

Wanstead High School

Education with Character

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Headteacher: Miss E Hillman

19th December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have made it through the longest and darkest term and I remain so inspired by the children that come to this school. They are without doubt the most engaging, ambitious and kind group of young people I have ever had the privilege of working with. Some days have their ups and downs but the path of adolescence never does run smooth. We are grateful for the positive way we are able to work with you as parents and carers to find solutions and your support for the direction of travel of the school.

I am super proud particularly of the way Year 11 and 13 have tackled their mock exams with some outstanding result successes, the way Year 7 have settled in, the maturity of our older pupils and the excellent input of the Year 12 pupils at the Sixth Form Open Evening. It is also such a pleasure to be in the classroom in this school. I am lucky enough to teach 7S French and it appears that I may be teaching 7G as well in January.

As well as this, the talent of all our pupils, whether on display at the music concert this week or in sporting and other events or activities inside and outside of school continue to inspire me. Some of our pupils, such as Noah Willer (swimming), are competing at a national level and many others are achieving unique sporting success. I also want to send a shout out also to those children that do the right thing each and every day and do it quietly and with no fuss. We work hard to ensure these pupils do not go under the radar. I am also hugely grateful to all our staff who work so hard to provide opportunities in and out of the classroom to support our young people and to those that go the extra mile organising out of the classroom opportunities, especially those abroad. A huge thank you also to the kitchen staff for the excellent Christmas dinner.

This letter contains some important information about the start of term and some updates:

Letter from Councillor Kam Rai

We received the attached letter today which is a credit to the hard work of the school community. What a great Christmas present!

Start of Term Arrangements

Normal gates will be open from 10.50am on 5th January and tutor time will begin at 11am for all promptly. Staff will undergo some key training with a focus on tutor time and the quality of education in the morning. If you wish your child to be supervised during this time, please complete the form by December 31st.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZwSBrH_wUbP-kk7-DjaXVyTylazDLa3rzn4sjdh6gXUiRdA/viewform?usp=publish-editor

Staffing

A warm welcome to ...



Mr Miah, Teacher of Maths

Mr Miah has experience teaching across Key Stages 3–5 and focuses on helping pupils build confidence, strengthen problem-solving skills, and achieve their full potential in mathematics. Holding a first-class master's degree in mechanical engineering, Khaled combines academic expertise with real-world applications to make learning engaging and meaningful and is keen to develop here as a leader.



Ms Flindall-Beard, EAL HLTA

Ms Flindall-Beard is an experienced educator with over 15 years' experience supporting English as an Additional Language learners both in the UK and internationally. She brings extensive classroom experience, cultural awareness and a genuine passion for helping pupils.

I am also delighted to officially welcome **Mr Sheehan as permanent Head of Media and Business** - we hope to start with a Business A Level in September 2026 for the current Year 11.

And a fond farewell and thank you to ...

- **Ms Worham, Deputy SENDCo**, who will be leaving us to spend time at home supporting her family. She will send a separate letter to SEND families.
- **Ms Begum, Head of Media**, who leaves us to spend more time with her family.
- **Ms Rahman, Maths Teacher**, who has supported us in Maths to cover absence and has been here for a number of years.
- **Ms Tranent, PE Teacher**, who has supported us in PE to cover an absence.
- **Ms Anwar, Exams Officer**, who is leaving to work at a new school in East London.
- **Ms Khan, EAL HLTA**, who leaves us after 12 years to enjoy her well earned retirement.
- **Ms Reis dos Santos, Welfare Assistant**, who has a new role.

We will inform you about additional replacements for the above once they are finalised. **Mr Tinker** will be taking over as **tutor of 11B** and **Mr Miah as tutor of 11H**.

A letter about timetable changes in Science will be sent out shortly as per previous correspondence. There will be some other minor changes to teachers in some areas eg. MFL, English and Geography to adapt to the staff changes.

There will be some set changes to Maths and again this will be in a separate letter and tutors may make some changes where appropriate and these will be relayed by the Head of Year to individual families.

Holidays

Although pupils are in your care over the holidays, we expect the highest standards of behaviour as they may still be identifiable as Wanstead pupils and also we want pupils to naturally respect their, and our, community. We are confident that this will be the case. Please also talk to your child about crossing roads safely and using the crossing, especially outside school. We regularly remind pupils but many still think they are invincible and dash across the road.

Please don't forget that pupils can contact us over the holiday if they need support via talktous@wansteadhigh.co.uk and you can report any safeguarding issues or ask for help via safeguarding@wansteadhigh.co.uk.

Uniform

All items of uniform should be checked and replaced if necessary over the break. A reminder that jumpers must be woollen or wool-look black V-necks, shirt buttons should be done up, and socks should be black or white only. We are pleased that girls have been excellent in wearing tights, which has made the uniform much smarter —

we have had zero complaints from the community or other parents since September. We continue to liaise with suppliers about a summer uniform, and tights will remain compulsory at least until the start of the summer term.

Lanyards are now embedded, compulsory and helping to keep everyone safe. After Christmas, conduct points will be given to pupils failing to wear lanyards, and parents will need to pay for lost lanyards. As children do not take these home, they are very hard to lose.

Water Bottles

Please ensure your child has a reusable water bottle. Buying a bottle each day costs you unnecessary money and damages the environment. Fresh cold water is available for all from our water fountains.

