

Our ref: MMC/NWI

7 March 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

This week has seen our year 11 students begin their trial exams. They are performing fantastically well and the process of exams at the academy now feels 'normal.' We work hard from year 10 on small marginal gains that make the process feel part of exams habits, which include sitting in the same seat, having the same equipment, sweets being given halfway through and the tables being laid out in the same way. The walk to the exams is thought out with messages lining the way with staff smiling and reinforcing positive messages. We are proud of the way that year 11 are performing.

Last week's South Yorkshire Athletics Championships taking place at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield was run by STWA staff for other schools in Doncaster to compete and it always gives a sense of pride that we are so heavily involved in the sporting offer for Doncaster schools.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11 Trial Examinations

Our year 11 students have made a strong start to the final round of trial examinations in English Language, Music, Food, Design and Technology, Polish, Mathematics, History, English Literature, Geography, French, Business Studies and Biology. Attendance has been excellent to all the examinations, and we are pleased to see most students attending the Pre-Achieve sessions from 7:30 am, where teachers are available to support with final preparations and to ensure students are fuelled with tea and toast for the day ahead. We wish students a restful weekend so that they are ready for their second week of trial examinations but also remind them that Twilight Achieve Sessions are running the evening before every examination from 6:00 to 6:45 pm and 7:00 to 7:45 pm to revisit key topics and share vital hints and tips.

Tassomai

It was another week of fantastic investment in Tassomai last week, with year 10 students once again completing over 100 hours of quizzing and year 11 students completing over 110 hours of quizzing on the GCSE revision app.

Each week, our highest performers in year 10 are rewarded with queue jump passes and students in years 10 and 11 with the highest Tassomai points will be rewarded with driving school places in our next round of STWA Driving School on Thursday 27 March.

Sparx Mathematics

To date, we have completed over 400,000 personalised questions at school, with 200 students increasing their challenge level in the past week. We are close to 5000 hours of personalised learning and so a small push this week should see us over the benchmark. We would like to encourage all students to practise their times table fluency using the app. A reminder that all tasks are set on Friday and due in Thursday.



Events

Year 12 Geography Visit

On Tuesday 4 March, our year 12 Geography students visited the Lake District to experience locations which have been affected by glaciation. Students used a range of strategies to collect data which will be used as part of their NEA.

World Book Day

Throughout the week, we have celebrated World Book Day by hosting several competitions that we launched with students during Monday's tutor time. Students were asked to complete a World Book Day bingo, which encouraged them to visit different departments to ask their teachers about literature. They were also asked to create short reviews that will be displayed in our local Waterstones in Doncaster city centre. Students have completed short story openings as well as recreating book covers of their favourite books!

On Wednesday 5 March, we hosted a staff Book Swap and invited staff from across the academy to bring in a book that they would like to swap. Staff celebrated a love of reading whilst enjoying a hot drink and cake!

On Thursday 6 March, staff across departments shared with students their favourite books or what they are currently reading. Students in KS3, who are fully invested in English and reading, were invited to a World Book Day workshop where they learnt how to develop a fantasy novel - they created their own worlds, maps, protagonists and antagonists as part of the workshop. It was brilliant to see so many students invested in reading and being imaginative. We also hosted a student Book Swap at break and lunch time for all students including KS5 - the turnout was phenomenal and truly reflected the power of literature!

Badminton

On Tuesday 11 March, selected students from years 7 to 10 will attend the All England badminton championships at the Birmingham Utilita Arena. The All England remains the most prestigious event in the badminton calendar.

Year 12 and 13 Parents' Evening

Parents' evening will be held on Tuesday 11 March between 3:30pm and 6:30pm. Parents/Carers have received a letter via ClassCharts with the links to book appointments with teachers at both Sir Thomas Wharton Academy and Maltby Academy. The link to book went live on Monday 3 March at 9:00 am.

Robin Hood Pantomime

You thought the pantomime season was over? Oh no it isn't! On Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 March Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood is coming to Sir Thomas Wharton Academy. With a cast of enthusiastic thespians, we aim to put on a hilarious performance with all the troupes you would expect; a brilliant baddie, a dazzling dame, a menagerie of merry men and lots of audience participation. Do not miss out – tickets are available via parent pay and reception.

UK University and Apprenticeship Search

On Wednesday 12 March, all year 12 students will attend the UK University and Apprenticeship Search event at the University of Sheffield to explore options after sixth form. Students must attend tutor as normal at 8:30 am; the transport will depart at 9:30 am. The visit is compulsory for all year 12 students, as such, there will be no lessons on the day.



Cambridge Homerton Trip

On Thursday 13 March, selected year 12 students have been invited to attend a trip to Homerton College at the University of Cambridge to speak with current students and admissions staff about studying at Cambridge and the competitive application process.

Sixth Form Taster Day

On Friday 28 March, the sixth form will be hosting a Taster Day for year 11 students to explore the subjects they want to study and to learn more about the sixth form provision. As such, there will be no A Level or BTEC lessons on the day. Students will have a 'Reading Day' and this time should be used for independent study and revision. Sixth form students will be expected to attend school, only if they have a trial exam on the day.

All year 11 students are expected to be in school on this day, but they can attend in non-uniform to take part in one of three Post 16 Pathways:

- Sixth Form: students will attend A-level and BTEC taster sessions to give them the experience of being a Sixth Form student.
- College: students will attend Life Skills focused workshops to visit key topics and skills that will prepare them for their next steps in life.
- Apprenticeships: ASK apprenticeships will be running a workshop to provide expert guidance to students on how to find and apply for apprenticeships.

The day will also involve all students having a mock interview with an employer to give them vital careers experience. Further information will be shared in due course.

Sports Fixtures

This week, our year 7 and year 8 Football squad travelled to Armthorpe Academy for the next set of fixtures in the Doncaster Schools Football League. The year 7's were able to maintain their unbeaten run with a close game, running out 2-1 winners; whilst the year 8's, despite an early 1-0 lead, were beaten 4-1. Both teams will welcome XP School to Sir Thomas Wharton Academy on Monday next week and then the year 8 and year 9 teams welcome Ash Hill Academy on Wednesday.

Attendance

We have had another good week with regards to attendance so far. On Monday we hit our highest day so far this school year and we see our whole school attendance continue to improve.

I would like Parents/Carers to be vigilant please for students who are ill on a Friday. We see our attendance take a small drop each Friday due to the higher amount of illness. Every day is important, and students need to be in school five days per week. Please can you ensure that students are not taken out of school on a Friday and are only kept off for illness in exceptional circumstances. On average, these expectational circumstances might happen once or twice during a student's school life. If students have a minor illness (cough, cold, sore throat etc.) they must be in school and this is not a reason to be absent.

Standards

Please can we remind parents that if a student is unable to wear school shoes due to a medical issue/injury, then students must wear plain black trainers. We have some of these in school for students to borrow if needed in the short term. Students will not be allowed to wear trainers which have colour or have a logo on them. Please do contact us if needed and we will be happy to support with one of our pairs. These will only be permitted in the short term, and students will be expected to return school shoes as soon as possible.



Careers

On Tuesday 4 March, we hosted ASK Apprenticeships who delivered a talk to our year 13 students on the range of apprenticeships available, where to look for vacancies and how to apply for them. They also received assistance in writing a competitive applications and how to make a great impression at interview.

On Thursday 6 March, our year 10 students attended a Careers Fairs at the Yorkshire Wildlife Park, organised by Doncaster Chamber. The event aimed to inspire, enthuse and motivate students to think about prospective careers, the employment options available to them, and how to make the most of their remaining time in education.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald
Principal

