

Spring Term 2
Friday 7th March 2025

Dear parents and carers,

Lisbon Trip

During the half term break, over 70 students flew over to Lisbon for an action packed 5 day sports trip. Students took part in a variety of sporting activities during the day and attended a match at the Jose Avalade stadium. The WCHS blue jumpers really stood out in a crowd who were predominantly dressed in green. Thank you to all of the staff who gave up their time to make this trip possible. Thanks especially to Mr Cawley who organised the tour. What a memorable opportunity for all of our students!



Mock exams underway - Y11

We are now half way through the second Year 11 Mock Examination Fortnight. The students have conducted themselves extremely well so far in the exam hall and their teachers have seen plenty of evidence to show that students have prepared well. We still have a week to go, so it is vital that students continue to prepare for the remaining exams. There will be a Parents' Evening to discuss progress in the mocks on the 2nd April. More details will be released soon.

w/c 3rd March	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Mon	English Language 1			RS	
Tue	Maths Non Calculator			Spanish Writing Computing	
Wed	English Language 2		Business	Sociology	
Thur	Chemistry			History Paper 2 EEE & Cold War	
Fri	Geography Paper 1&3 combined		Spanish Reading	PE Music	

w/c 10th March	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Mon	English Literature			Drama Hospitality and Catering	
Tue	Physics			History Paper 3 Germany	
Wed	Maths Calculator		Business	Biology	
Thur	Maths Calculator		Art	Art DT	
Fri	Geography Paper 2		Spanish Listening	GCSE PE	

Calendar

March 2025

19th March
Y8 Options Information and Parents Evening
4pm to 6pm

April 2025

2nd April
Y11 Parents' Evening

4th April
Commendation Assemblies
Classroom Moves
End of Term (1pm finish for students)

22nd April
School Re-opens

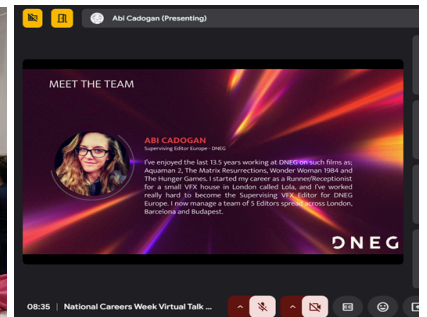
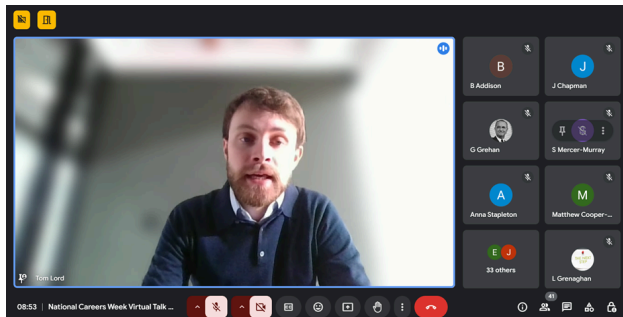
National Youth Orchestra

On the first day of this half term, some of our most gifted and talented musicians were treated to a trip to Blackpool to hear a performance by the National Youth Orchestra. The event was organised and funded by NYO Inspire, which is designed to support equity in music education and unlock potential, particularly for teenagers with a passion for music, who may be facing challenges in accessing music opportunities.



National Careers Week

Our Careers Officer, Ms Grenaghan has been very busy this week hosting virtual talks during form time to mark National Careers Week. The idea behind these virtual sessions is to inspire students and give them the opportunity to explore less traditional career paths, as well as learn about the education and pathways that our guest speakers have undertaken and what it takes to be successful in the workplace. This week we have hosted a published author, Dr Vanessa Harbour, who also lectures in creative writing at the University of Winchester; a nuclear engineer, Andrew Chadwick from the world renowned and international company GE Vernova; a town planner, Tom Lord who is an alumni from Rochdale Sixth Form College and works for Turley Planning; Matt Braithwaite, a civil servant who works for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and Abi Cadogan, a VFX Editor who works for DNEG the largest VFX company in the Film and TV Industry. At the end of each talk, our volunteers very kindly allowed students to ask questions and our students and form tutors asked some really interesting questions such as 'How long does it take to write a book?', 'Have you ever designed a whole new town?', 'What is it like working for the new Prime Minister?' and 'What's it like working for an international company?'. The key takeaways for students were: it's okay if you're not sure what you want to do after school but pursue what you are good at and what you enjoy too. You have options and it's okay to change your mind and your career path if things don't work out as planned. What was also clear was the passion and enthusiasm that all our speakers had for their roles and that the key to success in work is to do what you love. The hard part is finding what you love, so Miss Grenaghan's key message to all young people this week is get involved, try new things, volunteer, you never know what you might learn about yourself! It's been a very inspiring National Careers Week.



Y7 Parents' Evening

Last week, we hosted a very successful evening for parents/carers of our year 7 students. The feedback forms completed by parents/carers were overwhelmingly positive, which was really uplifting for staff. Many parents commented about how impressed they were with the innovative use of technology to make the evening run smoothly. The next event will be for parents/carers of students in year 8. This is due to take place on 19th March.

NODA Awards

Congratulations to three members of our school community who have recently been recognised at the NODA awards. NODA stands for the National Operatic Drama Association. These awards are highly competitive, as such, just to be nominated is a huge honour. Year 9 student Victoria E was nominated as a cast member in three separate categories. Our Vice Chair of Governors, Mrs Evans, won the award for best programme. To top off our school success, one of our maths teachers, Miss Sladen won best musical director for a pantomime.



