THE WINSFORD ACADEMY

24th October 2024



Ms Emma McLaren
Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Winsford Families,

I cannot believe that we are about to break up for half term; as I reflect upon my first eight weeks at WA, I feel incredibly grateful for the warm welcome that I have received with students, staff and families supporting my vision and direction of Ambition and Excellence for All.

One of my key highlights has been meeting so many of our wonderful parents; attendance figures to parent events have been the highest we have seen for a number of years; it is brilliant to see such high engagement. Within this newsletter, there is an additional opportunity for Year 10 and Year 11 parents to sign up to our KS4 SEND information evening which will be led by both SENCos and senior leads.

Last week, Halliard Trust CEO, J Spencer visited the academy to observe progress that we have made towards set targets; activities included learning walks, meetings with leaders, student and staff voice. All activities evidenced progress towards set academy targets, with staff also reflecting marked improvements with behaviour and standards. The vast majority of students wear their uniform with pride, are respectful to staff and each other and try their best in lessons.

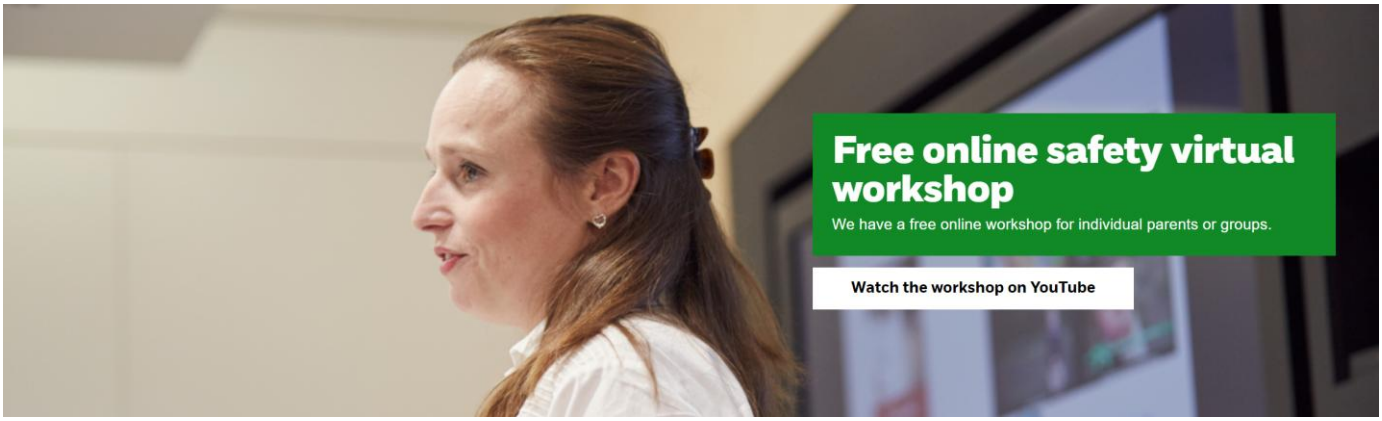
This week, I had the pleasure of spending time with the primary headteachers from our partnership schools. As Winsford headteachers, we are committed to working together on aspects of the curriculum and areas of school improvement such as attendance. Excellent attendance to school continues to be a priority for all schools in Winsford, we know that students with good attendance achieve better outcomes.

I have also included links to a new 40-minute webinar by the NSPCC about how to keep your child online, information includes guidance about social media, online bullying and mental health. Each week, within my communication I will also include parent guides for various online games and apps.

Thank you again for all of your support, I am delighted to be the Principal at WA and look forward to meeting more of our families in Autumn 2.

NSPCC Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online

The NSPCC have produced a free online safety virtual workshop.



The workshop provides parents and carers with information about how to support children in their online world. The 40-minute pre-recorded presentation covers topics such as online bullying, mental health, and social media, as well as signposting to resources and organisations for help and support.

The workshop is available at the link: [Free online safety virtual workshop | NSPCC]



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

With more than two billion active users, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. The UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging, but for the time being, this controversial feature remains.

...MSG ME...

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency' – plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. Therefore, if a child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that the child might be added to a group chat or community (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

CHAT LOCK

In 2023, WhatsApp introduced a feature that lets users keep their chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind their phone's passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. They subsequently developed an additional feature – 'Secret Code' – where users set a unique password for their locked chats. Unfortunately, this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversions and content they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).



'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The ability to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate material or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this disappearing content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing protection of privacy.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original ... and might not be entirely factual, either.

