



## WHITELANDS ACADEMY

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29<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are hurtling towards the end of the first full term of this academic year and I am excited to share our progress since I last wrote to you all in October:

### **Parent Engagement**

As always, I am very grateful for parental feedback and support and know that working together will always result in better provision for our young people. Our open morning in October was a huge success and I look forward to offering a similar opportunity next half term. I would now like to invite parents interested in setting up our first ever PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) to email: [admin@whitelandsacademy.org](mailto:admin@whitelandsacademy.org) by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December. I will then set up a meeting for those interested to agree our Terms of Reference and next steps.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities and Trips**

I am delighted to confirm that we are now able to offer trips and am grateful to Mrs Mofford for taking the whole school lead on this as our Educational Visits Coordinator. We spent over an hour of our recent INSET day discussing the value and importance of activities to enrich our curriculum and aim to publish a calendar of opportunities by the end of December. We are also looking into booking a ski trip for Spring 2024 which we hope to communicate to you before the new year. Knowing how expensive these residentials can be, it is our intention to give you at least 10 months' notice so that payments can be spread out in advance. Please look out for a survey regarding this trip so we can gather information about our families' expectations in order to provide an opportunity which is accessible to as many students as possible.

I am also delighted to share that the Trust have secured a school minibus for us which we expect to arrive in January. In the meantime, we will hire a minibus to take students back home from fixtures which are far away, hopefully reducing the recent frustration and travel time endured by parents. Thanks to all parents for supporting these fixtures to date: they are

such an important part of our growth as an academy of sporting excellence and I am grateful for your support and patience to date as we have worked hard to find a solution.

### **Pastoral Care, SEND and Safeguarding**

I informed you before half term of the upcoming departure of our much-loved SENDCO Laura Dennis. I have been working hard with the Trust team to secure a replacement and will write to all parents with an update before the end of term.

In the last two months, all staff have received specialist external training on ASD, ADHD and SEND to ensure we continue to offer outstanding provision for all our students. All staff received CPOMS training during our recent INSET: CPOMS is the platform we use to record any concerns we may have about a child's wellbeing and welfare. This information is then triaged by the Safeguarding team and managed appropriately. We have excellent links with external agencies such as the school nurse, counselling and social service and are here to support families during challenging times. If you have any concerns about the welfare of your own or another child, please do not hesitate to contact us so we can support you.

### **Curriculum**

Heads of Department have been working hard this half-term to update the long-term curriculum overviews and these are now being placed onto the school website. In our latest INSET day, we spent time developing information for you as parents and carers so that you can understand more clearly what students are learning in Term 3, what additional resources you can use at home and optional home learning tasks that students could complete for increased variety. These will be available on the school website by the end of December in readiness for January

Furthermore, we are looking at apps we can use to keep parents better informed and to enable a more effective system of communication between parents and class teachers. I expect this to be launched later in the year 2023.

The Year 9 options process will begin with our parents' evening on 17<sup>th</sup> January and a more detailed focus on options in March. We believe our Key Stage 4 curriculum will be driven by the Trust's commitment to academic excellence and I look forward to communicating this to you soon.

As you will be aware, we currently have a long-term compassionate absence in music and have been able to secure some specialist supply teaching to cover this gap. For a short period of just four weeks, we are using Music lessons to fulfil our statutory obligation of two hours PE a week, but we are engaging with a music specialist who we expect to support us after this short period of change.

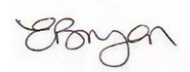
### **Student Voice**

We have recently completed our elections for our student council and interviews for our safeguarding ambassadors. We also have a team of anti-bullying ambassadors whose voice has already contributed to changes in our duty rota and locations and to all duty staff now wearing hi-vis vests to make them more visible to students! In January, we will be launching our peer

mentors scheme: please do encourage your children to apply for these coveted positions when they become available!

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

