



The Wilsthorpe Way

Issue #1

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Review of the term

Welcome to the first edition of 'The Wilsthorpe Way', our new termly e-newsletter for families. Each edition will begin by looking back at the previous few weeks, but most of the content will help to update families about what is coming up soon, so that you feel informed and prepared for the term ahead.



More than anything, this term has been characterised simply by how pleased students and staff alike have been to return to some normality. Teachers have taught in specialist spaces, students have enjoyed accessing 5 lessons per day across the full curriculum and have engaged with renewed enthusiasm in a relaunched programme of clubs, activities, arts groups, and sports teams, not to mention formal assessments and mock examinations.

We often tell students 'Education cannot be done *to* you, only *with* you'. Education is indeed a partnership, and we rely on you as families to take an active interest and to work with us as a school, through times of both challenge and celebration in your child's educational journey. I very much hope that this newsletter helps to strengthen that vital partnership.

Derek Hobbs - Headteacher

Success to Celebrate

Sport and Physical Education

Earlier this term, seven local secondary schools took part in The District Cross Country Championship. It is an event that Wilsthorpe has organised for the past 10 years with many staff and over 40 student leaders engaging in marshalling, course setting, recording, first aid, and team management. Wilsthorpe's Sixth Form students acted as hares for all races, including Jack Davies, on course to represent Wales as a national competitor. Inspiring runs from the 50 Wilsthorpe competitors led to over 20 qualifying for the Derbyshire Schools Cross Country event in January. Wilsthorpe's long established racing pedigree was evident again this year, winning four out of six age categories and finishing second in the other two. Following this success, five students were invited to a cross country training camp at Lea Green where they met British Athletes. A special 'well done' to the following students who finished in the top 3 for their age: Dillon (Y9) – 1st, Belle (Y9) – 2nd, Bailey (Y9) – 3rd, Marima (Y7) – 1st, Kieran (Y7) – 2nd, Ruby (Y10) – 1st.



Strong community links with Long Eaton Rugby Club enabled both Wilsthorpe boys and girls to train and enter competitions at the club with LRC coaching staff. The Derby University Climbing Wall is another excellent local facility our students have benefitted from this term. GCSE Sports Studies students have attended sessions led by Derby University coaches in order to help improve their grades for practical assessment. Over 150 Year 7 and Year 8 students attended an inter-form football tournament over four weeks this term, battling through poor weather with great attitude and spirit. County Cup football matches led to successes for both our boys and our girls. U12 and U14 girls' teams have been drawn against Alvaston or Repton respectively in the next round.

In addition, lunchtime and after school clubs continue to provide opportunities for sport and fitness. This term we have run clubs in football, netball, rugby, badminton, basketball, cross-country and fitness. Well done to everyone who attends; we always welcome students whether experts or complete beginners.

Creative and Performing Arts

The Creative and Performing Arts team has had a busy term with extra-curricular activities: 'Shrek the Musical' had its first full run-through in rehearsals this week, a production which features 73 students on stage. The Drama Club has been busy this term, staging an original performance entitled 'The Disappearance of Santa'. A significant number of students have taken Associated Board of the Royal College of Music (ABRSM) and Trinity graded music exams, with a selection of students successfully gaining places in the County Youth Orchestra and Band. In Art, there have been trips to Derby Art Gallery and the Museum of Making, as well as a keenly contested Photography competition. In Years 7-9, we have seen some excellent clay skulls produced in Art, original compositions created in Music and comical masked performances in Drama. In Years 10-13, students are working incredibly hard towards completing their internal assessments and have demonstrated resilience, teamwork, imagination and confidence when responding to briefs set by the exam boards.

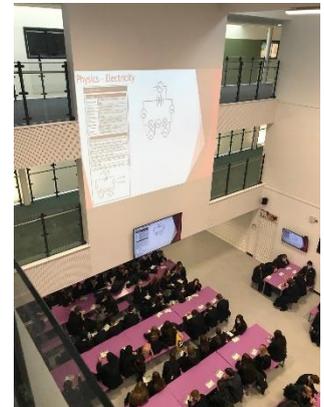


Excellence in Learning

Year 10 and 11 students have enjoyed a series of 'Mastery Mornings'. These whole-year group sessions are delivered by some of our most experienced teachers and focus on key elements of GCSE specifications and exam papers. It has been wonderful seeing our students engage positively with the knowledge that has been presented to them. So far, there have been sessions delivered for English, Maths, Science and Geography – with more planned in the New Year.



