THE WINSFORD ACADEMY

21st February 2025



Ms Emma McLaren
Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Winsford Families,

I very much hope that families are enjoying a relaxing half term break.

At mid-point of the academic year, I am pleased to reflect how current academy data demonstrates the progress that we have made so far. Current behaviour data shows that suspensions have been reduced by 40%, RESET data has reduced by 61% and the number of lessons covered has significantly reduced.

Inline with the next phase of school improvement planning, we are currently redrafting our anti-bullying policy, personal development curriculum and academy lesson structure. We are also reviewing the subjects we offer at KS4, and how students are fully prepared for their next key stage.

To ensure that students achieve their full potential, for Spring 2 we have also increased the capacity of our attendance team so that more home visits can take place. We want to work in partnership with families to remove any barriers; if families would like additional support, please contact the attendance team attendance@winsfordacademy.org.uk

This week the academy was open to Year 11 students who attended additional revision sessions in Maths, English and Science. The final set of Year 11 mock exams continue next week, with teachers already using marked papers to make modifications to the curriculum and revision sessions. To further support Year 11 families, there will be a separate Year 11 newsletter that will be sent out on a regular basis which will include details about exams, college and intervention sessions.

I have further updated enclosed diary dates to include details of additional academy events that are happening. Spring 2 looks to be another busy half term, with Year 9 Parents' Evening taking place during week 1.

Wishing you a lovely weekend and I very much look forward to meeting Year 9 parents on Thursday evening.

Diary Dates 2025	
Monday 24th February	**Students return to school through the gate by 8:40am**
WC 24th February	**Year 11 Assessment Week 2**
Wednesday 26th February	**Year 9 & Year 10** **Duke of Edinburgh Information Meeting 5pm – 6pm**
Thursday 27th February	**Year 9 Parents' Evening 4pm – 7pm**
WC 3rd March	**Year 10 Assessment Week 1**
Monday 3rd March	**Year 9 Vaccinations**
Thursday 6th March	**Year 11 Geography Field Trip to Llandudno**
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**
Monday 10th March	**Year 11 Drama (AQA Examiner on site)**
WC 17th March	**Year 11 Parent Meetings with Senior Leads** *Students will have received results from Mock Exams*
Monday 31st March	**Year 11 GCSE Choreography Exam**
Thursday 3rd April	**Year 10 Parents' Evening 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**
Thursday 24th April	**Year 9 Odd Arts Workshops (*Throughout the day*)**
WC 28th April	**Y11 Photography & Fine Art Exam**
Monday 5th May	**Bank holiday – School closed**
WC 5th May	**Y11 Fine Art Exam & Spanish Speaking Exams**
Thursday 8th May	**Year 7 Parents' Evening 3:45pm – 6:45pm**

United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Challenge!

United Kingdom Maths Trust (UKMT) run global Maths challenges each year with around 700 000 pupils taking part.

This year we entered 75 students in Year 9 - 11 and are delighted to announce their fabulous success.

- ✓ 15 of our students scored high enough to be awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates.
- ✓ 10 students were awarded Bronze certificates, 4 students were awarded Silver and 1 of our youngest entrants in Year 9 achieved a Gold Certificate which is only awarded to the **top 8% of entrants across the UK**
- ✓ Our Gold certificate winner's score was so high that he has been invited to take part in the next level of challenge which is the Grey Kangaroo Challenge. We are very excited to see how far he can progress through the challenges.



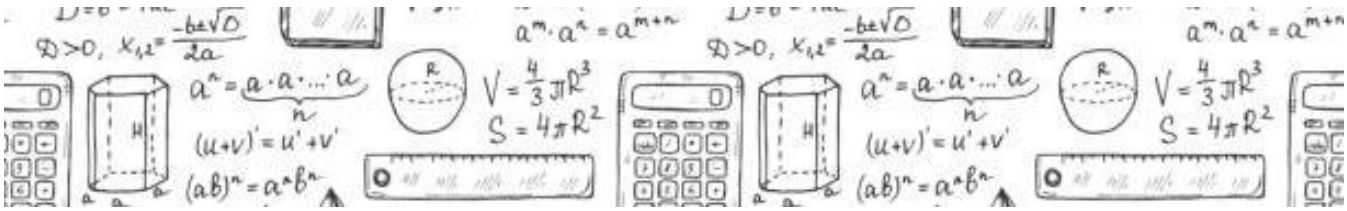
UKMT Example question!

- No calculators or equipment are allowed in the challenge, not even squared paper.
- Students are only allowed a pencil, rubber and a blank piece of paper.

Jane's farm is home to many cats and dogs. At the start of the week the ratio of cats to dogs was 3 : 5. Then 32 cats, but no dogs, arrived and the ratio became 5 : 3.
How many dogs are there on Jane's farm?

A 12 B 18 C 24 D 25 E 30

✓ *The answer is at the bottom of page 5 (Attendance Matters page)*



Spanish Enrichment!

Last half term, Year 9 students engaged in a Spanish in Football Day.

