



HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL

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October 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the first newsletter of this academic year.

I am delighted to report that our new Year 7 have made a fantastic start and it was great to see so many parents come into school recently to have a discussion with tutors about how their children have settled in. We also saw a large number of Year 11 parents attend the recent revision skills session, mirroring the guidance the students have been given to help them to prepare for their mock exams. Parental engagement is one of the most important factors in predicting the life chances of young people and your support and interest is both welcomed and vital.

There have been lots of other events and activities. Our football and netball teams have made excellent starts to their seasons and we have seen plenty of trips, activities, fieldwork and an excellent Year 8 residential. We were beginning to think that Mr Neil should just move to Swanage permanently.

On a personal note, thank you to colleagues, students and parents for all of the kind words and actions over the past two months. It has really helped me during a very difficult time.

Attendance

As I mentioned in my summer newsletter, this has been a key priority for us as we strive to return to the excellent attendance levels that we enjoyed prior to the pandemic. At the risk of repetition, young people have a fundamental right to education and it is important (and a legal requirement) that students attend school every day.

Any individual attendance below 95% is a cause for concern and will have a negative impact on progress. I evidenced this recently with our Year 11 students where I showed that poor attenders were currently performing, on average, over one grade below expectations for *each* of their GCSEs. They were surprised. I was not and understand the potential implications for their future life chances.

The bar to not attend school needs to be set very high and youngsters will take a cue from their parents. Please do everything you can to make sure that you maintain the standard. For example, a cold is not a reason to stay at home. This also includes making non-urgent medical or dental appointments outside school hours if possible – exactly the same as an employer would expect.

I have already received complaints from parents where we have started to be more robust in querying and chasing absences – especially where there have been unauthorised holidays and other time off. We are not trying to be antagonistic but I am afraid that this will continue and I will happily accept the criticism if the outcome is improved attendance in the future.

Excellence • Aspiration • Challenge • Values • Community

A Message from our School Nurse

I just wanted to remind you about this important service available to your children:

“Hello. My name is Heather. I am a Specialist Community Public Health School Nurse. I currently hold a fortnightly School Nurse Clinic in Warneford School, usually on a Tuesday. Students can come and see me for support, advice and guidance for a range of physical and emotional health issues related to:

- Healthy relationships including family and friendship worries
- Sexual health
- Body image
- Anxiety and emotional well-being
- Anger management
- Self-harm
- Alcohol and drug use
- Smoking and vaping
- Healthy lifestyle including sleep, physical activity, diet and exercise
- Medical worries

Although most of my referrals are through the school, parents and students can refer to School Nursing by sending an email to SNN@swindon.gov.uk.

The School Nurse Clinic is a private and confidential space. I will not discuss information outside of the School Nurse Clinic without student consent, unless I am concerned about a risk of serious harm.”

Community Request

The beginning and end of the school day are inevitably busy and, as the days get shorter, we do tend to get more students being driven to and from school. In general, the main entrance at the front of the school is best avoided if possible – it’s far easier and less disruptive to drop youngsters off in town and get them to walk the short distance to our back entrance and vice versa on the way home.

Having said that, residents of King’s Avenue have politely asked that parents use the Eastrop Car Park rather than drive down and sometimes block their very narrow road. We obviously can’t police this but it does seem a reasonable request.

OFSTED Response

As promised, I would like to give parents the opportunity to see what actions the school has made to address the findings of the report and ask any questions.

Rather than impose a format, if this is something you would be interested in then please complete this short form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/nJgHwmvZan>

I will then collate answers and get back directly to those who have responded.

Upcoming Calendar

31/10/22	Staff Training Day 3 – no students in school
1/11/22	Start of term for students (Week B)
	Year 11 Careers Guidance meetings until 18/11
2/11/22	Years 10/11 Army & RAF Careers Presentation
3/11/22	Year 8 Careers & Enterprise Workshops
	4.30pm – 7.30pm Year 11 Parents' Evening
7/11/22	Year 11 MFL Mock Speaking Exams to 8/10
9/11/22	Student Committee meetings
10/11/22	Year 10 Art Trip to National Gallery
11/11/22	Coleshill Charity Non-Uniform Day
14/11/22	Swindon Youth Festival of Literature all week – multiple activities
	KS3 Music Trip to Wyvern Theatre
	Years 9-11 SEND Provision Review meetings this week
15/11/22	Years 7/8 Girls' Swindon Town Football Tournament
	GCSE Music Trip to Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
16/11/22	Music Trip to Albert Hall
18/11/22	Year 10 Alcohol Awareness Session
21/11/22	Year 11 Mock Exams to 2/12
23/11/22	6.30pm Year 8 Music Showcase
5/12/22	Year 11 Art/Photography mocks this week
	House Christmas meals this week
6/12/22	Year 9 STEM Trip
7/12/22	Community Choir Singing
8/12/22	Yearley Trust Visit
12/12/22	Year 11 Mock Interviews
14/12/22	Senior Citizens' Christmas Party
15/12/22	Year 11 Mock Exam results issued to students
16/12/22	End of Term 2 – finish at 12.35pm

I hope you and your families have a restful Autumn break.

Yours faithfully,



Andy Steele
Headteacher