Equally our teachers have been honing their craft through a series of 'Professional Practice Mornings'. These short sessions, which run before school, focus on refining teachers' skills even further. So far there have been sessions about 'Effective Questioning', 'Memorisation and Knowledge Retrieval' and 'De-escalation'. Supporting the professional development of our expert teachers means that our students have the best possible experience in the classroom.



Professional Practice template

Effective questioning

Essential elements:

1. Script key questions in advance of the lesson and strategies for 'randomising' or targeting them appropriately.
2. Build in 'wait time', to enable students to really think deeply about their responses.
3. Don't allow any student to opt out or be passive or settle for their first response during questioning.

Step-by-step guide:

- Script some key questions that you plan to ask during the lesson. Include some questions to check substantive knowledge, but also some open questions that challenge students to compare, evaluate and analyse.

Relationships First

Winter Wear and Uniform

School expectations for school uniform remain high through the winter months. We ask parents to be mindful that students need suitable warm and waterproof coats to ensure they arrive at school ready to learn and able to focus in lessons. Students must wear their blazers under their coats and coats should not be worn instead of a blazer.

We recommend, if students are particularly cold, that they wear their Wilsthorpe jumper or cardigan. Other jumpers and cardigans are not permitted.

As with all year round, students wearing hoodies will be asked to remove them or will have them confiscated.

PSHE - Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year and is a time to remember the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a time when we seek to learn the lessons of the past and recognise that genocide does not just take place on its own – it's a steady process which can begin if discrimination, racism and hatred are not checked and prevented. We're fortunate here in the UK; we are not at immediate risk of genocide. However, discrimination has not ended, nor has the use of the language of hatred or exclusion. There is still much to do to create a safer future and Holocaust Memorial Day is an opportunity to start this process.

Next term in PSHE, students will be examining this year's Holocaust Memorial Day theme of 'One Day', using accounts from survivors of genocide and considering how a lack of tolerance contributed to their lives changing forever. Students will also be discussing how 'One Day' can also contribute to challenging prejudice in the world.



Mental Health and the Christmas Season

Whether or not Christmas is an important part of your life, your mental health might be affected by it happening around you. It's a time of year that often puts extra pressure on children and families, and can affect our mental health in lots of different ways.

For example, you may:

- feel alone or left out because everyone else seems happy when you're not
- wish you didn't have to deal with Christmas or find it stressful because of other events in your life
- feel frustrated by other people's views of a 'perfect' Christmas, if these feel different to your experiences
- want to celebrate with someone who's struggling

Tips for coping

Be gentle, generous and patient with yourself - It's ok to prioritise what's best for you, even if others don't seem to understand

Plan ahead - Think about what might be difficult about Christmas for you, and if there's anything that might help you cope. It might be useful to write this down.

Look after yourself - Let yourself experience your own feelings. Even if they don't match what's going on around you, they're still real and valid. Take time out and do something to forget that it's Christmas or distract yourself. If you can't avoid something difficult, plan something for yourself afterwards to help reduce the stress or distress you might feel.

Talk to other people - Let people know you're struggling. It can often feel like it's just you when it's not. It doesn't have to be people who are already in your life. You could join an online community to talk others who have similar experiences to yours.

Get support - If you're struggling this Christmas, you may want to find support for your mental health. There are a few ways that you can do this:

- Call [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 (freephone). They're always open.
- Text SHOUT to 85258. This is a free 24/7 crisis text service run by [Shout](#).
- Visit our '**Signposting Support**' directory for a list of organisations who can support your mental health or help with practical problems.

Signposting Support

In order to provide families with additional support, we have produced a guide to signpost you and your children to a range of organisations that can offer support in relation to a number of issues and concerns.

