

Our ref: MMC/NWI

11 October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

We are incredibly proud of how students are progressing in Half Term 1. The Year 7 students have started fantastically and continue to impress us as a year group and our Y10 & Y11 students have a superb focus on GCSE examinations and have taken to their additional Period 4 lessons extremely well.

We continue to show prospective parents around the academy on 'Golden Ticket' tours and it really is such a positive that we can allow parents to visit the school at any time, we are confident in what they will see.

## **Teaching and Learning**

### Y7 Parental Transition Survey

Thank you to all of you who completed our transition survey which closed earlier today. Your feedback is invaluable to us to ensure that all students have a smooth start to secondary school feeling as supported as possible. Overall, more than 60% of our year 7 parents and carers responded and as a token of our thanks, we entered all of those, in to our survey prize draw for a £40 ASDA voucher. The lucky winner is: Natalie Squires; please call into our Reception at the academy to collect your prize.

Our initial findings indicated:

- Parents and carers are blown away with our electives offer.
- Primary visits and induction days which take place throughout year 6 have allowed students to feel supported in starting secondary school.
- Communication needs to be clearer at the start of the year around homework, ClassCharts and ParentPay.

Next, we will select a sample of parents and carers for a follow-up conversation to clarify and further explore lines of enquiry raised by the survey.

We look forward to sharing a more detailed summary of our findings and our intended next steps soon.

### Sparx

Sparx mathematics homework is set for all students in years 7 to 11 on a Friday at 9:00 am and is due in on a Thursday at 7:00 am. The majority of computers and tablets will be fine for use, including laptops, desktops, iPads and other tablets, but they do need to be connected to the internet. All students should aim for 100% completion; watching the available videos when needed. If required, a guide showing how to log in has been sent out via Class Charts. Students can access computers in Homework club afterschool should they wish. If you have any issues with accessing Sparx, please do not hesitate to contact: [m.harvey@stwacademy.com](mailto:m.harvey@stwacademy.com).

### Tassomai

Last week was another superb week from year 10 and year 11 in terms of Tassomai investment, with over 92% of students accessing the revision app to achieve their weekly goals in English, Science, Geography, History and Computer Science. This resulted in a total of over 292 hours of quizzing across both year groups.

## **Sports Fixtures**

This week saw the first fixture for our year 9 boys in the second round of the National Cup, in which we welcomed South Axholme to Sir Thomas Wharton Academy. In a very competitive fixture, we took an early 2-0 lead however South Axholme managed to earn two goals themselves, taking the fixture into penalties. Following some nervous moments, with a couple of misses for both teams, we managed to come through winners after sudden death.



A special mention to our goalkeeper, who made an outstanding save, by diving to his left-hand side, to send Sir Thomas Wharton Academy into the draw for the Third Round.

On Thursday 24 October 2024, years 7 to 10 will be participating in the first of the Maltby Learning Trust Games events of Football at Wath Academy.

Our next Netball fixture is on Monday 21 October away at Don Valley.

## **Enrichment**

### World Mental Health Day

This week, we celebrated World Mental Health Day by launching this year's Sixth Form Mentors. Our post-16 students provide support and guidance for students in key stage 3, under the direction of our Inclusion Manager, Miss Mckie. Miss Mckie has provided the Sixth Form Mentors with training and support and we hope this will help to support our younger students.

### Year 7 Theatre Visit.

As part of our Sir Thomas Wharton Academy pledge to ensure all students visit the theatre, we are excited to announce that all students in year 7 have been invited to CAST theatre in Doncaster on 17 December to watch a professional pantomime production of Jack and the Beanstalk. The trip is fully funded by the academy, so if you have a child in year 7, please complete the short consent form which has been sent via ClassCharts.

## **Events**

### Better Workers Better Learners

Over the last few weeks, Year 9 students have been applying for positions on the Better Learners, Better Workers (BLBW) programme for this year. This gives students the opportunity to meet with employers and undertake projects related to construction, engineering or health and social care sectors.

