



West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'

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Dear West Park Families

This really is a special time of the year as we begin to see the back of the cold, dark winter months and begin to enjoy the bright days that Spring brings. We still haven't seen an increase in temperatures (it was a real shock to be scraping the car this morning!) but I have no doubt that this will come over the next few weeks. This change feels particularly poignant this year as we slowly emerge from Covid restrictions. We have all enjoyed interacting more freely with pupils as we have ceased wearing masks around the school site. For some of our younger pupils it has been a shock to see that staff have faces that go below their nose!

As we continue on our journey out of Covid we have returned to our rule of requiring pupils to take their coats off inside the classroom. Although twice weekly testing has ceased we are still seeing positive Covid cases amongst both staff and pupils. Please do test if your child is experiencing Covid symptoms and continue to report positive results to the school. We can also offer advice and guidance in relation to isolation and lateral flow testing. Prior to Easter we are hopeful that we will be able to re-launch our assembly programme. This is very exciting and we are looking forward to talking to full year groups again.

Punctuality to school/work is a key element of being successful and we are very proud of the vast majority of pupils who attend school on time, ready to learn every day. Unfortunately, a very small minority of pupils do not attend on time which can impact on their learning and the learning of others. We have trialled a daily text service for Year 9 and Year 10 which gives parents and carers an early alert that their child has been late for school. This has been very useful in allowing parents and carers to work pro-actively with the school to stop this pattern of behaviour. We have now developed the capacity to expand this service and from Monday 21st March, we will be rolling this out to include Year 7 and Year 8 pupils.

Transition

Year 6 pupils received their offer letters for secondary school places on 1st March. We have offered 290 places against a PAN (Published Admission Number) of 290. There are a number of children in catchment (normal area) who have not obtained a place as well as a number of children who live outside of catchment (out of area) but have a sibling attending West Park. We have had numerous conversations with families about this and it is likely that we will have a large number of appeals in May.

Transition activities have already commenced for these pupils with a variety of information being sent home alongside a 'Welcome to West Park' letter. Pupils will be completing a 'Who am I' booklet to help us get to know them and to support us in comprising Year 7 form classes. This year we will utilise our online offer, including our virtual tour, alongside a range of face to face transition activities. Three face to face, city wide, transition days are planned for early in July.

Continuing with the transition theme, we are delighted to be inviting the Year 5 pupils from our partner primary schools for a visit this term. This provides these children with their first opportunity to see a secondary school in action and is always well received by local families.

Year 11

Our year 11 GCSE cohort are currently finalising their exams as part of Assessment Point 2. This assessment model was put in place nationally to support the centre assessed grade (CAG) which will be implemented if summer exams do not go ahead. Year 11 completed a full set of mocks in December/January which have been followed up with a mock results day and a second Year 11 parents' evening. This second assessment point has involved Year 11 pupils sitting one exam paper under full exam conditions. There is now a strong likelihood that Summer exams will take place. Mr Allsop is currently planning our Year 11 revision timetable which will start shortly after the Easter holidays and run throughout the examination period.

Year 9 Options Process

The Year 9 options process has been facilitated this year using a hybrid model which includes online subject videos, an instructional PowerPoint about the process and an online parents' evening. Option forms were due in by Wednesday 16th March to allow us time to timetable courses for Key Stage 4. This is a significant undertaking as we will now have 600 pupils spread across Year 10 and Year 11.

High Standards and Expectations

At West Park we will always have very high expectations of our pupils. This allows us to have the unique ethos that permeates across the school site and allows pupils to develop and grow in an environment that is conducive to their learning. Our pupils are very responsive to this and I am incredibly proud to say that over 1200 pupils have done the right thing this year without picking up any sanctions or behaviour points. Indeed, a large number of these pupils are celebrated with different rewards and recognition including our Feel-Good Friday scheme and our upcoming Interim Assessment Awards. It is fantastic to see so many of our pupils excelling at the school. At times, we are aware that any pupil can get it wrong and we use a vast array of strategies to minimise these events and the subsequent disruption that they cause. As stated at Open Evening, we do not negotiate on strategies like detentions and expect all West Park families to support this process if and when it is required. As always, I am very happy and proud to show families around the West Park site during the school day. These tours really do emphasise the impact of our endeavours.

Events

It really is exciting to be able to start planning whole school events again. This provides a real opportunity for the school community to come together and indulge in a bit of impromptu singing or dancing or even both, particularly if certain members of staff have an involvement.

Please be aware of the following dates:

- Friday 18th March Non-Uniform Day in support of the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal
- Friday 8th April Non-Uniform Day in support of Spondon Green Spaces
- Saturday 11th June Queen's Jubilee/Birthday Bash

We have also slightly amended our school calendar for 2022 – 2023 please see below:

Terms and Holidays

2022-2023

AUTUMN TERM

Thursday 1 st September 2022	INSET DAY
Friday 2 nd September 2022	INSET DAY
Monday 5 th September 2022	Return to school
Monday 12 th September 2022	INSET DAY/Open Evening
Friday 21 st October 2022	Break-up for half-term holiday
Monday 31 st October 2022	Return to school
Friday 25 th November 2022	INSET DAY
Thursday 22 nd December 2022	Break-up for Christmas holiday

SPRING TERM

Monday 9 th January 2023	Return to school
Friday 17 th February 2023	Break-up for half-term holiday
Monday 27 th February 2023	Return to school
Friday 31 st March 2023	Break-up for Easter holiday

SUMMER TERM

Monday 17 th April 2023	Return to school
Monday 1 st May 2023	Bank Holiday
Tuesday 2 nd May 2023	Return to school
Friday 26 th May 2023	Break-up for half-term holiday
Monday 5 th June 2023	Return to school
Friday 14 th July 2023	INSET DAY
Friday 21 st July 2023	Break-up for Summer holiday

As we project forward to a life beyond the pandemic, I am also acutely aware that a number of our families are already feeling the significant impact of rising fuel costs, energy price increases and noticeable difference in the price of shopping. In these strange times we are genuinely here to help and continue to think of innovative ways to support our West Park families.

I can now say with optimism that I look forward to seeing many of you at school events next term!

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott McGregor', written in a cursive style.

Scott McGregor
Head