

Wanstead High School

Education with Character

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Headteacher: Miss E Hillman

3rd September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you have had a wonderful holiday and your child/ren are ready to come back to school on Wednesday. A special warm welcome to all our new Year 7 and 12 pupils – we are delighted to have you as part of the community. I also want to welcome all our new staff and Ms Samuel and Ms Cini who join our Leadership Team. Details of all new staff were sent out at the end of last term.

2024 is the year of the school's centenary and we will update you with details of any celebration events, as well as ensuring pupils are aware of the fascinating history of the school.

Building Update

You will have read about the issues across the country with schools being affected by **reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)**. As you know, we had already undertaken a condition survey last year and this had not found issues with this so, despite our other challenges with the building, **we have no identified issues in this area and the school will open as planned**. Redbridge Council will be coming in to do additional checks early in the term but I am confident this will not be an issue.

We do remain challenged by the building work and you may have noticed that very little work has taken place on the site since June due to delays in the schedule caused by a number of issues. This is due to start again next week but we remain concerned about the noise levels as much of the noisy work was due to take place over the summer. I would encourage you to ask questions of the Local Authority and local councillors to ensure they are aware of the impact on our community. We will keep you updated as always.

We have decided to start term without the one-way system in operation as this has affected the well-being of pupils and staff and this was fed back in the surveys. We will monitor this carefully and regularly risk assess and this will rely on pupils being sensible and mature as they move round the site.

However, on a brighter note, a lot of refurbishment work has taken place over the summer with rooms being repainted and an old portacabin has been revamped to provide more pastoral space where we hope to develop a new well-being area later in the year. My thanks to the site staff and Ms Williams, my Business Manager, who have worked tirelessly to ensure this work is completed. Additional thanks to Dennis Weeks and the PTA for installing the greenhouses in the quad area that the Science department are so excited about.

Start of Term

Below is a summary of the start times for pupils on Wednesday 6th September. On this day, our new Year 12 pupils will enter via the main reception as a one-off. Sixth Form pupils will be allowed to enter through the main gate on Redbridge Lane West (as well as the Leisure Centre entrance as they choose) as a trial and again this will be monitored. There will be no break food served on this day. All pupils will be expected to line up with key staff and then will be taken to their new tutor groups arranged in year group areas. There will be extended tutor sessions for all pupils, as well as orientation and biometric processes (fingerprints taken for lunch payments) for Year 7, and assemblies for each year group over the first few days. Mrs Martin will be ensuring all pupils are aware of the new Behaviour Policy and what it means for them to ensure we engender the highest standards at all times keeping everyone safe and happy. Pupils will receive timetables in paper form and once any issues are ironed out, will receive a small laminated timetable that will fit in their pockets.



Year	Time	Entrance	Other information
7	Gates open from 8.20am for a prompt 8.40am start. Pupils should aim to be in school each day for 8.35am.	Entrance to right of main school	Pupils will start with an assembly.
8	Gates open from 10am for a prompt 10.20am start. Pupils should aim to be in school by 10.15am at the latest.	Entrance to right of main school	Pupils to join tutor group line up on the Upper Playground by 10.20am.
9	Gates open from 10am for a prompt 10.20am start. Pupils should aim to be in school by 10.15am at the latest.	Entrance to right of main school	Pupils to join tutor group line in front of the field by 10.20am.
10	Gates open from 10am for a prompt 10.20am start. Pupils should aim to be in school by 10.15am at the latest.	Leisure Centre entrance	Pupils to join tutor group line up on the Lower Playground by 10.20am.
11	Gates open from 10am for a prompt 10.20am start. Pupils should aim to be in school by 10.15am at the latest.	Leisure Centre entrance	Pupils to join tutor group line up on the Lower Playground by 10.20am.
12	Main reception accessible from 9am for a prompt 9.15am start; welcome assembly and induction session.	Main reception (first day only) Either entrance all other times	Pupils may now use either entrance. Pupils go home at 11.20am. Dress code must be followed.
13	Gates open from 10am for a prompt 10.20am start. Pupils should aim to be in school by 10.15am at the latest.	Either entrance	

On Thursday 7th, we return to normal start times for all pupils with Years 7-9 using the gate to the right of the main building and Years 10 and 11 the Leisure Centre entrance using the path not walking through the car park. Please do not obstruct traffic if you are dropping or picking up your child and do not leave engines idling. We encourage pupils to walk or take public transport and the previous guidance about bicycles needs to be noted. Pupils should arrive in full school uniform and have put any headphones or phones away so they cannot be seen or heard.

