



Parent Handbook

2011 - 2012

WIRRAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A Foundation Business & Enterprise School for Boys

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Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to all parents of new pupils at Wirral Grammar School for Boys. The purpose of our Parent Handbook is to provide essential information for you to support your son during his Grammar School education. This publication is produced annually and issued to parents of all boys in all year groups as some aspects of our school policy and procedure change from time to time.

At Wirral Grammar School we pride ourselves in setting and achieving high academic standards. We also believe that school life is about wider participation and this is reflected in an outstanding breadth of extra-curricular opportunities. We encourage our boys both to work hard and play hard. Ours is a school in which boys grow and mature into confident young men, equipped with all the qualifications and skills that today's professional world demands.

If you are reading this Parent Handbook at the initial stage of considering the choice of school for your son, the best way of finding out more is to come and see us at work. We are always pleased to see parents and prospective pupils and to show them the school in action.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R. Hazeldine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Hazeldine
Headteacher

Our School Aims

At the heart of Wirral Grammar School for Boys are the following core aims:

- To enable each student to gain the highest possible standard of academic achievement.

We develop in students the ability to learn in the self-disciplined, independent and flexible manner today's world demands. High expectations and excellent teaching by well qualified, specialist staff, enable them to develop lively, enquiring and creative minds.

- To develop each individual's potential to the full.

School life has to be about more than high academic achievement. A rich and varied extra-curricular programme complements the formal curriculum so as to enable each boy to develop breadth of interests.

- To provide a happy, safe and caring environment.

Staff and students are all members of our school community and conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration. We set very high standards of behaviour and appearance. The school has a caring and supportive ethos to which all are expected to contribute.

- To provide an education that is broad and balanced and relevant to the demands of an ever-changing technological society.

Our choice of specialist status as a Business and Enterprise school underlines our commitment to provide each boy with the skills and aptitude required in today's professional work place. Society is ever changing and our students will be at the forefront of managing and leading change in all walks of life.

- To provide an effective and purposeful partnership between the school, parents and the community.

Our sense of community is our strength. All members, students, parents, staff and governors have a combined role to play in supporting achievement.

Our School Values

At Wirral Grammar School for Boys:

We value learning

We value respect

We value cooperation

We value courtesy

We value fairness, justice and tolerance

We value trust and honesty

We value kindness,
compassion and generosity

- for that is the purpose of our school
- for self and others so that we can learn together
- because together we can support one another
- as a sign of our mutual respect
- for they create equal opportunities and reinforce respect
- for they are the keys to purposeful and trustful relationships
- because these underline the true spirit of friendship and mutual respect



ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Admission of Pupils at the start of Year 7

Parents should be aware that full details of admissions procedures are available from Wirral Local Authority and this information is issued to parents of pupils in Year 6 well ahead of the choice process. Our website contains guidance regarding admission arrangements.

As an 'independent' State School, we manage our own admission arrangements from Year 7 onwards. Full details of admission arrangements are available separately, or can be obtained through the school website

Admission of Pupils into Sixth Form

There is a separate admission procedure for students wishing to join our Sixth Form. Further details are available from the School Office or from the Deputy Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form). Applications should ideally be submitted during the Autumn or Spring Term of the preceding academic year.

STUDENT WELFARE

Settling into a new School

Helping your son to adjust to his new school is a key priority for us. For boys entering from Primary School, before the start of the school year, all boys are able to visit the school and take part in an Activity Day; boys will have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school, meet their Form Tutors and Head of Year and experience a few lesson activities. We appreciate that settling in to a new school takes time; getting used to a larger environment and experiencing new subjects for the first time. Tutors, subject teachers and student mentors will be on hand to provide guidance and support.

