



# Newsletter

Hallfold, Whitworth, Rochdale  
Lancashire, OL12 8TS  
Tel (01706) 343218  
[www.wchs.co](http://www.wchs.co)

**Autumn Term 1**  
**Friday 11th October 2024**

11th October 2024

Dear parents and carers,

## Rewards and Hot Chocolate Fridays

It is really important that children are recognised and rewarded when they have done well in school. Students have already amassed over 32200 achievement points between them, which is testament to the good work that they do in school and at home every day. Please could I ask parents/carers to check Edulinkone on a regular basis so that you can see when your child has been given reward points and reiterate our congratulations.

A new rewards initiative for 2024/25 is Hot Chocolate Fridays. Each week 12 students are invited to these events, during which they are praised for their good work. They can be nominated by their teachers for a variety of different reasons including effort, attainment, conduct, representing school etc. We have now had three of these events, all of which have been a resounding success. Congratulations to all the students who have been invited so far.

Speaking of recognising achievements, I know that many of our talented young people are involved with a variety of hobbies and activities outside school. I would really like to know about and celebrate external successes of WCHS students. Therefore, parents/carers are encouraged to send in news and photographs of their children so that I can congratulate them and include them in our newsletters.



## Year 11 Revision Evening

The year 11 Revision Evening was a resounding success. We had a packed hall of year 11 students and their parents/carers. Following an opportunity to purchase revision materials, Mrs Haworth presented a brief presentation on the topic of general revision strategies. The students and their parents/carers then went off to some breakout spaces where they were given subject-specific guidance on how to prepare for exams.

The year 11 Revision Evening is always a significant event in the academic calendar as it represents a re-setting of the partnership between school and home, which is vital for the success of our students. A huge thank you to all of the teachers who presented revision presentations and to parents/carers who attended the event with their children.

## Year 7 Settling In Evening

Only a week after hosting our oldest students and their parents/carers, it was the turn of our youngest students. One of the ways in which we try to establish a strong partnership between home and school is by hosting our annual Year 7 Settling In Evening. The evening offered an opportunity for parents/carers to informally chat with their child's form tutor, as well as with members of the School Leadership Team.

*Climbing higher!*

## Calendar

**October**  
**2024**

**15th, 16th & 17th**  
**October 2024**

Our Autumn Show  
'Grease'  
7.00pm start

**18th October 2024**  
After School Closure for  
Half Term

**28th October 2024**  
School Re-Opens

**November**  
**2024**

**6th November 2024**  
GCSE Presentation  
Evening at The Ashcroft  
7.00pm



**School Website : [www.wchs.co](http://www.wchs.co)**



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More importantly, it was an opportunity for our year 7s to introduce their new friends and their families to their own parents/carers.

During the evening, we celebrated the achievements of our new year 7 students. Many of them were awarded certificates and prizes for the work they have done so far since joining our school. They really have made a brilliant first impression and we are proud of the way that they have settled into life at Whitworth Community High School.

## Parent Conduct / Facebook

Thank you to the vast majority of parents/carers who are always considerate and kind when dealing with staff regarding issues in school.

Please keep in mind that we do a difficult and fast paced job, trying to balance the needs of 672 children on a daily basis. As such we sometimes get things wrong and we occasionally have to make decisions that don't please everyone. If there has been an issue and parents/carers don't get the outcome that is desired, please could I ask that the appropriate channels of communication are used in a spirit of mutual respect. There is a comprehensive complaints policy on our website that sets out the steps to take should you be unhappy with anything in school. The first step is to get in touch by letter/email, over the phone or through a pre-arranged meeting. We will always do our best to work with parents/carers to resolve issues.

Sadly, it has been brought to my attention recently that a very small number of parents have written some unkind, hurtful and damaging comments on Facebook, mainly in a group called 'Making Whitworth A Great Place to Live'. In recent comments, staff members have been directly named and spoken about in a derogatory manner in a public forum, to which they have no right of reply in their professional capacity. This is unacceptable behaviour and damaging to the wellbeing of my staff. It also further exacerbates the recruitment and retention issues that schools are currently facing. I need to remind all parents/carers that we do not respond to Facebook posts and we do not make any decisions based upon what is written in Facebook comments. We will only communicate with parents/carers through the appropriate, professional channels as set out in our Communications Policy.