Times of the School Day

Below are the slightly amended times of the school day including 5 minutes extra for each lunch:

Time	Activity
8.25am	School gates open
8.35am	First warning bell – pupils should be in school by this time to ensure they get to tutor time on time
8.40am	Morning Tutor Time / Assembly
9.00am	Period 1
10.00am	Break for Years 7-9 Period 2 for Years 10-13
10.20am	Break ends for Years 7-9 Period 2 for Years 7-9
11.00am	Break for Years 10-13
11.20am	Break ends for Years 10-13 Period 3 for all
12.20pm	Lunchtime for Years 7-9 Period 4 for Years 10-13
1.05pm	Period 4 for Years 7-9
1.20pm	Lunchtime for Years 10-13
2.05pm	Period 5 for all
3.05pm	Pupils move to extra-curricular activities or school gates to leave
3.10pm	Depart

Attendance

We will be continuing to focus on raising attendance, although our figures last year were well above national figures. School attendance is clearly a national issue and pupils who miss more than 10% of school have more than doubled since Covid, with figures most alarming for vulnerable pupils. We recognise that more children are suffering from emotionally based school avoidance and commit to working with you and external agencies where necessary to support where this is the case. I urge you to reach out to us if you have any concerns about your child's attendance or well-being promptly so we can work in partnership to support. On another note, please make sure you request any absence for any reason well in advance and we will be developing an on-line form for this. Please do not book holidays in term-time as we will not authorise these requests - we know the cost of holidays is shocking but we need your support with this.

Uniform

Please make sure you read the uniform guidelines sent out at the end of last term – we have made some changes to the rules as a result of feedback and want to ensure everyone is aware of the new expectations. Whilst we have relaxed some rules, we remain committed to ensuring high standards of professional dress and this includes blazers and suitable skirts which should be school-style and knee-length. We have also made a late decision that tailored shorts can now be part of the uniform all year round and will update the information leaflet next week. We return to the blazers at all times rule, except when pupils are given specific permission to remove in the classroom. We know it will be hot in the first week but want to be sure that we start school with the right expectations. Pupils should not wear jumpers if they are too hot in the first week or so, but we are not anticipating a long heatwave!

We will be further reviewing uniform in line with Government guidance this year and aim to ensure there are more suppliers introduced to support families. In the meantime, please do contact Heads of Year or Ms Cini if you need any financial support with uniform and remember the PTA collect uniform in school so we welcome any used good-condition uniform to support the second-hand 'shop'.

Lockers

A lot of items were left in lockers - these have been cleared for new bookings and will be returned to pupils at the start of term. There are still some lockers available for booking.

Pupils in the Local Community

We also expect pupils to uphold the standards of uniform in the local community and not roll up skirts, take off ties etc. We remind you that pupils should go home promptly and not hang around in large groups on the street or in shops or cafes. Please be mindful about the muggings in the community last year and we remind you to ensure pupils keep valuables hidden and seek help from local businesses if necessary. We will continue to patrol the High Street each afternoon after school with support from our Safer Schools Officer when she is available. Pupils must not loiter outside houses or knock on or approach any of our neighbours. If anti-social behaviour becomes a problem, you will be expected to collect your child from school as per our Policy.

Survey Feedback

We are grateful for feedback from all our stakeholders and a summary of some of the responses will be sent out in the first weeks. Parents' Evenings will continue to be run on line as this reflects parental preference but there will be an opportunity in each year group for parents to come in for information events and we encourage parents to attend events such as the school performances to ensure you feel part of the community. We encourage families to also get involved in the PTA.

Calendar of Events and Assessment

We will be sending out the new assessment calendar shortly so you can support your child/ren with preparing for the termly more formal assessments that we have introduced, including details of mock exams. We will also send out information about Parents' Evenings and extra-curricular activities; the latter is put together in the first few weeks of term. Do encourage your child to take part in extra-curricular activities and the impending production of Grease – we want all pupils to really embrace education with character.

Please don't forget pupils can currently access a free breakfast club or attend the Library before school from 7.45am each day via Main Reception. The new website will also be launched this term.

Learning and Teaching – Ms Steel, Deputy Head

As we start a new academic year here is a reminder of our LEARN – Wanstead High habits for effective learning used to provide our pupils and their teachers with a number of consistent habits for all teachers and pupils to adhere to - aiming to make every lesson engaging and impactful towards learning. LEARN promotes **Leadership, Enquiry, Active learning, Resilience** and **No fear**. Keeping LEARN in mind we teach our pupils to develop habits to lead and take responsibility for aspects of their learning, ask and answer questions posed, remain actively engaged and involved, think hard and prepare to be mentally challenged and for healthy struggles. Importantly, adopting strategies to develop their resilience and resourcefulness in lessons which includes engaging with their teachers' feedback for subject specific targets to improve further. In this first term all pupils will re-visit LEARN through an assembly, as well as through their timetabled lessons. Please visit the school's website for more details on LEARN and the school's curriculum.

Wanstead Stars

Please do send us any photos and information about amazing or interesting things your child has achieved over the summer or in the last year. We will use these to add to our Wanstead Stars and display around the school and in our publicity. If you send them in, we will assume you and your child are happy for us to use these.

We wish everyone a smooth start to term. We will be focusing on key objectives for school development in our two INSET days including a continued focus on continuing to raise the standards of learning and teaching in every classroom for every child. We will send out a link to the revised School Development Plan shortly. I look forward to getting to know you better this year and will also be setting up termly Parent Surgeries where you can raise specific issues or just come and say hello. I am also delighted to be teaching a GCSE Drama group this year – let's hope the Year 10s are as delighted as I am!! If you have any questions or queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the school. We will also be contacting you next week to ask for those that can afford it to contribute to our School Fund which supports opportunities outside of the classroom for all pupils.

And, finally, here's hoping Ofsted don't arrive next week!

All the best

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emma Hillman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Emma Hillman
Headteacher