Soon after the autumn half-term holiday, we invite all Year 7 parents along to a meeting with their son's Form Tutor. This meeting provides an opportunity to establish that everything is going well and if parents have any concerns they can be shared on this occasion. Parents are reminded that if they have any issues that they would like to raise, this can be done at any time by contacting their son's Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Tutor Groups and the House System

When pupils join the school at the start of Year 7, they are placed into one of five tutor groups (sometimes known as forms). Each tutor group is of mixed ability and in Year 7 boys are largely taught in these groups. Pupils remain in the same tutor group throughout Years 7 and 8 but are placed in a different tutor group in Year 9 in order that they might experience working with a different group of boys. Tutor groupings may be modified again for Years 10 and 11 when the option subjects which they have chosen for GCSE play a part in determining which group they should be in. By this stage, the vast majority of teaching is carried out in sets and option groups rather than by tutor group.

As well as being assigned to a tutor group, each boy becomes a member of one of four Houses. These are Barber, Dodds, Hodgson and Lever. Boys remain in the same House throughout their time in school.

Membership of a House is denoted by the stripe worn on the school tie (see information on uniform) and a house badge may also be worn.

The House system is a respected and historical aspect of our school life and is valued for encouraging team spirit and assisting the development of an increased sense of community.

From September 2011, a revised system of rewards will be in place which will unify and replace the pre-existing Commendations and House Point awards. The new awards will be called House Commendations (HC's) – reflecting the fact that an individual is being rewarded for personal effort whilst also simultaneously contributing to their House total.

The main areas for reward are Achievement and Effort; Sport; Music & Drama; Enterprise and Creativity, Charity and Community and Attendance. Please refer to the section on 'Recognition and Rewards' for additional information.

Boys are allocated to a Vertical Tutor Group. These meet for one registration period every two weeks and are composed of Y7-13 students from the same house. This encourages inter-year group friendships and strengthens the sense of house identity.

Student Support

Your son is likely to have a different form tutor in each of Years 7 to 11. It is the Form Tutor who will meet them each day for registration. He or she will address any immediate concerns and is the first point of contact in the school and we ask that you address all notes to them.

Heads of Year have overall responsibility for overseeing each boy's welfare, conduct and progress. He or she will deal with any pastoral concerns and will arrange to speak to or meet parents as the need arises. It would be of considerable help to us if you would let the school know of any home circumstances which may affect your son's concentration and attitude to his work. Our Heads of Year are:

Year 7: Mrs K J Turner Year 9: Mr G J Money Year 11: Mr I F Davies
Year 8: Mrs D Hynes Year 10: Mrs L Ahern

At the start of the school year parents will be informed when the best times are to contact their son's Head of Year.

If you wish to come to school to discuss your son's work, conduct or issues of a personal nature, you are very welcome. Parents should make an appointment to see the appropriate Head of Year, either by writing to, or telephoning the school. Please note it is often not possible for teachers, other than Heads of Year, to speak to parents on such occasions due to their teaching commitments. In addition, as Heads of Year also have a heavy teaching commitment, they may not always be available at short notice.

Our Learning Mentor, Mrs Walker, is a full-time member of our support staff. She is on hand to address any personal concerns that your son may have. Meetings between students and our Learning Mentor often take place on an individual basis. She will liaise with parents where there are concerns that are affecting a boy's well being. All matters relating to Sixth Form students should be addressed to Mr Askew Deputy Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form).

Student Records

To help us to support your son, it is important that our records are kept up-to-date. Essential information includes names, addresses, emergency telephone numbers, medical details and email addresses. This information is essential should there ever be an emergency. It is particularly important for us to have a number on which we can contact you during the school day.

We use a system called 'Parent Mail' for issuing routine letters. It is therefore important that email addresses are kept up to date as this aids the reliability of this as a means of communication.

Confidential Information

If there is any confidential information that you feel we should know in order to support your son, please write a personal letter to his Form Tutor or Head of Year. We will endeavour to contact you as soon as is practically possible. (It is not always possible to speak to staff immediately due to their teaching commitments.)