## School Building Update

If the work on site continues as planned, I am hopeful that phase 4 and 5 handover will take place on 31st October. This will mean that the school will take full responsibility for the whole site once again including the additional car parking and top fields.

As the building works draw to a close, our senior prefects will be burying a time capsule before we break up for half term. The capsule contains lots of current school memorabilia such as a prospectus, curriculum information, a PE top, a school tie etc. The plan is for the capsule to be dug up in 50 years time when the school is re-built once again.

## Parent Governor Vacancy

We currently have a vacancy for one parent governor and are seeking nominations from enthusiastic and committed parents to join the Governing Board. The deadline for nominations is 12pm on Tuesday 15th October. If there are more nominations than vacancies an election will be held with a closing date of 12th November. For further information and the nomination form please visit the Governor page on our school website <https://www.wchs.co/governors-1/>.

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## Burnley College Trip

On Thursday, 3rd October, a group of our most academically able year 9 and 10 students had the opportunity to attend a Leadership Training Day at Burnley College. The day was based around De Bono's Six Thinking Hats - a decision making and problem solving tool that encourages individuals to approach challenges from multiple perspectives, using different "hats" to represent various modes of thinking. We are hoping to organise similar events in the future as part of our Able Gifted and Talented (AGT) programme. These initiatives are designed to help our students build vital skills that will benefit them in their future careers.



## Grease, The Musical (15th, 16th and 17th October)

If you haven't yet got your tickets yet for our forthcoming production of Grease, please act quickly as they are selling out fast. I am told that the Wednesday and Thursday performances are already sold out. Some tickets are still available for Tuesday evening and can be purchased through ParentPay, as can raffle tickets, which are £2 each. I have heard lots of practicing going on in the music and drama rooms for this production over the last few weeks and can't wait to see the finished performance

## Holiday Pattern for 2025/26

The holiday pattern has now been agreed for the next academic year. I have chosen to use the pattern as suggested by Lancashire Local Authority so as to align with as many local schools as possible. Hopefully, this decision will make it easier for families who have children in multiple schools to arrange holidays and childcare. The holiday pattern is on our website in the Key Information/Term Dates section.

## Paris

Excitement is most definitely building amongst our students as the final preparations are made for the forthcoming trip to Paris. Over 100 students are signed up to attend what we hope will be an amazing and memorable experience. Thank you in advance to Mrs Murray and all of the staff helpers who are giving up their time over the half term holiday to make this happen for the students.

## Half term break

Just a quick reminder that school closes for half term at 3pm on Friday 18th October. I think staff and students will be ready for a well deserved rest. School reopens on Monday 28th October.

Best wishes



Mr A Oliver  
Headteacher

*Climbing higher!*

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## Grease the Musical!

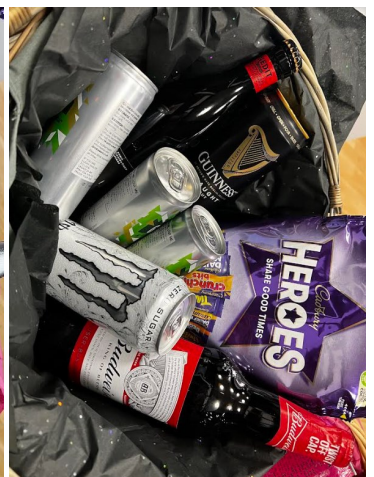
Our students are working incredibly hard on this production putting in numerous hours of rehearsals after school and at weekends. We are excited for them to show everybody what they can do!

We also have a Grease MEGA Raffle for some excellent T-Bird and Pink Lady Hampers. These are filled with fabulous prizes and you can buy tickets on ParentPay for just £2 a ticket. There will be draws for these on every show night.

We cant wait for you all to watch our students shine.

Tuesday 15th, Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th October, 7pm at WCHS all seats priced at £6.

See you there!



## Great news from Hopwood Hall College and University Centre!



Our hugely popular Animal Academy is back this October half term. This incredible 3-day adventure is perfect for young people aged 13-16 who aspire to develop a career working with animals. Delivered by our in-house team of expert tutors, this immersive programme gives young people 18 hours of highly sought-after practical experience – the perfect foundations for a career in working with animals. Animal Academy students can expect to learn all about the unique lives of our endangered animals at Hopwood Hall College, we have over 500 animals here, including snakes, tortoises, poison frogs, wallabies, ponies, alpacas and bats to name but a few.

