THE WINSFORD ACADEMY

9th February 2025



Ms Emma McLaren
Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Winsford Families,

I would like to take opportunity to thank families for their ongoing support. Last week it was wonderful to see so many families attend the WA Dance Show. The evening was a great success with many students performing routines they had choreographed themselves. It was also brilliant to see so many staff in the audience, cheering and encouraging students.

This half term has been one of the busiest, with various events and competitions taking place. Year 8 and Year 9 students took part in the Northwest Indoor Rowing Competition in Warrington, we launched our new KS3 Cheerleading Club, students took part in the UKMT Maths Challenge, and both girls and boys football teams continue to work hard as we rise through the league!

We also welcomed numerous visitors to the academy, including 30+ organisations that attended our Careers Events. I was thrilled to receive an award from the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, as WA becomes a 'Young Chamber School'. For 2024-25, a key feature of the academy improvement plan is to further strengthen partnerships with local business and stakeholders so that students gain a clear understanding about the world of work and can make informed decisions about their future pathways.

This week is the start of Year 11 Mock Exam Week, with exams taking place during both morning and afternoon sessions. On Tuesday, groups of Year 9 students will be involved in workshops focusing upon languages in the sporting world. Celebration assemblies will also be taking place throughout the week to acknowledge strong attendance and students that continue to demonstrate a good attitude to learning.

As it is Safer Internet Day this week, within this newsletter I have also included parent guides from National Online Safety (NOS) which discuss scams, fake news and staying safe on social media.

Winsford Way Reminders!
Just a reminder for students to bring an outdoor coat to school.

- Students **must wear blazers at all times** in the academy - **REQUIRED**
- A plain black jumper may be worn under a blazer – OPTIONAL
- Hoodies are ***not*** a replacement for a school coat and are not to be worn on the academy campus
- Zip-up tops are ***not*** a replacement for a school coat and are not to be worn on the academy campus
- Gilets are ***not*** a replacement for a school coat and are not to be worn on the academy campus



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

Resident's Voice
Cheshire Constabulary are keen to collate 'Resident Voice'.

Cheshire Constabulary

Please see link below where residents can have a voice on what is of concern in their local area.

Resident Voice will help shape what the police do in the future based on public needs/wants.

Resident's voice | Cheshire Constabulary

Dates for your Diary	
WC 10th February	**Year 11 Assessment Week 1**
Half Term Break: Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February	
WC 24th February	**Year 11 Assessment Week 2**
Thursday 27th February	**Year 9 Parents' Evening 4pm – 7pm**
WC 3rd March	**Year 10 Assessment Week 1**
Thursday 6th March	**Parent Forum Meeting 5pm – 6pm** ✓ Follow-up meeting from Autumn Term ✓ Agenda informed from Parent Voice ✓ Agenda item include PFG meetings for Summer Term 25
WC 10th March	**Year 10 Assessment Week 2**
WC 17th March	**Year 11 Parent Meetings with Senior Leads** *Students will have received results from Mock Exams*
Thursday 3rd April	**Year 10 Parents' Meeting 3:45pm – 6:45pm** *Students will have received results from assessments*
Easter Term Break: Monday 7th April – Friday 18th April	
Monday 21st April	**Bank Holiday – School closed**
Tuesday 22nd April	**INSET Day – School closed to students** Training will include Safeguarding (Prevent training) & Personal Development Curriculum Planning.
Wednesday 23rd April	**Students return to school through the gate by 8:40am**
WC 28th April	**Y11 Photography & Fine Art Exam**

Free Year 11 Science Revision!

Warrington & Vale Royal College are offering free GCSE Science revision sessions for Year 11 students from Winsford Academy.

Sessions will be led by teachers, examination markers and tutors, with places given on a first-come-first served basis.

Workshops will take place in the college's laboratories each Tuesday from 6pm – 8pm.

Detail of each session and sign-up details are within the link below, please discuss with your child.

[GCSE Science Revision Sessions | Warrington & Vale Royal College]



NHS
Providing NHS services

Most pharmacies can help you with seven common conditions without needing a GP appointment

What is Pharmacy First?

This service enables children and adults to get quick access to healthcare advice as they can walk into a pharmacy and access the service (some pharmacies also offer the service remotely as a video consultation).

The person will then be offered a consultation with a pharmacist in a private consultation room. This service takes away the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment and may help ensure children get well and back to school as quickly as possible, as well as supporting parents/carers to also get better sooner if they are unwell.

