

Wanstead High School

Education with Character

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Headteacher: Miss E Hillman

12th December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Ahead of my end-of-term letter, we are sharing some important safeguarding information to help keep your children and our wider community safe. Overall, pupil behaviour has been excellent both in school and in the community this term and we have seen some examples of pupils, especially Year 12 being very supportive to younger children and passing on key information on things they may have noticed that have been concerning. Thank you for your support with this.

However, there are some matters that require your attention as parents and carers.

Online Pranks and Trends

We are increasingly concerned about the growing craze for social media pranks and forfeits, such as those linked to Fantasy Football leagues. Recently, we have had to investigate a significant incident in the local community connected to these challenges, alongside several smaller incidents. During these investigations, we reviewed videos of pupils completing forfeits. While these may appear light-hearted, they can cause embarrassment and, more importantly, leave a lasting digital footprint. In one case, the school suffered considerable reputational damage.

We are particularly concerned that some forfeits have taken place in public spaces while pupils were wearing school uniform. One such incident caused major disruption in the local community and disturbed local people. We regularly remind pupils of our expectations in the community. While they are entitled to use local spaces after school, if a young person can be identified as a Wanstead High School pupil, they are representing the school. Our policy is clear: if a pupil brings the school into disrepute through anti-social or harmful behaviour, serious sanctions will follow, including suspension or more severe consequences.

We regularly remind pupils about the risks of social media in school. A “harmless prank” posted as a teenager can resurface years later and negatively impact future opportunities, including employment. We have also dealt with incidents recently where pupils were asked to say innocent things that were later edited and posted online in a way that was embarrassing.

Some pranks have involved groups of close friends, but others have crossed into ritual humiliation or hazing. While some may see this as part of ‘sporting culture’ or ‘banter’, it is not tolerated in our school community. Not all pupils feel equally confident within friendship groups, and some may feel pressured to take part against their wishes. Our priority is the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Activities involving humiliation, risk-taking, or online sharing can have long-term emotional and reputational consequences.

Other pranks have caused harm in the community, such as ringing doorbells and running away or kicking front doors. Local residents have been distressed, and such behaviour can verge on criminal damage.

We ask that you speak with your child about the importance of making safe, respectful choices and understanding the impact of their actions both online and in the community. Please reinforce the following messages:

- Pranks, forfeits, or challenges must never involve humiliation, risk-taking, or harm or have a negative impact on the local community.
- Wearing school uniform in any such activities can damage the school’s reputation and lead to serious disciplinary action.



- Think carefully before sharing any content online.
- Remember that the school has zero tolerance for these activities, regardless of personal views.

Thank you for your support in helping us maintain a safe and respectful school environment and community. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Information from the Police: ACT Early

As Christmas approaches, many parents will be buying new phones and devices for their children. The police are urging parents to be vigilant about online activity.

Last year, London saw a 38% increase in referrals of children to the Prevent scheme, which helps stop people becoming radicalised. It is vital that parents set appropriate controls and take an active interest in their children's digital lives to ensure they are not drawn towards extremist content.

The ACT Early website (<https://actearly.uk>) provides tips on warning signs, advice on conversations with your child, and guidance on what to do if you have concerns.

You can also read more here:

- **Link to full news article:**
<https://news.met.police.uk/news/parents-urged-to-be-vigilant-over-their-childrens-phones-503763>
- **Link to Met Police X post:**
https://x.com/metpoliceuk/status/1994692813628256294?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Etweet
- **Link to CTP Facebook post:**
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1300435232122508&set=a.305157808316927&locale=en_GB

Roblox

We also want to raise awareness of recent concerns regarding the online gaming platform Roblox. Investigations have revealed that extremist groups have used Roblox to share harmful content, including far-right imagery and extremist messages. This poses serious risks to children's safety and wellbeing.

You can read more here:

- [ITV News: Mosque attacks and far-right skins – Roblox teens exposed to extremist content](#)
- [What is Roblox - A safety guide for parents](#)
- [BBC News: Roblox safety concerns](#)

What you can do:

- Talk to your child about what they do online and who they interact with.
- Check privacy settings and enable parental controls.
- Monitor gameplay and encourage open conversations about anything unusual or upsetting.

If you have concerns or need support, please contact us. Together, we can help keep children safe online.

Safety in the Community

As the winter months bring darker evenings, we urge you to remain aware of where your children are. While reports of muggings have reduced significantly, it is important that pupils act safely and avoid situations that put them at risk.

Conversely, large groups of young people gathering can cause intimidation to others. Please remind your child to be mindful of how their presence and actions may affect the wider community.

Final Message

We want all families to be safe and happy over the festive period. We hope this is a peaceful and loving time for everyone, and that the advice above helps us work together to maintain a strong culture of safeguarding over the holidays and into the new year.

All the best

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emma Hillman".

Emma Hillman
Headteacher