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child is safe while out, for example. However, anyone in a user's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS

A community is a collection of related groups on WhatsApp. They can consist of thousands of users. Communities can often be used by scammers to target large groups, hoping someone clicks on their link or responds to their requests. In communities and groups, there are multiple ongoing conversations, which results in pressure to respond. Members – even if they are not each other's contacts – will be able to see any messages sent into the group.

Advice for Parents & Educators

...VPING...

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider whether it sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change a child's WhatsApp settings to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval. You can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if a child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

DISCUSS GROUP CHATS

Make children aware that there could be members of a group that they don't know well and that words can be misinterpreted. Encourage them to leave a good impression, to avoid joining in if conversations turn towards bullying, and to respond to such situations in an appropriate way. Make sure they know that it's OK to leave a group chat if it makes them uncomfortable – or for any reason, in fact.

THINK BEFORE SHARING

Help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content that a user posts to be shared more widely, even publicly on social media. Encourage children to consider how an impulsive message or forwarding might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Check in with the child about how they're using WhatsApp, making sure they know you only have their safety at heart. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of content they've stored in there, who they're talking to, and why they want to keep these chats hidden. Also, if children send any 'view once' content, it could be helpful to ask them why.

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.



...HEY OSC #WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Source: https://blog.whatsapp.com/an-open-letter | https://faq.whatsapp.com/1077018839582332 | https://faq.whatsapp.com/360058961892452/?helpref=hc_fnav https://www.whatsapp.com/security | https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-intimate-conversations-even-more-private | https://www.aura.com/learn/whatsapp-scams

@wake_up_weds /wuw.thenationalcollege @wake.up.wednesday @wake.up.weds

KS4 SEND Information Evening – Thursday 7th November, 4:15pm – 5:15pm

To further strengthen our parent partnership, we have planned two additional meetings in the Autumn Term for parents and carers of young people with special educational needs.

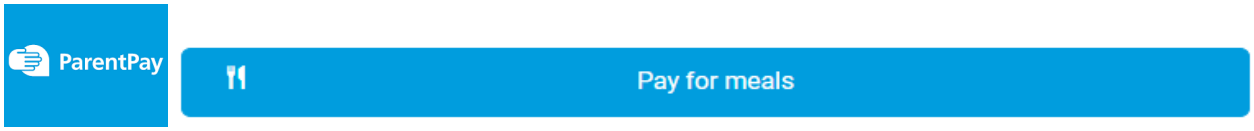
The first evening for parents in KS4 will take place on Thursday 7th November 2024. If you haven't done so already, please follow the link below to secure a place.

https://forms.office.com/e/pk8PM324XU

Dates for your Diary: Autumn Term 24	
Half Term Break – Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November ***All student return Monday 4th November, through gates for 8:40am***	
Wednesday 6th November	**Flu Jabs for Y7-Y11**
Thursday 7th November **4:15pm – 5:45pm**	**SEND Information Evening – KS4**
Wednesday 27th November **4:15pm – 5:45pm**	**SEND Information Evening – KS3**
Friday 29th November	**INSET Day: Academy closed for students** Staff training will be focus upon safeguarding, assessment at KS3 & KS4 and effective learning strategies.
Thursday 5th December **3:45pm – 6:45pm** *(£5 reduction in Prom Ticket if families attend)*	**Year 11 Parents' Eve** Student will have received Mock Exam Results
Monday 9th December	**Dance GCSE Exam**
Term Break – Monday 23rd December – Friday 3rd January **INSET Day – Monday 6th January** ***All student return Tuesday 7th January, through gates for 8:40am***	

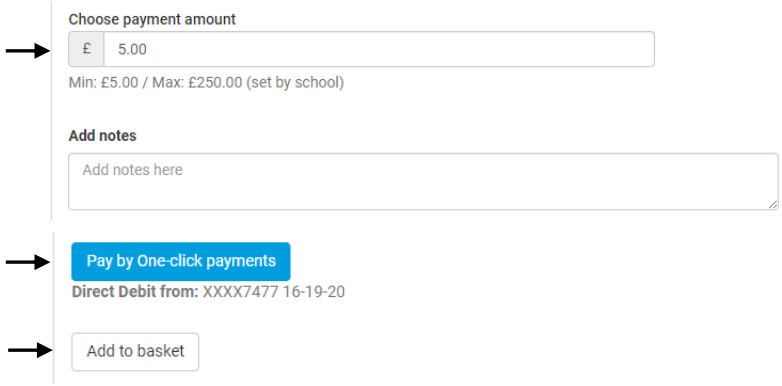
How to add money to your child's ParentPay account to pay for school meals

Parents can do this by logging into your ParentPay account go to **Pay for Meals.**



This will take you to a new page where you can choose how much you wish to add to your child's account.

