



Newsletter

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

Autumn Term 1
Friday 20th September 2024

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Dear Parents/Carers,

What a busy and hugely successful few weeks we have had at school. I will do my best to try to summarise for you some of the great things that have been happening recently.

New Building Update

You will remember in my previous email that I gave a brief update on the progress with the new building. Sadly, I have to report that there are still plenty of snags that are still to be resolved. However, there has been some progress with the final phases of the project and we have eventually been given a handover date of 31st October. Hopefully, by this date, we will take full ownership of the additional car parking, PE foyer and PE canopy. It is frustrating that the newly seeded top fields will not be fully accessible for a further 12 months as we have to patiently wait for the seeding to fully take root.

Our newly installed public announcement system is now fully functional. It has an AI generated voice who is now known by our students as Amy. She conveniently reminds students when lessons are about to begin and how many seconds they have to get to their lessons before the registers close. This has been a relatively simple but hugely effective development. Lessons now all get off to a prompt start so that no learning time is wasted during the school day. Amy surprised the students when she wished them all a good weekend at 3pm last Friday.

Thank You to Mrs Banham

Our first full Governors meeting took place last week. During the meeting, Mrs Banham, one of our long standing Governors, informed us that she will be stepping down from her role. Some of you will remember Mrs Banham from her previous role as Headteacher's PA and Office Manager. She has now served the school in a variety of roles for over 21 years. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Mrs Banham for her dedicated service to our school over such a long period of time. I wish her well as she takes some time to enjoy retirement and to look after her new Grandson. Hopefully, we will still see Mrs Banham around, especially if I can talk her into coming back in the summer term to invigilate some of the GCSE examinations.

Open Evening

Our annual open day and open evening was an overwhelming success. We welcomed approximately 200 students during the day and we were visited by approximately 450 people in the evening. Sadly, we can only offer 130 places in each year group and they are allocated by the Lancashire Pupil Access team so it is very difficult for me to predict where the geographical cut off points will be. My advice to families is that if you want a place for your child, you will need to put WCHS as your first preference on the application forms.

We had well over 100 student helpers on the day and they were a credit to their school and to their families during the open evening. A special mention must go to our four brave year 7 students who took to the stage to speak to a packed audience in the main hall about their experiences of school so far. Congratulations to Alice, Isaac, Samuel and Alessia for representing our school so positively after only three weeks as a student.

Calendar

**September
2024**

20th September 2024

Inset Day
School closed to
students

24th September 2024

Y5 & Y6 Parent/Carer
Coffee Morning
10.00am-12.00pm

**October
2024**

1st October 2024

Y5 & Y6 Parent/Carer
SEND Coffee Morning
10.00am-12.00pm

9th October 2024

Y7 Settling in Evening
6.00pm-7.30pm

15th, 16th & 17th October 2024

Our Autumn Show
'Grease'
7.00pm start

18th October 2023

After School Closure for
Half Term



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Year 7s

Our new year 7 students continue to settle in well. They have made a great first impression on their teachers and we have high hopes for this year group. The year 7 students have recently completed their Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). They conducted themselves very well during these assessments. The CATs are used in a variety of ways by the teachers. The main purpose, however, is to ensure that we are correctly tailoring our educational offer for each student based on their individual abilities. For example, the CATs might help to show that a child needs additional SEND support whereas another may have high academic abilities and as such will need further stretch and challenge.

Please could I ask year 7 parents to keep your eye out for a letter from me inviting you to our Settling In Evening at 6pm on Wednesday 9th October.

Davis Cup PE Trip

A group of our PE students recently went to the AO Arena in Manchester to watch Great Britain versus Argentina. The matches were part of the Davis Cup competition, which is often referred to as the 'World Cup of Tennis'. It was a fantastic opportunity organised by Mr Cawley, which I was fortunate to attend with the students. It was very clear early on in the afternoon that some of our students did not fully understand how to score a tennis match. Therefore, Mr Cawley and I spent a lot of time explaining the rules to our students, much to the amusement of some of the other spectators who were sitting in the immediate vicinity. Sadly, Great Britain lost the tie. However, it was a great opportunity and a memorable afternoon. We even managed to have our photograph taken with Dan Evans on our way home from the event.



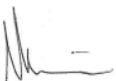
Visit From Our New MP

Our newly elected Member of Parliament, Andy McNae visited our school this week. He began his visit with a question and answer session hosted by our Senior Prefects. I was very impressed by the quality of questions that our students put to Andy during his visit. He was asked about the narrow curriculum which is currently imposed on 16 year olds, the OAP heating allowance, the necessity of food banks and a range of other topics. I'm glad Andy was in the hot-seat to answer their questions as they gave him quite an interrogation. After the session with our Senior Prefects, Andy was taken on a tour of our school building and met lots of our students in their respective lessons.

Year 11 Revision Evening

A quick reminder about the year 11 Revision Evening will be taking place on the evening of Wednesday 2nd October. This event is for Year 11 students and their parents/carers and will provide an overview of revision and study strategies along with specific guidance from subject areas that parents and carers can use to support their children. The event will open at 5:30pm and will be finished by 7:30pm.

