

Parent Bulletin

office@willingdonschool.org.uk | 01323 485254



Willingdon
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

11th October 2024



Dear Parents/Carers,

As a school we value and appreciate our community both current and past. We recently heard that a former student of ours died over the summer. Stanley Forder joined our Year 7 students in 2020. Stanley was supported fully by the inclusion team and moved onto a specialist provision towards the end of his Year 8 with us.

His mum writes "While at Willingdon it became apparent that a conventional classroom was not suitable for Stanley's needs. After leaving Willingdon, Stanley started attending South Brockwells Farm School where he found his true passion in life and where his hard work was rewarded when he won National Farm School Student of the Year 2023. This was something Stanley and his whole family were very proud of."

We remember and give thanks for the time Stanley was in our school. His kindness and love of animals and nature were central to his purpose in life and his incredible family demonstrated so clearly the impact of love, strength and support for Stanley. Our thoughts and prayers as a community are with Stanley's Mum, Dad, little sister and his wider family. We are hoping to raise some money for a charity close to the family's heart.



We are looking forward to welcoming our Year 11 parents for our first parents evening. We want to ensure we work as a team to prepare effectively for the first round of mocks which will begin very shortly.

We were delighted by the overall behaviour and conduct of our students during the Sponsored Walk. We hope they all enjoyed themselves and if you still have any money fundraised, please do donate by next Friday. We also have our link to the MUGA court fundraising on page 3.

We have hosted new Year 6 prospective students and their parents over the last three mornings and our students have been amazing role models. Many thanks to you for allowing students to be guides last Thursday night and the last three mornings. The compliments about the young people were coming in fast from our guests. They really are a credit to us.

We are aspiring to have every Year 7 student engage in an extracurricular club with us. If your child does activities outside of school, please do let us know. We are proud of our students' achievements and want to celebrate them. If your child is not taking part in a club, do find out why. If we are not offering something, then we will consider whether we can, if there is the interest. This applies to Years 8 - 11 too.

Please do feedback on academisation from a parent perspective. Our consultation was not well attended by parents, and our governors are keen to understand your standpoint on this. We need more representation from parents so we can ensure all viewpoints are heard. The link is found on page 2.

Best wishes,

Mrs Emily May - **Headteacher**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TERM 1 - OCTOBER 2024

Year 11 Parent Evening - Thursday 17th Oct 3.15PM – 6.15pm - In person

Year 11 Mock Exams - Monday 21st Oct - All week

Half Term - Monday 28th Oct—Friday 1st Nov

TERM 2 - NOVEMBER 2024

Inset Day - Monday 4th Nov (Year 11 Mock Exams)

Inset Day - Tuesday 5th Nov (Year 11 Mock Exams)

Start of Term 2 - Wednesday 6th Nov

INSET DAYS

Monday 4th November 2024 (Year 11 Mock Exams)

Tuesday 5th November 2024 (Year 11 Mock Exams)

Monday 6th January 2025

(Possible Year 11 French/Spanish Speaking Mock Exams)

Friday 14th February 2025

(Possible Year 11 Mock Exams)

EARLY SCHOOL CLOSURES

Friday 20th December 2024

Friday 4th April 2025

Tuesday 22nd July 2025

*(staggered by year group from
12.20pm-12.40pm)*

Reminder of Parent Forum dates for this year

Wednesday 4th December 2024 6pm

Wednesday 5th February 2025 6pm

Wednesday 19th March 2025 6pm

Wednesday 30th April 2025 6pm



Dear Parents and Carers,

If you have not already done so, could you please complete this short survey for Parent Voice on Academisation.

[Parent Voice - Academisation](#)

Please be reminded that teaching staff contact details can be found on our website

<https://willingdonschool.org.uk/our-school/our-staff-team>



Help us raise £250,000 towards a Multi Use Games Area at Willingdon School

Willingdon Community School needs your support to build an all-weather, multi-use games area for our school and the wider community! There are many benefits to our current location, however like any British school we are often at the mercy of the weather! While our students - and our staff - never shy away from a muddy football pitch, we want to offer our students and the community the very best sporting facilities in order to harness their skills and fuel their sporting ambition. A MUGA (multi-use games area) is resilient to weather conditions, versatile, and inclusive to most sports, making it a valuable investment for our school community. If you wish to donate, please follow the 'Just Giving' link here:

[Just Giving MUGA Facility](#)



School Choir

School Choir are preparing to sing some fun pieces at our Crash into Christmas Concert.