Every student wrote an application outlining their skills and qualities and eighteen of those were selected for interview with Mr McDonald, Mr Walker and Ms Ward, one of the BLBW representatives. The students were understandably nervous but spoke incredibly articulately about what they wanted to gain from the programme and what they felt their strengths and weaknesses are.

Ten students have now been selected to represent the school on the programme and will have their first trip to The Cutlers Hall in Sheffield on Tuesday 22 October. A massive congratulations is due to all of them.

### Year 11 Securing Success Evening

We look forward to welcoming year 11 students and their parents/carers to our year 11 Securing Success Evening on Tuesday 15 October. The event will last approximately one hour, starting with a presentation at either 4:15 pm or 5:15 pm, which is then followed by a revision workshop with form tutors. All students will also receive a bespoke set of revision guides worth over £100.

### Year 7 Investment in Learning Evening

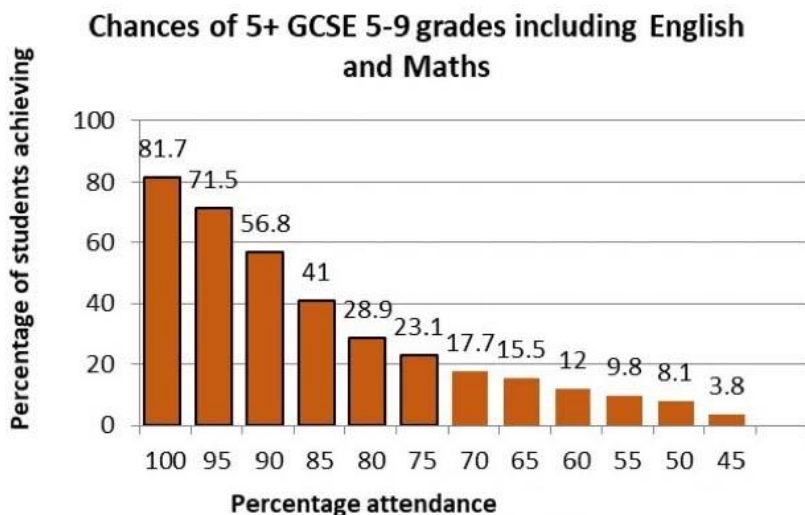
On Tuesday 22 October we have our Year 7 Investment in Learning Evening. Parents/carers have been contacted by their child's form tutor to have their face-to-face appointment to discuss the current investment of their child during this first half term. This meeting is a great chance for parents and carers to ask any questions they may have and get a real insight into the hard work that their child has put in since starting in September. After the appointment, parents/carers will be invited to attend the Enrichment Fayre, in which all 22 Enrichment Clubs have a stall detailing their amazing offer. Students will be given an Enrichment Timetable to build and sign up to all their after-school clubs. The launch of all Enrichment clubs will be in half term 2.

## **Attendance**

Supporting and ensuring your child's attendance to school is the single biggest impact you can have on a young person's education.



Below is a table of average grades at GCSE compared to a child's attendance using the last few years of data across the country (not just at STWA). From this table you will see that a child averaging 90% (19 lost school days over a year) attendance only has a 56.8% chance of achieving 5+ in English and Maths, compared to 81.7% for a student who has 100% attendance. This drops even lower when a child has 85% attendance.



Please do ensure that students are at school each day and learning when possible. Things such as a cold, cough, sore throat etc. are not reasons to keep a young person off school and we would always encourage you to send them in.

### Parents and Community Advisory Board

To enable us to reflect on the areas of strength and the opportunities for development within our school, our Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) meets once per term with members of staff and the Senior Leadership team.

The PCAB has a dual purpose:

- It allows parents/carers and members of the community to provide feedback to Leaders on current systems, successes, and areas for development.
- It is an opportunity for the Academy to provide updates to our members on the progress we are making and share early thinking about upcoming developments.

Our first meeting of this academic year will be held next week on Thursday 17 October from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm.

If you would like to join our PCAB, please email [admin@stwacademy.com](mailto:admin@stwacademy.com).

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald  
Principal