School Feedback and Actions

Pupil Council

Pupil Council has provided feedback to Senior Leaders and these areas covered food, the water fountains and the site. These issues are being passed to the catering company and the site issues addressed. They also feel teachers give more positive points to younger pupils. Moving forward, we will be asking all staff to ensure these points are awarded equitably across all key stages. Heads of Department will be given data to monitor and ensure this is in place, as well as checks from Heads of Year.

Summer Parent Survey

I promised to send a summary from the Parent Survey which helped define the School Development Plan. There was a huge amount of positive feedback and individual comments for staff which have all been passed on via individual postcards.

What You Appreciated Most:

- A strong sense of inclusion, both in the curriculum and within the school community and some very positive feedback about SEND support to pupils.
- The care and support offered to pupils, creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere.
- Clear behaviour expectations that contribute to a safe and structured environment.
- The breadth of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and relationships in many areas.
- Much better communication and organisation.
- The extra-curricular and trip opportunities especially in the performing arts.
- The improved academic outcomes in many areas.

Areas Identified for Improvement:

- Supply staff, turnover and retention: You expressed concerns about absent staff, consistency of teaching and the impact this may have on pupil progress.
- Communication: You feel there is a need for more frequent and detailed updates, particularly around academic progress.
- Inclusivity for SEND pupils: While inclusion is valued and there was some very positive feedback, you want to see even stronger consistent support for students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Stretch and challenge: You feel that pupils could be pushed further to reach their full potential.
- Consistency: You highlighted the importance of consistent approaches across staff.
- Facilities and building: You remain frustrated by the challenges of the new build and the general presentation of the site

We had already identified these issues and your personal feedback helps us to reflect on the impact of these things on you and your children. These points are all addressed in the 2 year SDP. Your feedback is always invaluable as we continue to build a school environment that meets the needs of every child and family. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and helping us improve.

Actions Taken Based on Feedback:

ParentPay Auto Top-Up: YOU SAID you wanted more information about auto top-up for ParentPay. WE DID provide this on the website under ParentPay Auto Top-Up.

EduLink Points: YOU SAID you wanted EduLink points cleared for the previous year. WE DID clear these points. While they remain in the database for record purposes, they no longer affect current totals.

Pupil Survey

This will be sent out via Google Classroom over the holidays. Please encourage your child to complete this and the Wanstead Walls survey.

Building Update

We hope that we will be able to move into the new building by September 2026 but this is still not set in stone. I will keep you updated as soon as I have news and am keeping an eye on the Redbridge website and advise that you do too. I have found out from here that we are also getting the 'cutting-edge IT suite' that I requested 3 years ago!

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-the-arts/investing-in-redbridge>

School Budgets

We're now over halfway through the financial year, and there are some steep financial challenges ahead, as there are for every school in Redbridge and beyond. This will no doubt be plastered all over the media. Despite this, I want to reassure you that our focus remains firmly on providing the very best education for every child.

Like many schools across the country, we've seen significant changes in funding over the past decade. The '[Stop School Cuts' website](#) (run by the National Education Union (NEU) and supported by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)), shows that our school has lost the equivalent of £860K in annual funding since 2010-11. This loss of funding, alongside inflationary increases in all our ongoing maintenance costs as well as exorbitant agency costs, means that we may no longer be able to afford the level of spending on things such as IT equipment, site improvement projects, materials, equipment, books and resources in comparison with previous years. Staffing costs here still however remain at the 80% level considered sustainable.

That said, our commitment to the quality of education has never been stronger, especially in such an unstable world - we need to future proof our pupils. We continue to deliver an ambitious curriculum and create an inclusive environment where every pupil can thrive. We are proud of what we achieve together, and we will keep finding creative ways to make the most of every resource.

Next year, we expect a small increase in funding (around 2%), but inflation and further pay awards will create a gap. By law, we must present a balanced budget, so we will need to make savings and consider all options carefully.

My priority is clear: to protect the breadth of our curriculum, ensure we deliver the SDP, maintain reasonable class sizes, and uphold our inclusive ethos. There will be tough decisions, but every choice will be guided by what

is best for our pupils. I am confident that, with your support and our dedicated team, we will continue to provide an education that inspires and prepares our young people for the future.

Thank you for standing with us. If you have any influence in education finance, please use this opportunity to advocate on our behalf. Together, we can ensure our school remains a place of opportunity and excellence.

We are also aware of a projected drop in the number of secondary school places needed in the future—potentially up to 15 forms of entry by 2030. While we remain full and continue to have a waiting list, meaning we are confident this will not impact us as it may other schools, it is essential that all headteachers work together to manage this strategically across the borough.

Letter to our Sons

We have been given details of a project from *Adolescence* star Stephen Graham and psychology lecturer Orly Klein, inviting fathers to write a letter to their sons for a book on how we raise boys to be the men we would like them to be. Please be aware that the deadline for submissions is Monday 12th January. The book, *Letters to Our Sons*, will be published in October 2026. It would be great if any of our fathers could be involved. We continue to prioritise supporting pupils with our key character virtues at school and challenging misogyny and violence against women and girls. [Information here](#).

Do please ensure you read the Heron Homelink, which also celebrates the amazing work of our PTA. Thank you to them, our School Governors, and all those who support our community in being the best we can be.

We wish you a very Happy Christmas, a joyous New Year, and a safe, peaceful, and prosperous 2026.

All the best



Emma Hillman
Headteacher