Willingdon
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Dear Parents/Carers,

SPONSORED WALK – Friday, 25th September 2026

Students in Years 7 – 11 are given the opportunity to revitalise their mental and physical health by walking 10 miles on the South Downs. As in previous years, this event takes place early on in the school year so there is a reasonable chance of good weather and all students can take part. The walk will be supervised from the front, back and middle by the Head of Year, the coaches and other teaching and support staff.

As a school, we intend to use the money raised by the walkers as our major fund-raiser for the year, to improve the opportunities and environment for the students. We therefore hope that parents and carers will wish to support this specific fund-raising exercise and encourage our youngsters to find the necessary sponsorship. Virtually the whole school participated in our last sponsored walk in 2025, and we want this again this year. Were every student to raise £20 this year, then we would exceed our £10,000 target. Every little helps.

As we did last year - we are asking students to 'enter' the walk. The way they do this, is by returning the Google form here – Sponsored Walk Permissions Form, along with a voluntary £10 entrance (sponsorship) fee paid on ParentPay (this basically equates to £1 for each mile walked). If students wish to raise more, they can donate through ParentPay as an additional contribution. Where there are multiple siblings, we have a voluntary £15 family entrance fee. We do not want the issue over an entrance fee to be a barrier to taking part, as our primary aim is to get the community enjoying this experience. If you are experiencing financial hardship, a sponsor form is available to raise these funds externally or speak to your child's Head of Year, and we will assist.

As usual, the 10-mile route follows public footpaths across the Downs and on the edge of Friston Forest, crossing the Wannock to Jevington road twice. The police have been consulted and are satisfied with the suitability of the route. At points where the road is crossed, and at other appropriate places, staff will be stationed to check the walkers as they pass and supervise their progress. Further detailed information is given to students in advance of the day of the walk. Students will walk in year groups with their coaching groups. Students are expected to walk in full PE kit, but with a 'splash' of their house colour added. This could be in the form of socks, ribbons, glitter etc. Coaching groups will be reminded which house they belong to and the colour assigned to them. For those not able to walk due to medical reasons, there will be community fund raising activities provided at school, these students will be fully supervised by staff. We really want everyone being a part of this community event.

All walkers are recommended to take a packed lunch to eat en route. Packed lunches can be purchased from the canteen (free to those eligible for a free school meal and otherwise at the cost of £3.15 payable to the canteen) will be available from 8.30am onwards; **If wanted, please order in advance** on the attached Google form. In addition to this, the Friends of Willingdon will run a snack shop along the route selling drinks, fruit, crisps and sweet snacks (please provide cash for this as on-line payments do not work in the middle of the forest!). Furthermore, the Friends will be offering a BBQ at the end of the walk. All 'food' items for the BBQ must be pre-ordered and paid for using ParentPay by Monday 25th September. Students can choose from a burger, hot dog or a vegetarian version of the two. In addition, soft drinks will be sold directly at the BBQ. These will not be on ParentPay, so cash again would be needed. An ice cream van will be on the school site for ice creams to be purchased on return to school should students wish.

All students will leave the school in time to complete the walk and arrive back at school by 3pm. Students will be allowed to leave, with parent permission, if they complete the walk earlier.

All students need to report back to school and register before leaving school. If it is not possible or appropriate for your child to return home early on that day, please indicate on the Google form. The school buses will depart at the usual time of 3.10pm.

We do hope you will want your child to take part in what has always been an enjoyable and rewarding experience. All students who would normally have attended school are expected to walk. If your child is unable to walk due to a medical reason, there are alternative options available. Any absences without a medical reason will be unauthorised. **NO STUDENT will be allowed to go on the walk unless we receive the completed Google form signed by either parent or carer by *Thursday, 17th September.***

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lesley Naylor
Head of Year 7 /Transition