Please click on the link to access our 'Signposting Support' guide:

<https://www.wilsthorpe.ttct.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/12/Signposting-Support.pdf>

Careers and Wider Opportunities

Making plans and preparing for the future is central to our work with students. During the term ahead, Year 11 students will have an opportunity to consider what is on offer from Derby College, Nottingham College and Confetti, who are delivering assemblies during January and February.

We continue to accept applications to Wilsthorpe Sixth Form and you can access the application form using the link:

- <https://www.wilsthorpe.ttct.co.uk/post-16/how-to-apply/>

Other providers of post 16 courses also continue to accept applications and some are listed:

- <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/>
- <https://www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk/>
- <https://confetti.ac.uk/>
- <https://bilborough.ac.uk/>



For those Year 11 and Year 13 students who hope to start an apprenticeship, opportunities and more information can be found using the links below:

- <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

All Year 11 students will attend a mock interview with a volunteer from a local company during February and will receive feedback on their performance.

We are also excited to announce our first collaborative Careers Fair with Friesland School and Trent College. Trent College will host the event on 9th February and details will be shared following the Christmas break.

National Apprenticeship week takes place from 7th-13th February and all year groups will have the opportunity to learn more about the apprenticeship pathway.

During next term, Year 9 students will begin to consider the best combinations of subjects to study at GCSE.

The link below can help inform the decisions that are made:

- <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/gcses/choosing-your-gcses>



We continue to promote the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and a number of lesson-based activities and trips will take place in the new term. A group of Year 9 students will attend a trip to the Science Museum and all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will participate in activities during Science and Engineering Week. We also hope that a large number of students will enter the Two Counties Trust competitions for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Finally, enrichment plays a vital role in nurturing our students' interests and talents. The enrichment activities currently on offer can be found using the link below:

- <https://www.wilsthorpe.ttct.co.uk/curriculum/enrichment/>

Sixth Form

This term has been busy and exciting in the Sixth Form. It has been wonderful to welcome the students back to their study areas and to see them collaborating on their learning in their independent study times. Towards the early part of the term we held our Sixth Form Open Evening where we were delighted to see so many of our Year 11 students and parents, alongside many Year 11 students from other local schools.

We have had record numbers of applicants this year to our Sixth Form and the Year 11s have shown fantastic maturity in their interviews. We would like to take this opportunity to remind any Year 11s who are yet to apply for a place at our sixth form, and would like to apply, to do so before the end of January so that we can use applications to build a bespoke curriculum for our applicants.

Our current Year 13s have been writing their personal statements and completing their UCAS applications, whilst our Year 12s will



be starting the first of a series of seminars from Nottingham Trent University which begins our support for their next steps beyond their Level 3 qualifications. Year 12 are also using tutor time to prepare for our two weeks of planned work experience at the end of this academic year.

Lastly, our Sixth Form society is now up and running. The leaders of the society have been planning their first fundraising events for local charities. All Sixth Form students are invited to join the activities the Sixth Form society plan during their time in the Sixth Form. We hope to be able to celebrate their fantastic fundraising in our next newsletter.



Dates for your diary

- **Monday 24 January:** Student Trackers sent out for students in Year 9
- **Tuesday 25 January:** Year 9 Parents' Evening
- **Monday 31 January:** Student Trackers sent out for students in Year 8
- **Tuesday 1 February:** Year 8 Parents' Evening
- **Monday 7 February:** Student Trackers sent out for students in Year 7
- **Tuesday 8 February:** Year 7 Parents' Evening
- **Friday 18 February** **Finish for half term break**
- **Tuesday 1 March:** Year 11/12/13 Intervention Evening
- **Friday 11 March:** INSET Day
- **Monday 14 March:** second set of mock exams begin for students in Years 11
- **Monday 21 March:** second set of mock exams begin for students in Years 12/13
- **Monday 28 March:** Student Trackers sent out for students in Year 10
- **Tuesday 29 March:** Year 10 Parents' evening

School Menus

- **10 January** - [Link to Menu 1](#)
- **17 January** - [Link to Menu 2](#)
- **24 January** - [Link to Menu 3](#)
- **31 January** - [Link to Menu 1](#)
- **7 February** - [Link to Menu 2](#)
- **14 February** - [Link to Menu 3](#)