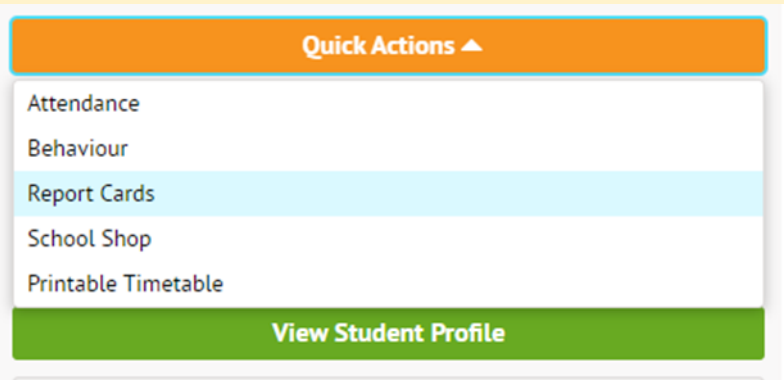
**All students and staff are welcome to join.
Rehearsals: Mondays 3pm in MU2**



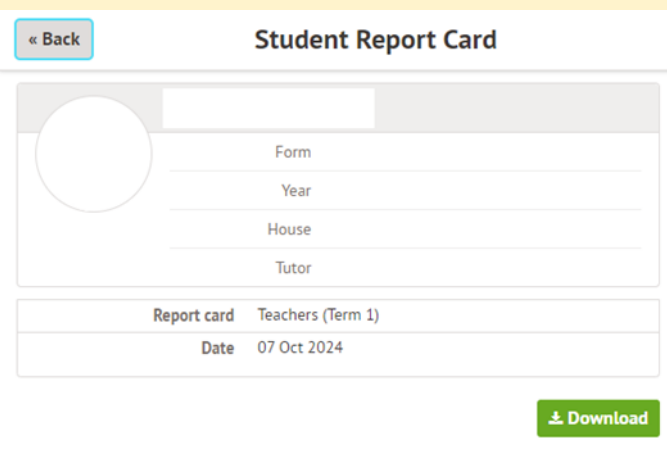
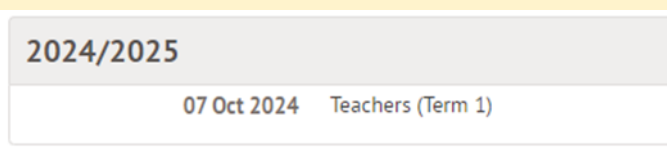
Dear Parents/Carers,

A report is now available for your child on Arbor, listing their teachers for Term 1 and their contact email addresses.

This can be found by navigating to “Quick Actions” and then “Report Cards”.



The report is called “Teachers (Term 1)” which once selected can then be downloaded to your device.



The information on this report was correct as of Monday, 7th October. These reports do not automatically update, so any changes since that date will not be reflected on the report.

A full list of teachers and their contact email addresses can be found on the school website: <https://willingdonschool.org.uk/our-school/our-staff-team>

If you do not receive a reply after two working days, please forward your enquiry to talk2us@willingdonschool.org.uk



Supporting your child's reading in secondary school

Why does reading matter?

Reading isn't just for primary school: it is very much for secondary school. It remains a crucial skill for secondary school and beyond. Strong reading abilities are essential for academic success. That's because they enable students to access the curriculum, expand their vocabulary, and cultivate a lifelong love of learning. In a nutshell, the stronger a reader your child is, the more likely they are to gain strong GCSEs in all subjects – not just English. Further, reading has been shown to support mental health and wellbeing in children. As a parent, you play a vital role in supporting your child's reading journey during these formative years.

12 parental tips for supporting reading

1. Encourage diverse reading materials

Allow your child to explore various reading materials that align with their interests, such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, newspapers, and high-quality online content. Exposure to different types of content enhances their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

2. Engage in conversations about reading

Discuss books and articles with your child. Share your own reading experiences and engage in conversations about what you enjoyed or found challenging. This helps them develop critical thinking and analytical skills. When your child reads, ask them to summarise the story or information. If it's a story, ask about the characters and plot. If it's an informational text, have your child summarise and then explain the main ideas. This will help improve their reading comprehension skills and develop their confidence when meeting complex texts.