Music Awards

Our school has a very strong partnership with The 2nd Rossendale Scout Band. Several of our players go on to develop their musical talents with this highly successful local band, based in Bacup. On Saturday evening, the band held their Patron's Concert at St Mary's Church in Rawtenstall. During the event, the annual awards were presented and it gives me great pleasure to report that three of the four major awards were won by students from Whitworth Community High School. Congratulations to Josh D (winner of the Dave Walsh award for Lower Brass), Liam J (winner of Junior Bandsman of the year) and Luke T (recipient of the Endeavour trophy). The boys are pictured here with Janet Hunt who volunteers with 2nd Rossendale. Janet was a long standing member of staff at WCHS prior to her retirement, so it was very fitting that she was able to celebrate this success with us.



Alumni Success

I always like to share good news stories regarding our former students. Therefore, I'd like to bring to your attention that one of our former students, Ben Hildreth, who is currently studying at Rochdale Sixth Form College, has earned a conditional offer to study History at Oxford. Ben achieved grade 9 for his History GCSE whilst at WCHS. It goes without saying that we wish him every success.

Rochdale Sixth Form College hits new high with twelve Oxbridge offers for students

Date published: 22 February 2025



If you know of other current or former students who have had similar successes recently, please get in touch to let us know so that we can celebrate their successes too. l.rawstron@whitworth.lancs.sch.uk

Make Your Mark Campaign

In Lancashire, there is a Youth Council who meet regularly with members of the County Council Cabinet and the Education Scrutiny Committee. The Youth Council has a responsibility to ensure that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. As part of the democratic process, they are asking young people across the county to vote on the issues that they want the Youth Council to focus on. On Thursday, our students had the opportunity to take part in this democratic process by filling in their Mark Your Mark ballot papers. We will now await the outcome from all of the votes across the county to see where the focus will be.

Admissions - Oversubscribed Again

The final thing to tell you is that we have filled all of our year 7 places for September. Yet again, our school was oversubscribed and the places were all given to families who chose our school as their first choice. This is testament to the outstanding work that is going on at WCHS currently. Our persistent and consistent drive for high standards in all aspects of school life is leading to excellent behavioural standards, which, in turn, allows teachers to teach and students to achieve the best outcomes they are capable of. Our school community continues to '*climb higher*'.

Best wishes



Mr A Oliver
Headteacher

Headteachers have been asked by Lancashire County Council to issue this document to parents to inform you that this new procedure will now be applied to all excessive leave requests made to this school.

Lancashire County Council are currently reviewing the arrangements for pupils who are absent from school due to unauthorised leave/holidays.

Attendance at school is vital to help children thrive and achieve their best. Children who are absent from school can fail to meet their academic potential and those who fall below 90% attendance are at significant risk of underachieving.

Absence during term time must be avoided. If you are considering taking your child out of school for any reason, it is essential that you request permission for the absence.

When penalty notices are issued, parents have the opportunity to discharge liability for an offence under S444 of the Education Act instead of being prosecuted by the Local Authority. The penalty notice regulations determine the amount of the penalty notice fine. Unfortunately, some parents are choosing to remove their children from school for longer periods, as the fine amount is the same regardless of the number of school days missed.

From 01/01/2025, the following rules will apply:

1. **Unauthorised leave less than 15 school days:** penalty notice issued
2. **Unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more:** the Local Authority will review any requests for penalty notices and may **prosecute** parents and not offer the opportunity to pay a penalty notice fine instead.

Failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence, and this means that if you are convicted, this could result in **a fine of up to £2,500 and you will have a criminal record.**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

With more than two billion active users, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. The UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging, but for the time being, this controversial feature remains.

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency' – plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user they want to message. Therefore, if a child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that the child might be added to a group chat or community (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people they don't know.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allow news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original source.

CHAT LOCK AND SECRET CODES

In 2023, WhatsApp introduced a feature that lets users keep their chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind their phone's passcode, fingerprint or face ID. There is an additional feature – 'Secret Code' – where users set a unique password for locked chats. Unfortunately, this creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of.

VIEW ONCE CONTENT

The ability to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate material or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't reopen them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this disappearing content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing protection of privacy.

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's Live Location feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child is safe while out, for example. However, anyone in a user's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's whereabouts.

Advice for Parents & Educators

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider whether it sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change a child's WhatsApp settings to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval. You can give permission to My Contacts or My Contacts Except... Additionally, if a child needs to use Live Location, emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Check in with the child about how they're using WhatsApp, making sure they know you only have their safety at heart. If you spot a Locked Chats folder, you might want to talk about the sort of content they've stored in there, who they're talking to, and why they want to keep these chats hidden. Also, if children send any View Once content, it could be helpful to ask them why.

DISCUSS GROUP CHATS

Make children aware that there could be members of a group that they don't know well and that words can be misinterpreted. Encourage them to leave a good impression, to avoid joining in if conversations turn towards bullying, and to respond to such situations in an appropriate way. Make sure they know that it's OK to leave a group chat if it makes them uncomfortable – or for any reason, in fact.

THINK BEFORE SHARING

Help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content that a user posts to be shared more widely, even publicly on social media. Encourage children to consider how an impulsive message or forwarding might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/whatsapp-2025>