Throughout the day students engaged in various activities including:

- ✓ A presentation that focused upon languages and football
- ✓ Careers in MFL workshop
- ✓ Classroom based language sessions
- ✓ Football coaching on the 3G Pitches







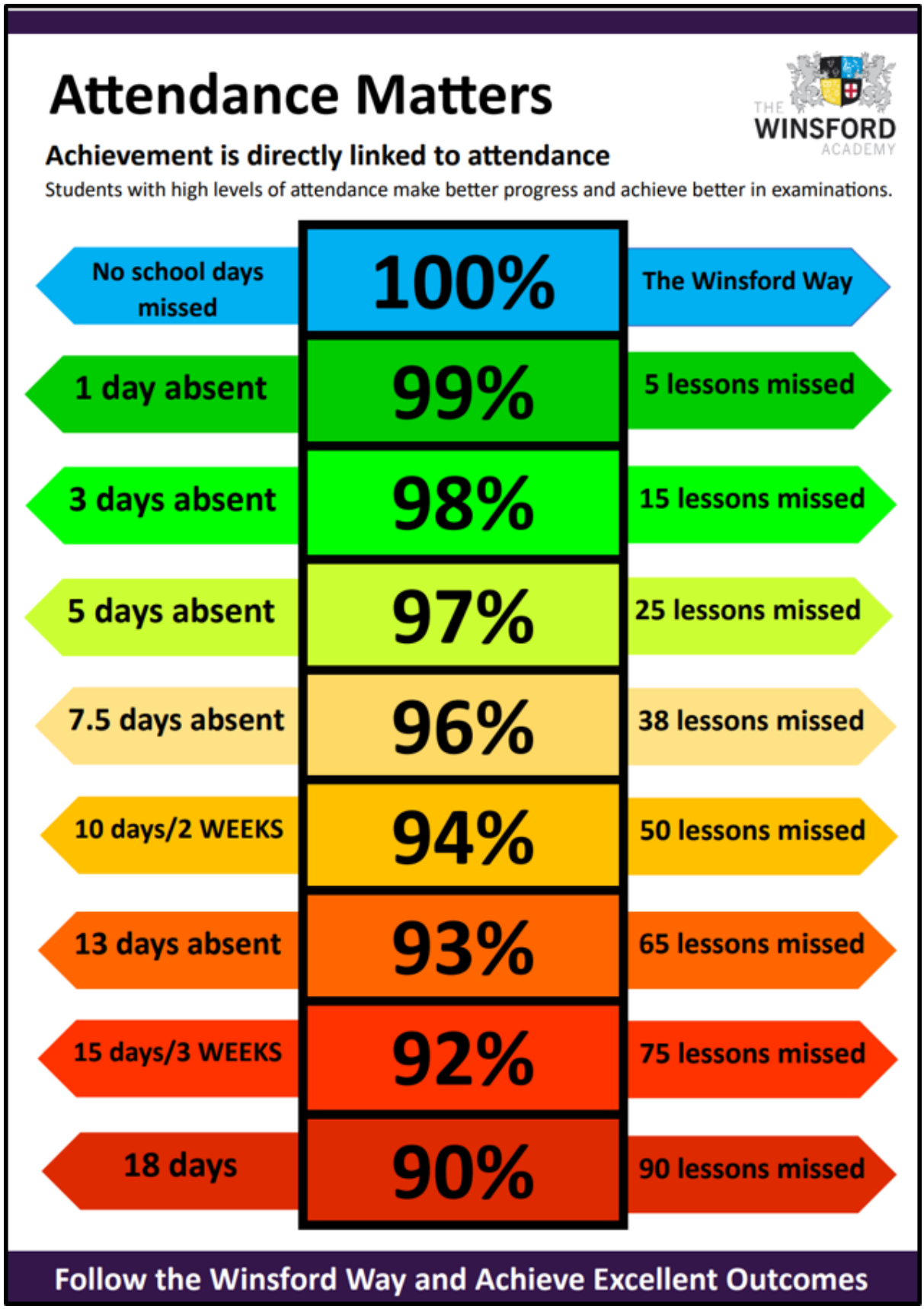


Why Study a Language?

Studying a foreign language can be extremely rewarding and exciting. They provide an insight into other cultures and can open the door to travel and employment opportunities. They can also broaden students' horizons, helping them flourish in new environments.

Employability & Careers

We know that employers value languages, as they are increasingly important to make sure we can compete in the global market. Because of this, languages are increasingly becoming a requirement for many graduate schemes.


Attendance Matters
THE WINSFORD ACADEMY
Achievement is directly linked to attendance
Students with high levels of attendance make better progress and achieve better in examinations.
No school days missed
100%
The Winsford Way
1 day absent
99%
5 lessons missed
3 days absent
98%
15 lessons missed
5 days absent
97%
25 lessons missed
7.5 days absent
96%
38 lessons missed
10 days/2 WEEKS
94%
50 lessons missed
13 days absent
93%
65 lessons missed
15 days/3 WEEKS
92%
75 lessons missed
18 days
90%
90 lessons missed
Follow the Winsford Way and Achieve Excellent Outcomes

✓ *Answer E - 30*

WA Uniform Expectations

- Students **must wear a tie and blazers at all times** in the academy - **REQUIRED**
- 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

Winsford ties and blazers are available from our uniform suppliers:

Julie Clare Schoolwear: https://www.julieclareschoolwear.com/the-winsford-academy

MySchoolstyle.com: https://myschoolstyle.com/school-shop/winsford-academy/



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

GROUP CHATS

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child *does* upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure children understand the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school, or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their identity to gain a child's trust and serve their own ends – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure the child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and why they should never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a device bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of the group chat while disabling notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Sources: https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/lets-talk-about/socialising-online/group-chats/ | https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/

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