3. Make reading a regular activity in your home

Incorporate reading into your daily family life to help your child develop a love for it. Set aside dedicated time where everyone puts away their devices and reads. Make it enjoyable by discussing the books afterwards or watching film adaptations of books you've read. The key is to make reading a fun, regular part of your family routine.

4. Listen to your child read aloud

When your child reads aloud, provide gentle feedback and support. If they struggle with a passage, encourage them to re-read it or model good, fluent reading for them. Repeated reading out loud of the same part of a text, even at home, has been shown to improve reading skills.

5. Have frequent conversations with your child

Engage your child in discussions on a variety of topics to expose them to a wide range of vocabulary and

6. Visit libraries

Explore local libraries and bookshops together, allowing your child to browse and discover new titles. Encourage your child to borrow books and explore different genres to expand their reading horizons. Remember that we also have a library here in school your child can use: encourage them to visit it and ask them about the books they bring home.

7. Download the free BorrowBox reading app

BorrowBox is a free app that can be downloaded and used if you are the member of a local library. It's a fantastic, free reading resource that is not to be missed. Through BorrowBox can download books, audiobooks and more, all for free. All that is required is your library card and pin number. You can also join your local library online, if you aren't able to visit them in person and it takes just a few minutes. Using BorrowBox will enable your child to access a diverse range of great reading material on any electronic device, all from the comfort of your home.

8. Be a reading role model

Let your child see you reading books, newspapers, or high-quality digital content. Model the reading habits you want them to learn. Your enthusiasm for reading can inspire them to develop a similar passion.

9. Create a comfortable reading environment

Ensure your child has a comfortable space for reading, with good lighting, cosy seating, and minimal distractions. A welcoming environment contributes to an enjoyable reading experience.

10. Encourage independent reading strategies

Help your child choose books they will enjoy and equip them with a toolbox of reading strategies to help themselves when they encounter difficulties, such as re-reading, using clues in the text to clarify their understanding, asking questions about what they are reading or making predictions based on what they know.

11. Celebrate reading achievements

Acknowledge and celebrate your child's reading milestones and accomplishments, such as finishing a challenging book or achieving a personal reading goal. Recognising their efforts encourages them to continue their reading journey with pride. Show them that developing their reading is something to be proud of.

12. Reading for mental health

Encourage your child to read books to promote their mental well-being. Reading can be a powerful tool for reducing stress, increasing empathy, and providing a healthy escape. Books that feature characters overcoming challenges or exploring emotions can help children navigate their own experiences and feelings. Discuss how reading makes them feel and how the stories might relate to their own lives or experiences.

By implementing these tips and providing ongoing support, you can empower your child to become a confident and enthusiastic reader through secondary school and beyond. Your involvement and encouragement are key to fostering academic success and a lifelong love of reading in your child, but also in supporting their










SAXOPHONE LESSONS

Dear Parents and Carers,

FREE TASTER LESSON – I am pleased to be able to offer a free taster lesson to give pupils the chance to try out the saxophone and see if they would like to start lessons. The lessons will take place at Willingdon Community School.

Below are the details on the saxophone lessons and how to get started.

To confirm whether you would like your child to attend the taster lesson and for more information, please contact me at: learn@maxhalemusic.com or **07772611979**

-  Experienced teacher and performer – Master of Performance degree from the Royal College of Music (Distinction)
-  Have experience playing and teaching all styles of music – pop, film, jazz, classical and many more!
-  Current DBS check
-  Weekly lessons are £12 for 30 minutes (for groups of 2 students), £12 for individual 1-1 lessons for 20 minutes and £18 for 1-1 lessons for 30 minutes.
-  The lessons and saxophone hire can be trialled for 3 months
-  The saxophones can be hired from £20 per month for 3-12 months.
-  Please mention my name to the company when enquiring and they will offer this reduced hire cost (normally £25 per month). They will also give you a free harness, which I definitely recommend getting.



Head of Year
Mrs Muller / Mrs Naylor

Email - pastoral-7@willingdonschool.org.uk

Year 7

Another great week from the Year 7s – all are settling in so well, and it feels like they have been here forever! I hope those that are attending have a fabulous night tonight at the disco.

Please can I ask over the weekend you ask your child to take a few minutes to complete the Year 7 Student Voice survey below (just click on the link). We value their voice so much!

