 9 boys B 7x7 team also finished second in their respective tournament after losing a very close final match by just one goal. Both teams played really well and represented the school brilliantly.



As you can see, it has been another action packed fortnight here at WCHS. There are now only two weeks to go until the ski trip departs and the half term break.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Oliver'.

Mr A Oliver
Headteacher



Helping Your Child with Maths Anxiety



What is Maths Anxiety?

A feeling of fear or worry when doing maths, especially under pressure.

It can lead to **physical signs** (heart racing) and mental blocks (mind going blank).

It is about **feelings, not ability** – even confident pupils can feel anxious.

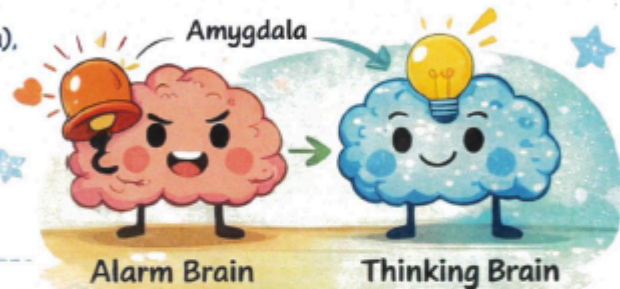
It's common around the transition to secondary school.



Why Does it Happen?

Anxiety triggers the brain's **alarm system** (the **amygdala**), which can make thinking harder.

This response is **normal** and can be managed with simple strategies.



How You Can Help at Home

- **Normalise it:** reassure your child that many people feel this way and it can change.
- **Praise effort and strategies, not just marks:** "I can see you tried a new step there."
- **Create a calm space:** reduce rushing; allow short breaks when stress builds.
- **Stay curious together:** ask, "What helped you feel calm today?"
- **Practise simple mindfulness:** slow breathing (in 5, out 7) or the 5-4-3-2-1 senses activity.
- **Support planning:** encourage breaking problems into smaller steps and checking work slowly.



Avoid Negative Talk About Maths

- Try not to say things like "I was never **good at maths**" or "I hate maths" in front of your child.
- These comments can make children believe maths ability is fixed and discourage them from trying.

Positive Phrases to Model:

- ♥ "Mistakes help us learn."
- ♥ "Everyone learns at their own pace."
- ♥ "Let's take it one step at a time."
- ♥ "You've overcome hard things before: you can do this."

Over the Term...

Your child will learn **practical** techniques to manage maths anxiety and build confidence, recognising signs, calming strategies, positive self talk, and **planning**.