The service supports children and adults in the below age groups who need help with:

- ✓ **Earache (aged 1 to 17 years)**
- ✓ **Sore throats (aged 5 years and over)**
- ✓ **Impetigo (aged 1 year and over)**
- ✓ **Infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)**
- ✓ **Sinusitis (aged 12 years and over)**
- ✓ **Urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women (aged 16 to 64 years)**
- ✓ **Shingles (aged 18 years and over)**

The pharmacist will provide advice and, if clinically necessary, offer an NHS medicine to treat the condition (these medicines are supplied free of charge to children under 16 years, with the normal NHS prescription charge rules applying to people aged 16 or over).

The pharmacy will then send an electronic message to the person's GP surgery so their health record can be updated.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SCAMS AND FAKE NEWS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

"Fake news" refers to falsified or misleading material presented as a legitimate account of events. It's often used by malicious actors online to push an agenda, or even by criminals as a way of making scams more persuasive. Scammers can trick us into handing over personal information, security details and even our hard-earned cash.

"CLICKBAIT" PHISHING SCAMS

A message arrives saying "Have you seen this video of yourself?" or you might be sent an attention-grabbing headline about a celebrity that's been shared on social media. This kind of "bait" is produced by scammers to drive us to click on an unsafe link, where malware could be downloaded to our devices. These scams rely on our curiosity and our "need-to-know" instinct.

SALES, DEALS & DISCOUNTS

Some scams appear as adverts, offering a chance to buy something – such as designer products, expensive gadgets or tickets to a popular show – at a reduced price. Such ploys often include a time limit or countdown, urging us to hurry so we don't miss out on the deal. This pressure encourages us to input personal details or payment information before pausing to check if it's legitimate.

YOU'RE A WINNER!

This kind of scam involves fake giveaways, opportunities or freebies. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and suchlike. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting. All these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, thinking that there's something to be gained by doing so.

FALSE FRIENDSHIPS

Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not to gain their victims' trust. They might attempt to convince any children they connect with that they're a child of similar age with shared interests. Warning signs include a high volume of messages (often with an intense tone), secrecy, inappropriate levels of intimacy, guilt tripping, emotional manipulation, threats or blackmail.

PANIC MODE

To trigger a sense of panic, scammers may claim that a child's account has been hacked, or a virus has been installed on their device, or any number of other scary scenarios. They may claim to be able to fix the problem or offer a solution – if the child hands over control of the device or sensitive information. Similar scams involve impersonating a friend or relative, claiming that they're in trouble and need help.

FAKE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Impersonating influential people online is a common tactic for scammers, who can use technology to create fake photos, audio and even videos that look authentic. These can be used to convince us, for example, to buy products, sign up for so-called "business opportunities" or invest in cryptocurrency schemes – all of which are fake or otherwise malicious. Many scams also involve the impersonation of popular companies' social media accounts, as well as those of individuals.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay up to date with the latest information and best practice on cyber-security. See what scam stories are reported in the news and make note of what tactics were used. Keep up with young people's digital lives: talk about what they're doing online and use properly endorsed resources to learn what risks certain sites and apps pose to their younger users.

TALK TOGETHER

Chat often and openly with young people about fake news, online scams and how they both work. Encourage them to talk to you about anything they're unsure of or worried about online. If a child claims to have been scammed, don't pass judgement. Blaming the victim may deter young people from asking you for help. Remember: adults are scammed just as often, if not more.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

Most scams rely on emotional or psychological manipulation, tapping into our human instincts – whether that's to keep ourselves safe, help others, find answers, make friends, avoid losing out or to secure something we really want. Encourage children to recognise that pressure to act and to always consult with an adult – especially if what's on offer sounds too good to be true.

BE PROACTIVE

Children increasingly use digital devices for education, socialising, shopping and play. Don't wait for a problem to arise before you discuss the risk of scams, false information and fake news. Highlight what to look out for and clearly communicate under what circumstances the child ought to speak to an adult. Finally, ensure that they're aware of the support services that are available to them (such as Childline).

Meet Our Expert

Dr Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading expert in digital safety, media law and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of risk online. She works with schools, businesses, and universities to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk for more.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: https://nationalcollege.com/guides/fake-news-and-scams

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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's concerningly common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling': trawling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose, instead of endlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep appraised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and that they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime; they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the app entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

Meet Our Expert

John Insley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.

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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media

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