Best wishes



Mr A Oliver
Headteacher

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about **FINAL FANTASY XIV**



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The video game Final Fantasy XIV launched in 2010, and, despite being critically panned, it saw an overhaul that has made it one of the biggest success stories in gaming. Its huge world, epic story and versatile combat system have continued to draw in new players, but there's a lot that trusted adults need to be aware of – not least the cost of paying monthly to play.

ALWAYS ONLINE

Final Fantasy XIV is an MMORPG, which stands for Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game. Much like World of Warcraft, players create a character in a chosen class and level up by completing quests to gain power and items. The game requires a constant internet connection, whether you're playing on PC, Mac, PlayStation or Xbox, and there's no option to play offline.

REGULAR EXPANSIONS

As with similar titles in the genre, players can purchase expansions to unlock additional content for the game. Those without the expansions will be locked out of certain new quests and activities, meaning that young people who play regularly will potentially have the next release earmarked on their calendar, ready to buy it as soon as possible.

IN-GAME PURCHASES & SUBSCRIPTION FEE

Users need to pay £8.99 per month to play Final Fantasy XIV, but there is a free trial. If someone stops paying, they'll lose access to their character (although they'll be able to pick up the payments again and resume where they left off). If a player forgets to cancel their payments, however, those subscription fees will continue rolling on automatically.

VOICE & TEXT CHAT

Final Fantasy XIV lets players send chat messages in-game or speak to each other over voice chat. On the one hand, that provides plenty of choice for how those enjoying the game can interact with their fellow fans. On the other hand, however, it's easier than in many games to receive unprompted messages from a stranger, with whom you constantly share your play space.

VIOLENCE

While Final Fantasy XIV has a fairly light tone throughout some of its quests, many involve killing enemies and sometimes even wild animals. The violence isn't especially strong – more comparable to a cartoon or anime style – but the act alone may make some children feel uncomfortable, if they're not yet able to separate fictional harm from the real kind.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

As with World of Warcraft, there's an element of addiction to Final Fantasy XIV. The gameplay loop can be quite engrossing, as minutes turn into hours and hours into days while playing alone or with friends. This can potentially lead to missing real-life events, a lack of interest in any activities not related to the game and procrastination around responsibilities like schoolwork.

FREE TRIAL

Advice for Parents & Educators

MANAGE PLAYTIME

Playtime limits are a great way to counter the addictive qualities of games like Final Fantasy XIV. They allow you discuss why it's still important to enjoy things outside of gaming while still letting a child enjoy playing online with their friends when it makes sense to do so. It's all well and good to have fun with a game, so long as they're able to step away and reconnect with the real world.

PLAY TOGETHER

The free trial makes it extremely easy to jump into Final Fantasy XIV and play alongside a child, provided they're old enough. Not only does that help you ensure that settings are adjusted for their privacy and safety, but it may also end up becoming a bonding experience for you both and any other family members that want to try it out.

MAKE USE OF THE FREE TRIAL

The Final Fantasy XIV free trial is a generous one, with no limits on how long someone can play until their character hits level 70. That's easily dozens of hours for a child to go through the game, complete quests, and see if they enjoy it before purchasing expansions or subscribing to a membership. They may well move on to something else before you need to spend so much as a penny.

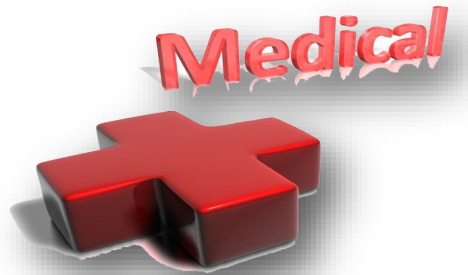
REMEMBER, IT'S A PEGI 16

Despite its often-relaxing nature, Final Fantasy XIV carries a PEGI 16 rating for violence and drugs (although the latter is due to a character smoking a pipe on occasion). There's minimal blood, but characters can attack enemies (and other players) with weapons and spells. Take a look at some gameplay videos to see if the content is appropriate for a younger player.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor-in-Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A longtime fan of online games, he's also a parent, and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has previously been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar and plenty more.





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.



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Attendance

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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 9th Sep - Friday 13th Sep)

We aim for at least **97%** attendance.
Here are the attendance figures for week ending 13th September 2024

Our Overall school attendance (years 7 - 11) was **96.53%**

Y7 = 98.60%

Y8 = 95.19%

Y9 = 96.01%

Y10 = 96.41%

Y11 = 96.09%



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.



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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 period¹. 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

Come and join in our PE after school clubs

Well done to our lovely Year 7 students who attended the netball session on their first week of starting WCHS. We are all looking forward to the competitions this year. Also it was great to see our year 7 and 8 girls at football practice. The weather was great and the girls did well. Open football training for year 7 boys is on Monday's 3-4pm and for year 8's Tuesday's 3-4pm. Open football training for year 7 and 8 girls is Thursday's 3-4pm We hope to see you there!