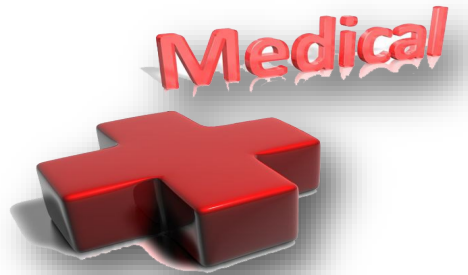
**Course will be held –**

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October to Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October – 9am-3pm**

You can book a place following the link below:

[Animal Academy - Hopwood Hall College and University Centre](#)

We can't wait to welcome you to our Animal Academy here at Hopwood Hall College and University Centre!



## Prescription medication

If your child has a medical condition that requires medication while they are in school then the following procedures should be followed:

- A consent form to administer medication must be completed by a parent/carer (this is available from the school reception)
- Any prescription medication must be brought into school in the original box with a pharmacy label that has your child's name on. We are unable to store medication which is not in its original packaging.

If your child suffers from **asthma** then please ensure they have an inhaler with them whilst in school. If you would like us to keep an emergency inhaler in the medical cabinet then please make sure the inhaler is in its original packaging, has a pharmacy label on with their name, as well as a medical consent form. We are unable to accept medication for your child if it's in a different name.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child's medication is with them in school. All medication will be locked away in the school's secure medical cabinet, as stated in the school's medical policy.

## Non-prescribed medications

We are not authorised to store or administer any non-prescription medication unless it is an exceptional circumstances and is for no longer than 48 hours.

## Attendance

Please note that our absence number for texting is **07418343218** alternatively you can phone the school on **01706343218** as usual.

If you text to notify us of your child's absence, please include their Name, Reg Group and reason for absence.



### Attendance Information (Monday 30th Sep - Friday 4th Oct)

We aim for at least **97%** attendance.

Here are the attendance figures for week ending 4th October 2024

Our Overall school attendance (years 7 - 11) was **93.13 %**

Y7 = 97.11 %

Y8 = 92.22 %

Y9 = 91.04 %

Y10 = 91.92 %

Y11 = 93.33 %

#### The best forms were;

7 Draco = 98.88%

8 Draco = 97.78% (top placing for second consecutive week)

9 Draco = 94.23%

10 Orion = 92.81%

11 Orion = 99.06% (top placing for third consecutive week)



## It's not ok to be away!

There is no entitlement in law for term-time extended absences, whether these are to visit relatives, attend weddings or funerals, or just for a holiday.

0 missed lessons	←	0 days off a year	←	100%	→	Perfect!
20 missed lessons	←	4 days off a year	←	98%	→	Very good
40 missed lessons	←	8 days off a year	←	96%	→	Good
50 missed lessons	←	10 days off a year	←	95%	→	Improvement needed
55 missed lessons	←	11 days off a year	←	94%	→	Concerned
95 lessons	←	19 days off a year	←	90%	→	Very Concerned
145 lessons	←	29 days off a year	←	85%	→	Significant impact on learning

### The impact on your child...

Your child misses out on valuable learning when they are absent, which may never be made up. This is true for children at nursery, throughout primary right up to the end of secondary school.

Children with **good** attendance perform better than those with **poor** attendance.

Your child's Primary education is just as important as their Secondary Education. Early Years lay the foundation.

Taking your child out of education teaches disrespect for the importance of learning.

Children often have social difficulties when they return after an extended absence. Friendships may have moved on and their self-confidence and well-being can be affected.

**Please support your child's future by ensuring you do not take them out of school during term time.**



## Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices Information for Parents

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period<sup>1</sup>. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

### Absences can have a lasting effect on learning

Missing a week of school means your child will miss around 25 hours of learning  
This creates gaps in their knowledge and could mean they will not meet their full potential

## LOST PROPERTY

Our lost property box is now placed in the pastoral office. If you think your child has lost something then please ask them to come and check.



### Celebrating students' successes



We are always looking to celebrate our students' successes in and out of school.

We work closely with the press, and it would be lovely to share some stories/ student achievements with our local community.

Why not email in at [office@whitworth.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:office@whitworth.lancs.sch.uk)

