



NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you enjoyed the recent holiday and have had a good start to the Summer term. To our new families joining us in September, a warm welcome to our school community! We look forward to getting to know you and your children.

I am writing to inform you about three important topics that you need to be aware of when your child joins us:

- The new school day
- The school's financial position
- Mobile phones.

This should ensure you are 'up to speed' for when your child joins us in September.

The New School Day

Thank you to all parents and carers who took part in the recent school day consultation, whether by completing the survey or taking part in parent focus groups. The focus groups gave us an opportunity to explain some of the proposed changes in more detail and to discuss your concerns.

My final proposal to governors took account of the views of staff, students and parents/ carers. From September, this will be the new schedule for the school day:

Gates open: 8.15

Gates close: 8.40

Lesson 1: 8.45 - 9.45

Lesson 2: 9.45 - 10.45

Break: 10.45 - 11.05

Lesson 3: 11.05 - 12.05

Form time: 12.05 - 12.25

Lunch: 12.25 - 1.15

Lesson 4: 1.15 - 2.15

Lesson 5: 2.15 - 3.15

School ends: 3.15





Parents, carers, students and staff told us that they preferred a later start with an 8.40 arrival so we made this change. There were mixed views about moving form time but we decided to go ahead with this in order to facilitate flexible working for staff, ensuring that we retain and attract the best teachers and support staff at WSFG. We know that moving form time may be challenging for some students and we are committed to working with families to make adjustments so that everyone has a good start to the day. Whilst the majority of staff agreed with a shorter lunchtime, students and parents / carers did not. I have therefore compromised with a 50 minute lunch, bringing us into line with the majority of Waltham Forest schools.

The changes will take effect from 1st September, 2025.

School Budget

You will be aware that schools across the country are facing increased budgetary challenges this year. NAHT, one of the Headteachers' unions, has reported that 94% of secondary schools will not be able to afford their costs this year. NFER / Sutton Trust reports that 51% of schools will need to make staffing cuts. Our school budget has been a healthy one up to now, supported by the additional funding we received from our designation as a Teaching School Hub and additional COVID/ Recovery funding.

Now that both of these funding streams have ceased and because of increasing costs (teachers' and support staff pay awards and inflationary increases to goods and services), we find ourselves in a position where we have to ask parents / carers for financial support in order to maintain the quality of education and support you have come to expect. For example, we know that parents/ carers really value the extra-curricular opportunities we offer but if activities are during the day, we have to fund cover for teachers and other staff to supervise the visits. A typical trip, involving half a year group (90 students), will usually involve the school finding in excess of £1,000 to cover the teachers out on the trip.

We are proud to be a comprehensive school: free at the point of use and able to offer opportunities to all. We want to continue to offer these opportunities and to ensure that the most disadvantaged can access the same standard of education as all of the students in our school. Governors have asked me to gauge the views of parents and carers about whether you would be willing to support the school financially and what those contributions might look like. I am aware that some schools ask for annual contributions whilst others ask parents and carers to be involved in fundraising for special projects. I understand that not all families are in a position to provide financial support.

Mobile Phones

I wrote to you in February about our mobile phone policy, to remind families about our expectations. A copy of the letter is included. I wanted to clarify some of the consequences of mobile phone use in school:



- If students are found wearing Air Pods or headphones during the school day, these will be confiscated for 48 hours and parents /carers will need to collect them.
- If students take photographs or videos in school, we will supervise students in deleting those photographs. In most cases, students are usually internally suspended.
- If students take photographs in school and share them, either on social media or through messaging, in most cases, students will receive an external suspension.
- Please remember that confiscated phones will only be returned to parents and carers.

I appreciate the support we have received from families regarding our mobile phone policy, including encouraging messages relating to our becoming a Smartphone Free School'. We will be advising parents and carers of our incoming year 7 students about this policy. I will be giving the same message to prospective parents and carers in our Open Evening in September. The school intends to go ahead with the policy change from September, 2026.

As always, I appreciate both your positive feedback and constructive criticism, aimed at helping us to improve further, and your willingness to work together for the absolute best for all of our students.

Best wishes

Helen Marriott

Headteacher