Newsletter

Autumn Term 2
Friday 13th November 2026

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www.wchs.co

Dear parents and carers,

School Trip to Paris

During the half term break, 50 students attended an unforgettable trip to Paris. The travel to France was all on time, followed by a smooth hotel check-in that kept everyone together on one floor. Their first full day was packed with magic at Disneyland, where our students navigated the bustling park seamlessly and checked in responsibly with staff throughout the day. Day two brought the iconic sights of Paris to life, featuring a scenic River Seine cruise, a vibrant local food market, and a rewarding trek up to the beautiful Sacré-Cœur just in time for sunset, followed by a wonderful dinner in a cobbled courtyard filled with street artists. Despite some predictable London traffic on the drive back north, the group made great time on a smooth return ferry crossing and arrived safely back at Whitworth by 21:45. I would like to extend a huge thank you to the staff who made this fantastic excursion possible, and to our students for representing our school so brilliantly abroad. A huge thanks must go to Mrs Murray who organised the trip and to Mr Duxbury, Mrs Turner, Mr Sheldon and Mrs Craven who all gave up part of their half-term holiday to supervise the students.





New Parent Governor

I am delighted to welcome Mrs Birtwistle as our new Parent Governor. We are incredibly fortunate to have Mrs Birtwistle join the governing body, particularly as she brings a wealth of expertise as a safeguarding specialist. Her professional background will be invaluable in helping us maintain a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all our children.

Calendar

December 2026

Wednesday 2nd
Y11 Parents Evening 4-6pm

Wednesday 9th
Y7 Panto

Wednesday 16th
Xmas Hat/ Jumper Day

Wednesday 16th
Christmas Concert 6.30pm

Friday 18th
SCHOOL CLOSES

January 2027

Monday 4th

SCHOOL RE-OPENS

Internal Examinations - Year 7 CATs

During the last fortnight, we've had lots of examinations taking place in school. We started off with Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) for our new year 7 cohort last Tuesday. The purpose of the CATs is to assess students' developed abilities and academic potential across four key areas: verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, and spatial reasoning. Because these tests evaluate how a student thinks and learns rather than what they have memorised, schools use the resulting data as a reliable baseline to understand each child's unique strengths and learning styles, especially since it is independent of Key Stage 2 primary school SATs results. We then use these insights to set realistic yet challenging academic targets, allocate intervention resources, and build balanced teaching groups, ensuring every student is accurately supported from the start of their secondary school journey.

Internal Examinations - Year 11 Mocks

As soon as the Year 7s had completed their CATs in the exam hall, we moved swiftly onto the Year 11 mocks. We have all been impressed by the diligent preparation that our students have put into these examinations. It has been good to see such determination, resilience and brilliant behaviour in the exam hall. It is hoped that this process will help our students to overcome their worries about external exams in the future. I look forward to sharing their progress with parents/carers on the evening of 2nd December.

Internal Examinations - Year 10 Mid-Year Tests

The Year 10 mid-year exams will begin on the 7th December and will finish on the 16th December. The revision materials for these exams are available on our website. Parents/carers are urged to support their children by helping them to make a revision timetable in the weeks leading up to these exams.

Remembrance

I take great pride in how deeply Remembrance Day is respected and observed by both students and staff at Whitworth Community High School.

Over the weekend, many of our students participated in acts of remembrance across Rossendale, Rochdale, and beyond, primarily through their involvement with various uniformed organisations. Pictured below, alongside the Mayor of Rochdale, is Olivia M, who proudly represented the Sea Cadets. You will also see Alessia B, Odhran M and Ronan M who performed in the parade in Rochdale. Also featured are our Head Girl, Millie H, and Deputy Head Students, Murishe M and Ted P. These three student leaders laid a wreath at the Whitworth Cenotaph on Sunday morning.

Following these weekend tributes, our whole school community came together on Wednesday morning for our annual Remembrance assemblies. As always, our students behaved impeccably, showing immense respect as we collectively honoured those who gave their lives in service to our country.







Student Success

Air Cadet Henry E was honoured to represent his squadron on a tour of Belgium including parading at Menin Gate. He was one of around 30 cadets from Greater Manchester to be selected to take part in the tour and the only one from his squadron. At Menin Gate in Ypres, every evening the town observes an Act of Remembrance, the Last Post is sounded and silence is observed followed by Reveille. Henry joined the cadets two years ago because he was thinking about a career in the RAF. He is now planning to continue his studies up to 18 and then enlisting. Later this month, he will be flying a plane at RAF Leeming, when he is hoping to earn his Blue Wings.



School Council

Our School Council met again this week to address a variety of topics raised by their peers. On the agenda were several important issues, including uniform policy, hairstyles, school dinners, Duke of Edinburgh participation, and the environmental impact of chewing gum around the school. I often wish I could record these sessions to showcase just how articulate and thoughtful our students truly are. It is a privilege to watch these future leaders master the art of debate and collaboration.

GCSE Awards Evening

On Wednesday evening, we held our annual GCSE Awards Evening at the Ashcroft. It was a joyful, celebratory evening during which we publicly recognised the achievements of our most recent alumni. It was a pleasure to welcome Councillor Louise Burton, Mayor of Whitworth, who presented the subject award winners with their prizes. We also welcomed Mrs Caroline Harrington Milne as our guest speaker. In her address she spoke to the students and their parents/carers about overcoming barriers to success, resilience and aspirations for the future. Mrs Harrington Milne also presented our major award winners with their trophies. Thanks to everyone who was involved, especially Miss Rawstron and Miss Robinson who did all of the preparatory work for this event.











