

Our ref: MMC/NWI

13 September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Our young people in the academy have been superb this week and we have seen a really calm and purposeful atmosphere. It has been particularly pleasing to see our KS3 electives start this week with some exciting plans in the works and a palpable 'buzz' around the academy on Wednesday.

Electives

We had a superb start to our KS3 electives this Wednesday. 27 electives were up and running, catering to over 600 students either in classrooms, the school fields, the MUGA, at Edlington Pit Wood, Allegro Dance Studio, the local Fire Station and the Doncaster Rowing Club. Students were full of energy and excitement, yet the atmosphere when they moved around school and on corridors during period 3 was as calm and ordered as any other day. Feedback from staff and students has been incredibly positive and we cannot wait to see how the electives progress over the coming weeks with additional off-site visits including Seven Studios, the Doncaster Golf Club and some of our feeder primary schools. The electives have been a year in the making and mark the start of a new journey for Sir Thomas Wharton Academy. We are determined to give our students a vast array of positive experiences outside the classroom; where they visit places they haven't been before, gain new skills and passions and make memories for life. Please look out for our article in the Free Press next week, plus upcoming social media posts and videos to see what wonderful activities our students are involved in.

Teaching and Learning

Y7 Transition Survey

At the end of this month, we will be sending out a survey to all year 7 parents to ask for feedback on the transition process. We conducted this survey last year and were able to respond to suggestions and make improvements.

Over the next year, we will ask for your input on a range of school issues to create a regular cycle of surveys allowing us to measure impact over time.

There will be a prize draw for a £40 ASDA voucher for those who participate in the survey. Winners will be announced, along with the preliminary findings of the survey, within ten days of the survey deadline. The survey opens at the end of September and takes no longer than five minutes to complete. You will be asked whether you give permission for us to contact you for a follow up discussion: a sample will be selected for a qualitative follow-up conversation to further explore lines of enquiry raised by the survey.

KS4 Achieve

Our KS4 students have made an impressive start to the year, demonstrating their resilience up to the very final minute of Period 4 to ensure they make the most of every second of the school day.

We will build on these high levels of investment next week, with year 11 students accessing a Science Achieve Day on Monday 16 September, which will focus on one of the required practicals and is therefore essential for all year 11 students.



Both year 10 and year 11 students will have access to Tassomai from next week, which is a GCSE revision app designed to support students' independent revision for English, Science, Geography, History and Computer Science.

In the coming weeks, year 11 students will also access a number of live trials for Mathematics, English and Science, which will support students with refining examination technique in preparation for the year 11 November trial examinations.

Events

STWA Athletics Championships

We are looking forward to our athletics championships at the Eco Power Stadium. We are excited to be celebrating the talents of our year 8 to 11 students with their parents at the Keepmoat athletics stadium next week on the evening of Friday 20 September 2024. Students have been invited to compete in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay on the floodlit track with cheerleading and dance displays during the interludes. We are very much looking forward to celebrating individual successes at the end of the evening in the event's award ceremony.

Year 11 Revision Guide Evening

We cannot wait to welcome our year 11 students and their parents/carers to our year 11 Revision Evening on Tuesday 15 October, which includes:

- A presentation from leaders about year 11, including key dates and events.
- A classroom-based session with form tutors about how best to revise.
- Every student receiving a bespoke pack of revision materials worth over £100.

The event will last approximately one hour, starting with a presentation at either 4:15 pm or 5:15 pm. Please use this form to register your attendance before Friday 27 September:

<https://forms.office.com/e/KCweJH0xV3>

Standards

What a fantastic start we have seen to the new school year. We have already given out **21,735** positive points on ClassCharts and it has been great to see students have settled back into their normal routines around school. This week, we have been practicing our line up from lessons with students during tutor time to support the calm and safe transition around the school site.

Attendance

Attendance in our second week has been equally as strong as in our first week. At Sir Thomas Wharton Academy, we encourage all students to strive for 100% attendance: every day and every lesson counts.

We would like to remind parents that the DfE have tightened their policies on holidays during term time. This year, parents who wish to take a student out of school for a week during term time could receive a fine of £160 (per parent). This is to ensure that students do not miss vital education and are in school learning.

Rewards

Our students have made a fantastic start to the year and many have gained several achievement points for their hard work in lessons, during electives and in enrichment. We will run our first series of Golden Ticket events during half term two, and students will receive an invite to these if they have secured a net of 180 positive points and 92% attendance.



NGRT Reading Tests

Developing students into confident, well-read readers, is a key aspect of our broad and balanced curriculum here at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy. To monitor and support our year 7 to 10 students, we are continuing to invest in The NGRT reading assessment test, which will generate a report about your child's reading ability. Key data from the report will be shared with all staff, so teachers can ensure they are planning and delivering lesson content which is challenging yet appropriate for our students. We will test your child biannually so we can track their progress and offer specific intervention where needed. The next round of reading tests will take place week commencing Monday 16 September 2024. As an academy, we will support your child to develop their confidence, enjoyment and reading skills through their English and reading lessons and the wider curriculum, as every teacher at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy is a teacher of reading.

Transport

With priority boarding taking place on the Stagecoach 552 service at the end of the academy day, I am pleased to report that all students wishing to board this service over the past week have been able to do so.

Please remember, the timetable for the Advanced Travel Conisbrough service in a morning to the academy changes with effect from Monday 16 September. The new timetable has been sent out in a separate communication and all parents/carers have been telephoned this week.

Year 5 and 6 Open Evening

If you have children who are in years 5 or 6 and are considering schools for their secondary education, come along to our Year 5 and 6 Open Evening on Thursday 3 October 2024 to see the exceptional learning experiences on offer at STWA. This evening will be a fantastic opportunity for prospective parents to see the academy and to meet the dedicated team of staff before making the important decision of which secondary school is right for their child. You will be able to book to see one of the presentations via the Microsoft forms link on the school website.

Please note that there was an error on last week's newsletter and the date of our Year 5 and 6 Open Evening is Thursday 3 October 2024; I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald
Principal