Type the amount in the box and, either, add to basket or Pay by One-Click payments (if you have a debit/credit card stored on your ParentPay account.



If you select Pay by One-click payments – this will take you straight to the payment page.

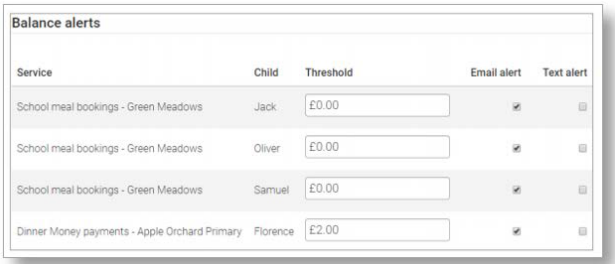
If you select add to basket – the shopping basket in the top right corner will be displayed, click on this and proceed to checkout using the pay by other method button.

It can be difficult to keep track of balances and payments. ParentPay gives payers the opportunity to set up email or text alerts. Text message alerts can only be received if you have credit in your text message balance. Charges for text alerts are deducted from the text message balance each time a text is sent. Texts are charged at 7p each. **There is no charge for email alerts.**

Balance Alerts

Payers can set a balance threshold to be set for associated items such as school meals. You can then choose to receive email or text alerts once the balance falls below the selected threshold. The thresholds can be set for each balance associated item linked with each child attached to your ParentPay account.

Maximum of one alert per item and child every 2 days once the balance alert reaches the threshold.





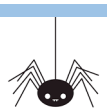
Year 8 Football Team: 7-a-side Tournament

The Year 8 football team took part in the Middlewich 7-a-side tournament.

Victory over Knutsford & draws with Hartford, Leftwich, Weaverham & Rudheath.

Goals – Riley C
Player of the Match – Carlos
Captain – Riley

Half Term Holiday Activities at West Cheshire Museums



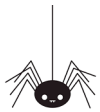
Weaver Hall Museum

- Starting Saturday 26th October Weaver Hall Museum has a Trick or Treat Trail that lasts all week.
- Free drop in Spooky crafts will also be provided by the Library and Museum Teams Monday – Friday
- Northwich Explorers Wednesday 30th October £5 per session – places must be booked. To book call 01606 271646.

Lion Salt Works

- On Friday 1st November Lion Salt Works has Free Spooky Crafts, Haunted Stories and a Trick or Treat Trail between 11am – 4pm
- Northwich Explorers runs the same day exploring spooky science £5 per session – places must be booked call 01606 275066.

Grosvenor Museum



- 9 October - 3 November Deadly Museum Trail -Discover the deadly things at the Grosvenor Museum this October with our special trail.
- 29 October @ 10.30am - 12.30pm Frankenstein's Museum. Create your own creature inspired by Frankenstein's monster using 'body parts' from the museum's collections! Free, drop in. Donations welcome.
- 29 October @ 5.30pm - 7.00pm £10 Children's Ghost Walk. Join guide Ann Coward for a family friendly Children's Ghost Walk.

Reminder: Closing Date for Secondary Applications, 31 October 2024



Applying for a Secondary School place - Year 7 September 2025

Is your child due to transfer from Primary School to Secondary School in September 2025?

YES – from 1 September 2024 you must apply for a school place.

You can apply from 1 September 2024:

- online at **www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions** (last year 99.3% of parents/carers applied online), or
- by telephoning the Authority on 0300 123 7039 to request a **'Transferring to Secondary School 2025-26'** booklet.

In addition you can view a copy of the booklet:

- in all Cheshire West and Chester primary schools
- online at **www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions.**

Closing date for secondary applications 31 October 2024

If entitlement to transport is important to how your child will get to and from school, it is vital you read the Home to School Transport Policy before applying for a school place. Visit the authority's website for further information.

Visit: **www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions**

Cheshire West and Chester


FOR 11-16 YEAR OLDS
WINSFORD
BOOGIE
BINGO!
SCAN ME
LOTS OF PRIZES TO BE WON. STAR PRIZE IS AN XBOX SERIES S!
OR VISIT
https://forms.office.com/e/cgXtfhZGqX?
COME DOWN FOR A FUN NIGHT OF MUSIC, DANCING AND BINGO.
Time: 6 – 8 PM
Address: New Images Youth and Community Centre Nixon Dr, Winsford CW7 2HG
28TH MONDAY OCTOBER
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire
Cheshire West and Chester
COMMUNITY GROUP
WYCF
Holdcroft HEATING
youthfed