



Newsletter

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Summer Term 1
Friday 2nd May 2025

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome to my first newsletter of the summer term. As I am writing, the sun is shining and I can see our students partaking in their PE lessons on the school fields. We are so lucky to be located in such a fantastic location with extensive fields and surrounded by such stunning views.

Year 11 Exam Preparation

The first two weeks back have been busy and very productive. There is a real sense of energy and purpose in school, particularly as the year 11s prepare for their formal examinations. As the parents/carers of our year 11 students will know, some of the assessments have already taken place. Just before the Easter break, our Drama students were assessed by the external moderator. The same happened for the GCSE PE students earlier this week. Added to this, the Art class have already sat their final exam and the Spanish cohort have been assessed on the spoken component of their course. So, lots has already been completed which now leads us into the examinations that will take place in the sports hall starting on Thursday 8th May. It goes without saying that I wish our year 11 students all the best, especially as it is clear that they have worked so hard and prepared themselves so diligently.

Parents/carers will already know that we are doing everything that we can to support year 11 students for the final exams. The targeted intervention continues as normal, added to which, we have now added Wednesday 'lesson 6' to help make up for the lost learning from the two Bank Holiday Mondays. Students have been really engaged with these sessions and they are a credit to their families. If parents/carers need any additional information or guidance in these last few weeks, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Drug Dealing In The Local Area

On a much more sombre note, it is important that I share my concerns with all parents/carers about a growing number of children in the valley who are taking illegal drugs in the evenings and during the weekends. Whilst school staff are more than willing to help children who have developed addictions, my view is that prevention is far better than cure. Therefore, the dangers of substance misuse is explicitly taught in assemblies and during PSHE lessons in school. The majority of the students heed the warnings given, but for some the message is not getting through. Please could I ask all parents and carers to take steps to make sure that your children are not using potentially dangerous illegal substances. Some practical ideas:

- Check your child's belongings, including their phones, to make sure they do not have illegal items - don't assume that your child wouldn't ever get involved with drug taking
- Talk openly with your children about the dangers of drug taking
- Think twice before allowing your children to go out in the evenings, especially if you don't know where they are going or if you suspect they are going to places such as the 'Kick Pitch' which, sadly, is regularly mentioned as a place where illegal substances are used and/or exchanged
- If you suspect your child is using drugs, seek support as soon as possible from www.wearewithyou.org.uk
- Contact the police if you know that your child has been offered drugs. Any information will help the police to find the source of the drugs and prevent future dealing in the locality

Calendar

May
2025

5th May
School closed
May bank holiday

14th May
Year 9
Parents' Evening
4.00pm-6.00pm

23rd May
After school closure
Half term

June
2025

2nd June
School re-opens

18th June
Summer concert

26th June
Y11 Prom

Alumni News

On a more positive 'note', I am pleased to be able to tell you about the success of one of our recent alumni. Former student Alice Clarke has had many successes with her music recently. After being accepted to study at the Royal Northern College of Music she was appointed as 1st horn at the Brighthouse and Rastrick band, considered one of the best in the world! Over Easter she travelled to Pangbourne College to spend the week with the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain where, after auditions, was appointed principal horn, also winning the Katie Ogden solo competition which allowed her to progress to the Harry Mortimer solo competition in the summer. She has also been invited to represent England at the European Youth Brass Band in Stavanger, Norway next week which she is very much looking forward to, culminating in various performances at the European Brass Band Championships.



Careers Activities

It is vital that students are well prepared for the world of work as part of their high school education. As such, the careers curriculum is prioritised here at WCHS. We consistently meet all of the Gatsby Benchmarks, which are the measure of success for a school regarding careers initiatives. In the last fortnight, students in years 7, 9 and 10 have been working on form time careers activities using the careers padlets whilst students in year 8 have been busy preparing for their mock interviews, the first of which took place on Thursday, with remaining Y8 students being interviewed the week after. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of the volunteers who volunteered to help with the mock interview process. The initiative would not have been possible without the support of the kind people from a variety of industries who gave their time freely so that our students could have the experience of being interviewed. This will definitely put them in a strong position when they apply for college places and jobs in the future. Thanks also to our Careers Officer, Ms Grenaghan who organised a very successful event.



Youth Conference Update

I mentioned in my previous newsletter that 5 of our students were recently invited to a Youth Conference with our Local Member of Parliament, Andy McNae. This event has now taken place and I am pleased to be able to report that it went very well. Our students took part in discussions about their hopes for the future and gave their practical suggestions to improve Rossendale for young people. Their input will be included into the consultation on a National Youth Strategy. Well done to Jamie C, Seb M, Poppy F, Keaton L and Ruby A who represented our school so professionally. Thanks also to Mrs Williams who accompanied the students.



Scout Moor II Wind Farm Consultation

To help students gain a better understanding of local events linked to the curriculum, we had a member of the new Scout Moor II wind farm project who came into school to give a talk to the whole of year 9. This is a new project to make the moor next to Whitworth the UK's largest onshore wind farm. This talk sets the stage for their next geography topic in which our students will learn all about the benefits and issues with wind power and renewable energy. At the end of this topic, students will then write a piece of work outlining their own opinion. Their opinions will then be used to determine whether planning permission should or should not be granted for the scheme. This is an excellent opportunity for our students to not only practice their decision making skills, but also apply their geographical knowledge to something happening in Whitworth!

Sport Update

As usual, the PE department has been a hive of activity. On Thursday 24th April a mixed team of key stage 3 students took part in the Table Tennis tournament at All Saints RC High School. Whilst they lost the overall competition by 5 points, there were some notable performances from Harrison W and Joseph KS who placed 3rd and 4th respectively in the individual competition. The year 11 boys B team played their last ever football game on Friday 25th April. I can't really report a score because it was a non-competitive 'out of position' friendly against TVLA. It sounds like it was a really fun evening for all involved. Also in football, our year 9s had a great run in the district competition this year but were beaten 3-2 in the semi final against Haslingden High School on Wednesday evening. The last event to report is Orienteering which took place at Marl Pits yesterday evening. I'm not sure of the outcome of this event yet but I do know that we sent a very enthusiastic team of year 7s and 8s. Well done to all of the children involved in these events and thank you for representing your school. Thanks especially to the PE staff who continue to give their time so generously so that the children can have all of these enriching opportunities.



And finally...

The final thing to mention in this edition of the newsletter is that Mr Towers (our new Teacher in Charge of Geography) successfully completed the Manchester Marathon last weekend. The conditions were uncharacteristically warm for this time of year and probably not conducive to personal bests, but I can tell you that Mr Towers recorded a very impressive finish time of 5 hours and 2 minutes. Congratulations to Mr Towers. What a fantastic role model to our students!



Best wishes

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

Mr A Oliver
Headteacher