Health Matters

In order to provide the best possible care for your son whilst in school, we need to be aware of any factors that concern his health. It is particularly important to inform us of medical conditions that may require prompt action.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the school staff do not administer medicines to pupils. However, if it is agreed that there are such circumstances, the taking of medicines would be supervised by the school office but only on receipt of a parental note. Parents will then be asked to complete a form which will be stored in the school office. Details of the type of medicine, dosage etc should be clearly provided and it is stored in the main school office, however, we are unable to take responsibility for its security or proper use. The use of inhalers is the pupil's responsibility and these are not stored centrally. Epi-pens are stored in the main office but the majority of pupils also carry one with them. It is the pupils' responsibility to carry their epi-pen with them to Physical Education and sports events. Pupils whose health might have an impact on their education have an Individual Health Care Plan drawn up by the school nurse.

A number of our staff currently hold qualifications in First Aid. Jo Winstone, our School Nurse, is based at the school on a part-time basis. In partnership with the, Wirral Primary Health Care Trust, we run a drop in clinic staffed by the school nurse and a youth worker where pupils can access health and medical advice and support on Fridays at lunchtimes. This confidential service is available to all our pupils

In the Event of Illness or Accidents

If it is felt that your son is not well enough to remain in school, then a member of our school office staff will contact you to arrange for his safe return home. No student under the age of 18 is allowed to go home without parental permission. Having up-to-date records is absolutely essential for this purpose. In the event of an emergency requiring hospital treatment, our first step will be to call an ambulance while seeking contact with a parent. If necessary, your son will be taken to hospital by ambulance and if you are not available, will be accompanied by a member of our staff.

For information relating to notifying the school of a boy's absence due to ill health, please refer to the section in "Attendance and Punctuality" in this Handbook.

Safeguarding

'Safeguarding' is a term that encompasses a wide range of approaches to ensure that each and every pupil is free from harm. In terms of employment, the school has rigorous procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitably qualified to work with children and young people. All staff are CRB checked at the time of appointment; visitors to the school are required to show personal identification. Questions at interview always cover aspects relating to the candidates suitability to work with children and young people. Procedures relating to accidents, site security and child protection are further specific examples of 'safeguarding' measures.

Site Security

We go to great lengths to ensure that our school site is safe and secure for all. At breaks and lunchtimes, staff patrol the site and provide supervision in the main student areas. For security reasons, we expect all boys, other than sixth form students, to be on the school site at breaks and lunchtimes. Only in exceptional circumstances would we deviate from this clear policy. We have a comprehensive CCTV system which records live images 24 hours per day for security purposes. Access to these images is restricted and they may be used to assist in the management of the school and pupils behaviour. In order to assist in the security of the school after hours, a magnetic door locking system that operates after school hours. At breaks and lunchtimes, senior staff and duty assistants often patrol the site and wear high visibility coats. Such staff are at hand to ensure that lunchtimes are orderly and boys have a point of contact.

Child Protection

Children and young persons have individual rights in law. Above all, they have the right to have their basic needs met and to be free from harm. At the heart of our child protection policy is the immediate liaison with the social services section of the Wirral Children and Young People's Services Department. A member of the school's Senior Leadership Team has specific responsibility for child protection issues.

Protection from Bullying

It is the perception of our students that our school deals with reported incidences of bullying effectively. We define bullying behaviour as that which causes hurt or harm to another whether this be physical or emotional. Our prime concern is for the safety of each individual. We address bullying in three ways: we seek to prevent it through education and early warning systems, we actively encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying and investigate fully all allegations and we seek to stop it through operating a no-tolerance approach to bullying. A copy of the schools Anti-bullying Policy is available from school upon request.

At the heart of our Anti-bullying Policy is the message that this conduct is completely unacceptable. Effective and immediate communication enables swift intervention. Boys are encouraged to tell a member of staff, e-mail the Peer Support group or use the Anti-Bully boxes that are placed around the school. The action we take varies but the priority is for the bullying to be stopped permanently and for the victim to feel safe and secure without fear of reprisal.