Extra-Curricular- Autumn Term 1



Physical Education Only

AFTER SCHOOL 3pm- 4pm	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
SPORTS HALL	BADMINTON Yr 8-11 Mrs Belham	NETBALL Yr 7 & 8 Miss Mcvarish Mrs Belham	GCSE TABLE TENNIS GCSE Only Mr Cawley Mr Hanvey	NETBALL Yr 9-11 Miss Mcvarish	FOOTBALL Staff vs Yr 11 Mr Cawley
FITNESS SUITE	FITNESS Yr 7 Miss Shepherd	FITNESS Yr 8 & 9 Mrs Lord	FITNESS Yr 10 & 11 Mr Hanvey		
FIELD	BOYS FOOTBALL OPEN TRAINING Yr 7 Mr Hanvey TEAM FOOTBALL PRACTICE Yr 8 Mr Cawley	BOYS FOOTBALL OPEN TRAINING Yr 8 Mr Hanvey TEAM FOOTBALL PRACTICE Yr 7 Mr Cawley		BOYS FOOTBALL MATCH NIGHT Yr 9-10 Mr Hanvey GIRLS FOOTBALL Yr 7 & 8 Mr Cawley	

PLEASE BE AWARE CLUBS ARE SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION FOR SCHOOL FIXTURES OR WEATHER

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



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO MANAGE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

Disagreement is a natural part of human interaction. This can seem particularly true when dealing with the sensitive issues that arise for secondary-aged pupils. This guide brings you 10 top tips which can help prevent conflicts arising or mitigate their impacts when they do.

1 INSPIRE RESPONSIBILITY

The best approaches to conflict resolution are restorative. This means that rather than adults imposing their own solutions on children who have had a disagreement, they should work with them. Allowing them to handle it can feel empowering to young people and will hopefully teach them to manage their own disputes as they move towards adult life.

2 ACTIVELY LISTEN

Remember to give every child the opportunity to voice their opinion, regardless of their age, stage of development, special educational needs, or other individual requirements. This can be done using a variety of different communication methods. For example, some children find it easier to express how they're feeling using pictures and drawings, while some prefer to write their ideas down.

3 BE CURIOUS

Demonstrating how to approach conflicts with a mature and empathetic mindset can set a good example to children, which can prove a useful skill for them later in life. Model this by asking inquisitive-yet-respectful questions about the issue at hand. Really try to understand where all parties are coming from, and share information between them when and where appropriate. This should encourage young people to mirror your behaviour, teaching them to be curious about the other sides of a conflict, and thus being more willing to hear them out.

4 PROMOTE DIFFERENCES

Children and young people may come from a range of different backgrounds and cultures or have protected characteristics which may cause them to see things from various angles. Having a school and community culture which celebrates and embraces diversity in all things – including diversity of opinion – means people are more likely to feel heard and understood.

5 BE SUPPORTIVE

Discussions may be sensitive or, in some cases, even trigger negative emotions. Pupils may have mixed feelings about the issue at hand. They could be nervous or anxious before even coming to the table to talk about it. Try and create a space where all parties feel safe, welcome and comfortable. Allow breaks and time-outs if the conversation gets heated, to prevent anyone from saying something they might later regret.

6 MENTALLY PREPARE

Think of how you can approach the conflict in a calm and regulated manner. Consider taking some extra time to prepare beforehand and finding somewhere quiet to relax. Even if you're not directly involved with the conflict, mediating can be a stressful experience in its own right. Make sure you're hydrated, fed and comfortable, and do the same for the young people involved. These may seem like insignificant factors, but it's important to remember that physical discomfort can trigger dysregulation, which can make it much harder to have a calm, productive conversation.

7 GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

Make sure you have all the facts, figures and timelines of the situation prior to the discussion. This should be done as objectively as possible with the aim of resolving the ongoing issue. You may want to risk assess any problems that may arise and look for possible solutions during your preparation time.

8 STICK TO THE POINT

Make the reason for, and purpose of, any meetings or communications clear prior to setting them up. Provide an agenda. Act as a neutral chairperson who can keep all parties on track. Make sure everyone has a chance to air their concerns about the issue being discussed and try to avoid talking about unrelated incidents. Close off with some action points, detailing what everyone can do to resolve the conflict.

9 BE SOLUTION FOCUSED

It's often said that the art of diplomacy is about giving others ladders to climb down. This means the main aim of any meeting or correspondence should be finding mutually acceptable and amicable solutions. Parents, carers, teachers and pupils should be aware there may need to be a compromise for the common good – and, most importantly, the good of the children you're supporting.

10 DON'T IGNORE OR AVOID CONFLICT

No one benefits from allowing concerns and grievances to fester, as this can lead to further division and mistrust, and ultimately doesn't help the children involved. Use our tips to open meaningful lines of communication. These should help you find a suitable resolution and minimise the number of conflicts you're faced with mediating overall.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a neurodivergent former SENCO and advisory teacher. She founded her company, Neuroteachers, to improve inclusion for neurodivergent people. She works with nurseries, schools, colleges and businesses providing consultancy, training and mentoring to create belonging and understanding for people with the full range of neurotypes.



#WakeUpWednesday®

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