[Year 7 Student Voice](#)

Here is the link to the Year 7 Parent/Carer Voice survey if you haven't managed to complete this yet either [Parents/Carers of Year 7 - Parent Voice](#)

Have a lovely weekend.

The Year 7 Team



Head of Year
Mr Keast

Email - pastoral-8@willingdonschool.org.uk

Year 8

We would like to congratulate Year 8 on another successful week where they have continued to embody our personal excellence values of: ambition, respect, courtesy, compassion and honesty.

We are also really proud of all of our Year 8 students who have volunteered their time throughout the week to deliver open morning tours to prospective Year 6 students. You have all represented the school remarkably well and we have been blown away by the volume of positive praise received from visiting parents - well done!

Have a lovely weekend.

The Year 8 Team

Willingdon

HOLIDAY CLUBS

Spooky Season - October Half Term



Weds 30th October 2024

Thurs 31st October 2024

9.30am-2.30pm



Multisport

Basketball, Football, Benchball
Badminton, Table tennis, Just dance

Students welcome from Year
groups 4-8 from all schools

Team Challenges

Taskmaster, STEAM, Photography
Logic Puzzles, Scavenger Hunt Team

Rates

£40 per day per child.
10% sibling discount
PP students attending year 7 or 8 at
Willingdon Community school 50%
discounted rate

All enquiries to holidayclubs@willingdonschool.org.uk

If you are interested in your child joining our holiday club in October, please complete the Google form, link below, you will then receive a confirmation email advising that your child has secured a place.

[Willingdon Holiday Clubs - Spooky Season Google Form](#)



Head of Year

Mr Cain

Email - pastoral-9@willingdonschool.org.uk

Year 9

It has been wonderful returning this week, following 2 weeks off on paternity leave. I have been inundated with well wishes, congratulations and hand made cards from students and it has been lovely to see their care and compassion towards me – or in some cases, nosiness to find out the name and the gender! Either way, they mean well and really are a credit to our school.

A busy week, but it's so pleasing to see so many represent the school and showcase their talents too. Numerous students have been involved this week as tour guides for our open mornings, involved in girls' football fixtures, a boys' football fixture and last night's school dance show. The talent and commitment to the school across the year group is phenomenal and I would encourage all students to make the most of all of the opportunities that the school has to offer.

The Options process is also beginning to take shape and I would urge all students to be checking their emails and responding quickly to surveys. They are designed to get student voice, so we give the best possible offer to students for their studies going into Key Stage 4.



YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS

We are pleased to announce that we will be offering the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award to Year 9 students this academic year. The launch will be in Term 2.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please email



dleonard@willingdonschool.org.uk



Head of Year
Mr Roche

Email - pastoral-10@willingdonschool.org.uk

Year 10

Dear Year 10 Parents & Carers,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am pleased to congratulate our Year 10 students on another successful week in their first year of GCSEs. We have once again maintained an impressive average attendance rate of 95%, which is excellent and a testament to their dedication.

On the sporting front, I would like to wish our Year 10 football team the very best of luck in today's County Cup match against Horsham Forest School—let's hope for a fantastic result! Additionally, a special congratulations to Ezra, who competed in a golf tournament last week and has qualified for the Junior European Open final, to be played in Spain in November. A wonderful achievement!

I look forward to the final two weeks of term being just as successful as the previous ones.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mr Roche

Head of Year 10



Head of Year
Mr Gordon

Email - pastoral-11@willingdonschool.org.uk

Year 11



I would like to say a huge well done to the year group on the fantastic costumes that were on show for the sponsored walk last week. The range of outfits from inflatable dinosaurs through to three old ladies with a shopping trolley must have been a sight to behold as the trail of students trekked over The Downs alongside the Year 11 staff team dressed as characters from Shrek and Green Crayola Crayons!

A reminder that the mock exams start week beginning 21st October, so that revision schedule should be fully up and running. Our intervention programme now includes one targeted session during tutor time each week and students have been made aware of this during tutor time this week.

A mention for our male football team this week who have progressed to the next round of the County Cup following a 5-3 penalty shootout victory against Gildredge House. Finally, good luck to Bode and Austin who this weekend travel with Brighton and Hove Albion FC to play in a Premier League tournament, we look forward to hearing how they get on.

Enjoy your weekends!

Mr Scowen

Acting Head of Year 11