The Peer Support Group is a support scheme consisting of Sixth Form students who are assigned to a form in Years 7 and 8. They offer support and guidance to lower-school students who are experiencing difficulties with regard to bullying, home-life or school work. The Peer Support Group is a group of friendly, helpful and understanding students, who offer guidance and advice to pupils who are witnessing or experiencing bullying. They have recently received the Princess Diana Award for their work in helping pupils to feel safe and secure and happy in our school.

Our Anti-bullying Committee meets at least once a term and consists of two Anti-bullying representatives per year (Year 7 to 11), the PSG, representatives from the Head Boy team, the Head of Year 7 and the Learning Mentor. The committee discusses current issues, provides feedback on recent form discussions and questionnaires and determines any necessary future action.

In 2009, Ofsted inspectors commented: *"Students themselves have taken on responsibility for stamping out bullying and intimidating behaviour. For this they have reaped rich rewards; the school climate is one of harmony and mutual respect."*

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Extra Curricular Opportunities

Academic achievement is our core purpose. At the same time we believe that it is important to enrich our pupils with wide-ranging opportunities for sport, music, performance, visits, competitions and subject-related activity clubs. At Wirral Grammar School we are very proud of the breadth of extra-curricular experience available. In 2009, Ofsted noted: *"The extra curricular activities are the jewel in the school's crown; they contribute enormously to students' personal development and well being."*

- Extensive sport provision including rugby, hockey, badminton, orienteering, basketball, golf, volleyball, cricket, athletics and tennis.
- Clubs relating to curricular subjects including: Science, Art, Drama, ICT, and Maths to name a few.
- An entitlement to outdoor residential experiences including an outdoor pursuits course in Year 8 and a water-based outdoor pursuit course in Year 9.
- Sports tours to Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the Caribbean.
- Music tours to Toronto, Canada; Lake Garda, Italy, the Costa Dorada in Spain and Austria.
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards with expeditions in North Wales.
- History visits to Germany, Holland, France and Russia.
- Music tuition with over 300 boys being taught to play different instruments by 20 peripatetic music tutors. There are opportunities to join an orchestra or to perform in one of the many ensembles.
- School drama productions with at least one major performance each year.

Sporting Achievement and Representation

This merits particular attention as our school has a superb reputation for success in competitive sports. In 1931 rugby was established as the school's main winter game. Our commitment to rugby is both a hallmark and tradition of our school and boys who represent the school have an obvious commitment to the programme of out-of-school hours fixtures. Boys compete in hockey, cricket and other sports to a high level. It is not unusual for 200 or more pupils to be participating in sport fixtures on a Saturday. Our fixture lists include a mixture of state and independent schools.

School Council

Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the School Council which meets to discuss a wide range of issues. Pupils apply for the role of Form Council representative and are then selected by both their peers and staff. The Year 11 representatives lead a variety of sub-committees. Pastoral Periods, in which issues are discussed by the whole student body, precede and inform the half-termly School Council meeting. There is a separate Sixth Form Council although representatives from each council attend both council meetings. This Sixth Form Council is chaired by students and last year student working parties considered the redesign of the quad adjacent to the Sixth Form Centre, changes to the post 16 curriculum and relationships with the local community. Recently, the School Council played an active role in choosing the new catering contractor and are currently involved in shaping the School's Learning Statement.



Expectations

We have very high expectations of our pupils. The maintenance of an orderly learning environment is an essential feature of school life. Each boy has seven precious years in which to optimise his potential, consequently, poor behaviour is not tolerated and firm but fair sanctions are applied. The section titled "Responsibilities and Sanctions" includes reference to how we manage the occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Pupils are expected to keep to a simple Code of Conduct that can be expressed as follows:

- Respect for all individuals
- A caring attitude towards each other
- Respect for the school as a learning environment

Pupils are expected to adhere to the following rules that are there for the welfare of all members of our community. This is not an exhaustive list but serves to illustrate how our Code of Conduct is applied in a number of key areas.

- Be punctual for the start of school and lessons.
- Have the correct equipment each day and for each lesson.
- Enter the classroom silently and in an orderly manner upon the instruction of the teacher.
- When answering questions put your hand up to answer.
- Concentrate upon your work and do not distract others.
- Participate fully in discussions and lesson activities to maximise your learning.

