



WHITELANDS ACADEMY

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23rd September 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It was lovely to meet many of you during our 'Meet the Principal' evening last week and I was delighted to hear such positive feedback regarding our school and the start of this academic year. I am confident this is a result of our very high standards, excellent standard of teaching and learning and our consistent commitment to 'The Whitelands Way'. Our high standards mean we are always striving to improve and I was equally grateful for your honest, constructive feedback. I have collated suggestions under some key headings and am writing to update you on our progress so far:

Parent Engagement

I very much welcome your appetite for regular parent engagement and know that working together will always result in better provision for our young people. I will write soon with details of a parent forum for those interested in a longer-term commitment. I also invite parents to sign up for an open morning where you can meet some of our governors and staff, take a tour of the school and sample our canteen food. Provisionally this has been agreed for **11:00 on Thursday 13th October** with food provided at 12:00. As we are limited to 30 spaces, we can only admit one parent or guardian per family and ask that you sign up in advance by emailing: admin@whitelandsacademy.org

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis with ten spaces per year group.

School Calendar

As requested, our provisional dates for parents' evenings this year are:

Year 7 - 25th April

Year 8 - 11th May

Year 9 - 17th January 2023 and 20th March 2023 (including support for Key Stage 4 options)

In addition, I can confirm that the INSET days published on our website for 2022/23 are accurate; please check these and our term dates carefully to avoid any unauthorised absence.

Pastoral Care

We are currently developing our new pastoral team and are committed to high quality training for all staff to ensure we get this right. All staff will receive external, specialist training on specific learning needs after half term and we are currently reviewing our behaviour policy to take into consideration specific learning needs and health care plans. Please bear with us whilst we grow to get this right and do liaise with the pastoral and senior leadership teams should you feel, we can benefit from your experience and expertise.

Curriculum

Mrs Edwards is working with subject leaders on their long-term curriculum overviews and these will be on the website by half term. This will enable you to identify topics and texts being covered in each subject so you can further support at home.

I can confirm that we currently employ two Science teachers who specialise in Biology and Chemistry. We intend to appoint a Physics teacher for September 2023 to support the delivery of GCSE Triple Science.

Mrs Edwards and I are drafting the initial models for Key Stage 4 options today for consultation until half term. We will communicate our plans to you once these are complete and welcome your feedback during the consultation process.

We currently have a long-term compassionate absence in music and are in the process of securing specialist supply teaching to cover this gap.

Enrichment and Home Learning

We are starting to offer a variety of clubs at lunchtime and after school and will grow this offer each term. Due to staff absence, there is a delay in the provision of music enrichment opportunities and we intend to run these from the Spring term. With some clubs, such as Basketball, we are experiencing a range of abilities and so may start with basics before we can offer regular games and matches. We are well resourced for all our clubs and as such all students should be catered for. Furthermore, the PE department are part of a group of schools who will soon be able to offer local fixtures to provide competitive experiences for our students.

We began our home learning programme this week with a series of quizzes on Satchel 1. Longer term, we intend to vary our home learning so that we combine recall quizzes with project and practical work. More information will be shared regarding this programme later in the term.

I have begun the process of trips administration to enable us to offer both day and residential, off site experiences for all our students. I am hopeful that day/evening trips will start after half term with residential held in term 6 and will communicate the programme and potential costs to you once this has been agreed – hopefully by November.

Student Voice

I am exploring ways for students to communicate their concerns and suggestions to the senior leadership team and will write to you once we have agreed a way forward.

We currently have a student council elected by their peers. Over the course of this term, we will offer a range of student leadership positions, such as anti-bullying and safeguarding ambassadors and peer mentors. There will be a rigorous recruitment process for such positions, including letters of application and interviews with a panel of school stakeholders. Please do encourage your children to apply for these coveted positions when they become available!

Lunch time and Canteen Provision

Last week I had a very productive, positive meeting with Caterlink and am pleased to provide the following updates:

- We now have three tills in operation and are able to get all students through the queue by 13:30, giving them at least 15 minutes to eat their lunch
- No child will be turned away from lunch: if/when this occurs, we will take a note of the student's name and amount purchased and follow this up appropriately
- Chocolate bars are no longer served at break or lunch time
- Doughnuts are now limited to one day a week
- I have attached the menu to this letter: we start next week on week 2
- During our parent open mornings, parents will be able to sample food from our canteen as part of our quality assurance process.
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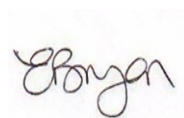
Future Plans

I have a meeting next week with the Trust's Director of Estates and Facilities to discuss the future of Whitelands Academy post 2025. Whilst it is our hope and aspiration to open a Sixth Form in the future, I am informed that it is unlikely this will be in place for our current Year 8 and 9 students and the decision to open in the future will be based on local need and secured funding. I will of course continue to update you as and when new information is released.

As we continue to grow and appoint new staff regularly, I am committed to ensuring stability for our school community. As a body of stakeholders, we are united in a common vision for the school and our programme of appraisal, training and leadership ensures consistency across the school is embedded and centred around that core vision. It is my belief that this commitment will secure stability for the future of Whitelands, ensuring that not only are high standards maintained, but further exceeded year on year, providing the very best school experience for your children.

I really do look forward to engaging more with our school community over the coming months and again thank you for your time and feedback to date.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend,



Emma Bryson
Principal