Sports Update

The sports updates begin with our cross-country runners who did really well at the district event at Marl Pits last week. Our Year 7 boys and girls teams both finished an impressive 3rd overall, while the Year 8/9 boys and girls teams placed a brilliant 4th overall. We had some great individual achievements, with Leo F taking 2nd place in the Year 7 Boys race, Lexi S finishing 3rd in the Year 7 Girls race, and Mason H claiming 4th in the Year 8/9 Boys race. Well done to everyone who took part and represented the school so brilliantly. A special mention must go to our site manager, Mr Blore who stepped in to drive the students to the event in the school minibus with very little prior notice.

Our Year 7 and 8 netball teams kicked off their season with their first matches of the year away at TVLA. While neither team was victorious this time around, the games provided excellent experience for the season ahead, and we are incredibly proud of how well our players represented the school.

Well done to Tommy D and Charlie H on representing the district football team in their opening county matches. The boys faced a tough start with a narrow 2-1 loss against Chorley, but they bounced back brilliantly in their second match to secure a 3-1 victory over Burnley Utd. The highlight of the tournament was a fantastic "Whitworth goal" which saw Charlie cross the ball perfectly for Tommy to finish and score the team's second goal. Mr Cawley was very proud of both boys and particularly praised the “Whitworth goal”.

Our Year 11B boys lost 2–1 to TVLA on Tuesday evening, though the sportsmanship they displayed mattered far more than the result. The TVLA squad includes three girls who have previously been discouraged from playing due to sexist remarks from opposing teams. However, TVLA's teacher praised our boys to Mr Cawley for their total respect, which ensured the girls felt comfortable taking part. I could not be prouder, and the team has been rewarded for their exemplary conduct.

On Thursday, a group of our students took part in a very inclusive event. The event was called PAN Bowling. 15 schools were in attendance. It was wonderful to see students who might not usually have the chance to represent their school in a sporting fixture enjoy competing as part of a team.

The last of the sporting events to report on is the under 16s girls Lancashire Cup tie against local rivals Haslingden, which took place here yesterday evening. Our girls played really well and secured a 3-1 win, meaning that they will now progress to the quarter-finals.









Singing Showcase

Three of our fabulous singers, Gabriel C-L, Murishe M, and Ellie C did a fantastic job representing our school by performing solos at the Rochdale Music Service Secondary Showcase. The event took place yesterday evening at at the church of St Mary's in the Baum. Mrs Goff went along to support and she was really impressed with our three students. I look forward to hearing them in our Christmas concert in December. Our students are pictured below with Emmie L who also performed at the event representing the Music Service.



Music Trip to The Bridgewater Hall

At the time of this article being finalised, our music students will be attending a lunchtime recital at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. The recital was specifically chosen by Mrs Goff as it features some performers who are closely linked to our school. Mike Cavanagh (former brass teacher at Whitworth who now works at The Purcell School of Music in London) and Jamie Smith (our current brass teacher) are two members of this world-renowned brass quartet. They regularly perform across the country and around the world. '*With a unique concept and configuration, A4 brass combines traditional brass band instruments with contemporary elements never seen before in this medium.'* The concert will be an amazing and inspiring experience for our brass students.

School Raffle

Congratulations to Sophie B in Year 10 who has approached several local businesses to seek support for a raffle to raise funds to keep our minibus on the road and eventually purchase a new one. As you can see from the picture below, there are a range of quite impressive prizes. Therefore, I urge families to support this initiative if you can afford to do so. Tickets can be purchased for cash in school during form time. Alternatively, parents/carers can buy tickets online using ParentPay. Many thanks again to Sophie for leading on this initiative and thank you to all of the businesses who have provided prizes.



Best wishes



Mr A Oliver
Headteacher

Family Hubs Network Rossendale Partners

Rossendale Newsletter, November 2026

Making a Difference

Young people in East Lancashire, and those concerned about a young person's wellbeing, can access free online mental health advice through CYPMH East's "Attend Anywhere" drop-in service. The virtual sessions offer advice, guidance and support from mental health professionals in an accessible online setting.

Upcoming sessions, on Wednesdays:

4/11/26 - 1pm to 3pm
11/11/26 - 3pm to 5pm
18/11/26 - 5pm to 7pm
25/11/26 - 1pm to 3pm

For joining details, scan the QR code below



New Initiatives

Could you spare a few hours to help your local community? Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust is recruiting volunteers to support children, young people and families across the area.

As a Community Connector or Youth Support Volunteer, you can help people access local support, share your knowledge and make a positive difference in your community. Full training and support are provided.

For more information, scan the QR code on the poster or contact your local Family Hub.

Supporting Local Families

Autism & ADHD Advocates CIC has expanded its free online support programme, adding new weekday, evening and Saturday morning sessions to make support more accessible for families and individuals. The sessions are open to parents, carers and neurodivergent people, offering practical advice, guidance and a greater understanding of autism and ADHD.

Participants can also suggest topics they would like to explore in future sessions. Attendance is free, no diagnosis is required, and cameras can remain off if preferred.

For more information or to book a place, visit:

www.autismadhdadvocates.org.

A valuable and accessible source of support for neurodivergent individuals and their families.

Working Together

Starting this November, families with children aged 0-5 are invited to join Little Explorers @ Hillside, a fun and welcoming toddler group held at:

Hillside Nursery, Cedar Avenue, BB4 5NH.

Featuring songs, stories, play activities and opportunities to make new friends, the sessions are designed to support young children's learning, development and confidence through play.

The group runs from 9:15am to 10:30am, starting 3rd November, and there is no need to book - simply turn up and join the fun! For enquiries, contact the Family Hubs!

For more information, get in touch today:
Rossendalefamilyhub@lancashire.gov.uk

Or call us on **01772 536 873**