- Tidy materials away at the end of each lesson on the instruction of your teacher.
- Depart the room in an orderly manner.
- Homework must be completed within the time specified.
- Student Planners are provided for boys to record their homework each day, these are an essential classroom item.
- Uniform must be worn in line with the specified regulations (refer to "uniform" section).
- Courtesy and good manners should be shown at all times.
- Boys are not permitted in classrooms at break and lunchtime unless involved in a teacher-led activity.
- Mobile phones are never to be used in school and mobile music devices (IPods, MP3 players etc) are never allowed to be brought to school other than by sixth form students (refer to the section on this).
- No boy is allowed to leave the school site without the specific request of a parent and this is required in writing.
- When walking around the school, boys must always keep to the right hand side of corridors.
- Any perceived risk to health and safety must be reported immediately.
- Any instance of bullying must be reported to a member of staff.

Please refer to the "Responsibilities and Sanctions" section for expectations regarding school uniform.



Recognition and Rewards

Central to our conduct policy is an emphasis on promoting good behaviour through positive reward. Good behaviour, attendance, sustained effort etc are all promoted. Methods include praise, encouragement and positive feedback from teachers; formal House Commendations recorded in boys homework diaries; a prize draw for boys in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 obtaining at least five House Commendations and certificates and additional bonus House Commendations when pupils achieve specific levels of House Commendations. Individual and team success are celebrated in school assemblies and during the form tutor period. Letters of congratulation are produced by the Heads of Years following the progress bulletin review. The school holds an annual Awards Ceremony at Hulme Hall at the end of the academic year when achievement, both academic and non-academic is publicly recognised.

Student Planners

All boys are issued with a Planner that contains information about their daily timetable and reminders about key aspects of school rules. Boys are expected to enter homework set in their Planner and this is checked, monitored and signed in school. We ask that parents also check and monitor homework and sign to show that this has been done. The Planner can also be used as a method of communicating brief messages between school and home. Sixth Formers are issued with a Sixth Form Planner.

Independent Study

Independent Study or homework is considered to be an integral part of the school curriculum and provides an essential framework to enable students to become independent learners. Independent Study:

- Encourages students to develop the skills and motivation needed to study effectively on their own
- Consolidates skill and understanding developed at school
- Complements school learning through research and additional reading
- Trains pupils in effective time management
- Enables parents and carers to play an active role in supporting their son's learning

Your son's Independent Study will consist of some practice of skills learnt during the day as well as extended assignments that will encourage your son to make choices and develop time management skills. At Key stage 3 Independent Study will be carefully structured and monitored but as he matures he will be expected to take greater responsibility for his own learning.

Good practice suggests that the amount of time spent by pupils at Key stage 3 should be no more than 90 minutes per day. This will increase slightly at Key Stage 4 and 5. Clearly the needs and work methods of learners varies and this is why the time spent on Independent Study can only be presented as a guide. Sixth Form Students are expected to study for around 15 hours per week in addition to the normal school day.

It is important that if your son encounters difficulties you speak to his Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately, so that these issues can be resolved quickly and without causing anxiety. Additional information can be found in your son's Student Planner.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND SANCTIONS

Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance is a high priority. This aids achievement and encourages boys to adopt the correct attitude towards school and ultimately, their place of work. We actively promote high attendance through awards and publishing tutor group attendance percentages. Boys with the best record of attendance are presented with prizes at our Awards Ceremony in the Summer Term.

Parents have the legal duty to make sure children attend school. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence. In-line with new national requirements, schools are able to impose fines where persistent unauthorised absence occurs. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a justifiable reason (eg, illness or other unavoidable causes). Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and absences for holiday where this is clearly to the detriment of a boy's education, for example when tests or exams are taking place. Please note that the school alone decides if an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If a boy is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence by telephone. When the boy returns he must bring a written note signed by a parent or carer which must be dated, clearly marked with the boy's name and form and placed in the box outside of the school office. Absences cannot be authorised without this procedure.

