



29 October 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Autumn Term – Half Term 2

I hope you had a lovely and relaxing break and that your son/daughter is ready to start the second half term of the academic year.

Clubs

I am really pleased to announce the clubs programme for this half term which is available on our website and by clicking [here](#). We are very proud of our clubs provision and the opportunities that it offers our students to step out of their comfort zones and try something new. This half term's programme includes brand new Gymnastics, Volleyball, Improvisation and Greek clubs.

Values

At Whitefriars School we teach our students to live by shared values and to hold these deep in their heart. In November will be focussing on the value of peace and kindly ask that you continue to support us in promoting this value at home. We will be teaching our students about respecting each other, acting with compassion and to reflect on their choices and actions. Parental support with our shared values makes a huge difference.

Theme

Every half term, in Key Stage 3, we consider a different theme. This half term the theme is 'How has Britain changed and developed?' Please visit our website or click [here](#) to find out what the students will be learning about in relation to this theme.

Word of the week

As you know every week we have a word of the week. This is part of our strategy to help students further increase their vocabulary. Please could we ask for your support in using the word of the week during the week at home. This week's word is hackneyed. Please note that all upcoming words are in student planners.

Philosophy and inspirational stories

Every week all our students learn about a different philosopher. This is to help them further develop their skills and appreciate the diversity of thought that shapes our world and makes our school a lovely place to be. This week our students are learning about Socrates and his stance on morality. Each week we motivate our students with inspirational stories. This week we are learning about Alek Wek and how it inspires us to remember that beauty does not mean going along with the crowd.

Home learning

Home learning for Key Stage 3 students is organised into fortnightly home learning booklets which are accessed and completed online. The fortnightly due date will make it very easy for students to remember when home learning is due, the online nature of the resources means that students can always access what they need and the requirement to complete the learning tasks online means there are no problems with submission. Parents are also able to see everything that students have to do and thus can support as appropriate. Students have been taught how to access these booklets on Microsoft Notebook via their Office 365 accounts which we have provided. Students can also attend home learning club, which runs every day from 3pm to 4pm, if they encounter difficulties. Please be aware that the next home learning booklet is due on Thursday 1st November. Please note that the home learning due dates for the whole academic year are in student planners.

Year 10 students receive regular home learning from their GCSE subject teachers and the students are required to record this home learning in their planners. It is vital that the students complete this home learning on time so that they continue to make excellent progress in ensuring that they achieve high GCSE grades. Please note that it will be compulsory for Year 10 students to attend home learning club if they do not complete their home learning and we will inform you if we need to make these arrangements.

iPads

All of our current Year 9 and Year 10 students are leased iPads so that they can access school learning resources at home. The iPads are also another device by which they can access and complete their home learning tasks. Our Years 7 and 8 students also have access to a large number of iPads in school and these are regularly used in lessons to greatly aid and support learning. They allow for easy access to resources and for the use of a variety of applications that help students with their learning.

This is a change from our original plan to lease all of our student's iPads to take home. The change in policy is because of the increasing need to help our younger students regulate the amount of screen time they have access to. It means we can provide education throughout Years 7 and 8 regarding screens before we provide them with their own device in Year 9. You will have heard in the news that the over use of screens means that children become addicted, monopolised and then controlled by these devices. This addiction can be seen when children cannot eat a meal, hold a conversation or socialise with friends without regular checking of their phone. More worryingly the comfort blanket of a screen and the lack of face to face conversations leads to the rise of online bullying and results in children saying things that they would not normally dream of saying. The addiction can cause mental health problems, loneliness and a break down in family communication and the inability to concentrate for more than 20 seconds. It can also lead to anxiety, insomnia and relationship issues. Unfortunately it leads to children craving instant gratification, by counting views, likes and subscribers rather than appreciating the delayed benefits of effort and hard work.

It is for this reason that we also do not allow students access to their mobile phones in school. It means they have a break from the device and thus more opportunity to develop important social skills. If students are found using a mobile phone then the device is handed to the school office for them to collect at the end of the school day. We really appreciate all the parental support that we have with this

approach.

Ethos and behaviour

At Whitefriars School we are a Rights Respecting school and take seriously the right for all our students to learn in a calm and positive environment. We recognise that sometimes students make the wrong choices and that these may affect the right of other students to learn. In these instances we take an educational approach and teach our students why the action was wrong and how they can avoid this happening in the future. We also help our student's plan their next steps so that they can successfully resolve these situations and move on.

Where student learning is significantly disrupted, we will remove the unsettled student from the classroom so that the learning of others can continue uninhibited. The student will then take part in a values workshop after school on the same day so that this can be properly resolved. We will email you as soon after 2pm as possible to let you know if your son/daughter is taking part in one of these workshops. We kindly ask for your support in these instances so that we can ensure that any serious disruption is resolved in a timely manner so that it does not continue the next day.

We all believe it is crucial that students are punctual to all their lessons; if students were 5 minutes late to all of their lessons for a week they would actually miss 2.5 hours of their learning. This would seriously disadvantage their progress. If students encounter any continuous problems with their punctuality then we will be running punctuality workshops after school on the same day that the problem arises. In these workshops we will provide education to the students, in our usual environment of positivity and care, so that the problem is resolved by the very next day. Once again we will notify you of this by email as soon as possible after 2pm.

Many thanks for your positivity and support and please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Watson
Associate Headteacher (Secondary)