

August 2022

Dear Parent / Carer

As we approach the start of the new academic year we feel it is helpful to provide some important start of term information. We hope that your family has had an enjoyable summer break and that your son or daughter is looking forward to returning to school next week.

Summer Examination Results

We are delighted to report that our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils who sat examinations this summer achieved unprecedented success. We are very proud of the individual success each pupil achieved and that both year groups achieved results that are significantly above local and national averages. Our GCSE and vocational results were particularly strong and, based upon early information, represent a record for the school and significant improvement upon historical performance.

Reminder of start of term arrangements

Monday 5th September 2022	Staff Training
Tuesday 6th September 2022	Staff Training Year 12 (10.30am) and Year 13 (1.10pm) return to school
Wednesday 7th September 2022	All pupils return to school

Attendance expectations

A child's success at school is very clearly linked with their attendance. The pupils who achieved the strongest results last summer were those pupils whose attendance was strong across their time with us. Overall attendance dipped nationally and at Whickham last year and it is one of our targets this year to ensure that our attendance improves. Children whose attendance is weak are being disadvantaged and let down. We will not allow this to happen. We expect all pupils to attend every day and to be on time. There will be a very strong focus on attendance this academic year.

We employ a number of strategies to support children whose attendance is lower than we expect (below 98%). These include:

- Development of bespoke plans to meet individual pupil needs
- Counselling for students requiring support with their mental health
- Referral to our Achievement Team where academic progress is weak
- Home visits
- Work with our Family Liaison Officers
- Legal intervention and the issuing of fines

Behaviour expectations

Good behaviour is expected of every pupil in our school as this is fundamental in establishing an environment where pupils feel safe and can focus on their learning. The school has a clear Behaviour Policy (please go to www.whickhamschool.org/parents/policies/) which details expectations and what pupils can expect in relation to rewards for success and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour.

The Behaviour Policy also details items that are not permitted in school. I draw your attention to some of the items that some children possess that cannot be brought into school. If these items are seen they will be confiscated and not returned.

- Fizzy drinks that have sugar in them (including energy drinks)
- Elastic objects that can potentially be flicked e.g. Loom bands
- Chewing gum (pupils will be required to complete a 1 hour detention that will involve improving our site if they are caught chewing gum)
- Laser pens
- Lighters and vapes

Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones around the site between 8.30am and 3.15pm unless they have permission from a member of staff. Phones should be in bags and turned off. Where pupils have mobile phones out of bags without permission they will be confiscated and taken to reception or the relevant pastoral leader. Pupils can collect phones at the end of the school day.

Uniform and equipment

All pupils will be expected to wear the correct uniform and have an equipment pack every day at school. Yr7 will be provided with their equipment pack on Wednesday 7th September but other pupils must have either organised their own pack or placed an order with the school. Pupils will be challenged if they are not meeting our basic expectations relating to uniform and equipment. Please click [here](#) for specific information regarding uniform and equipment.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming your child back to school, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information before the start of term.

Yours sincerely

F Turnbull
Headteacher