Pupils are expected to be on site by 8.55 am and 1.30 pm. They are expected to be in form rooms for registration at 9.00 am and 1.35 pm. Boys arriving after these times are late and marked so in the register. Boys who arrive after registration or miss registration for any reason (even, for example, to attend a musical instrument lesson elsewhere in the building) are required to sign the "Missed Registration" book at the School Office.

Holidays

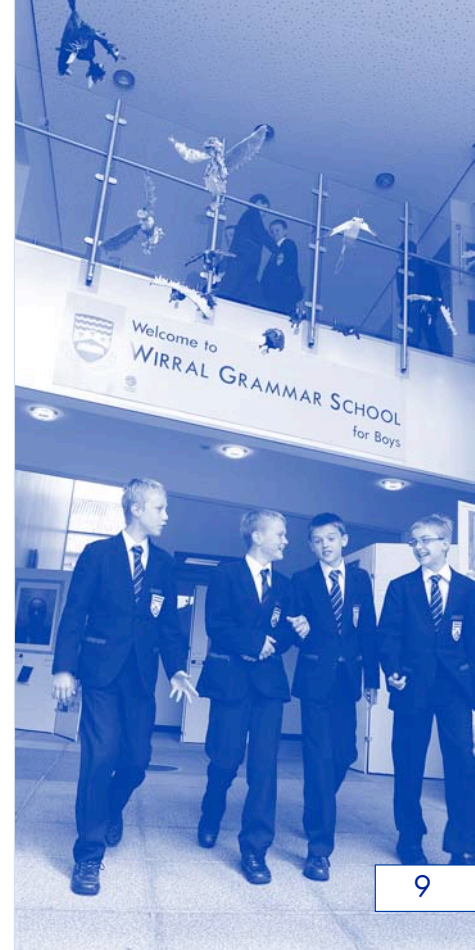
All parents are expected to avoid requesting holiday leave for boys in term time.

Given that tests and exams occur throughout the year and in Years 10 and 11 there are controlled assessment pressures throughout, absence from school is potentially damaging to a boy's progress and eventual attainment. In line with national expectations, from September 2011, all holiday absence requests for pupils in Years 10 to 13 will be declined and any such absence will be noted on attendance records as 'unauthorised'. Registration categories are prescribed nationally so that comparisons can be made between schools, and 'unauthorised' in effect constitutes a 'truancy' under the government's regulations. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, absence will only be authorised between set dates so as to avoid absence at critical times of the year. Critical times include the Autumn Term and during the Spring and Summer Terms when examinations/assessments are taking place.

Absence Requests To Take Part in Sporting Events etc

We are aware that some boys excel at particular sports and take part in individual and team activities at a high level (regional and national). We do try to accommodate requests for absence of this kind, provided that there are no formal assessments/examinations taking place. Such absence requests should be directed to the Headteacher.

Permission will not be given for requests to participate in the watching of a sporting event.



Appearance and Uniform

Uniform is compulsory for all students. Where a boy is not adhering to the uniform policy this needs to be addressed swiftly. In Years 7 to 11 our uniform is as follows:

- A black blazer with blue trimmings on pockets and a cloth badge.
- Black trousers.
- Plain white shirt.
- House ties as follows:
 - Barber House: White
 - Dodds House: Red
 - Hodgeson House: Green
 - Leverhulme House: Yellow
- Dark grey socks.
- Black shoes (not boots, trainers or any such variation)
- Boys may wear a pullover which should be black and v-necked.

Stripe

Under no circumstances may boys wear: trainers, “fashion” wear, hooded tops, denim etc.

Excessively long hair or excessively short hair, dyed hair or eccentric styling are not permitted, nor are earrings or any other form of jewellery.

As a school we reserve the right to contact parents and send boys home, returning to school when the concern regarding appearance has been addressed.

In the sixth form it is important to create a professional atmosphere and students are expected to dress accordingly. Students are required to wear a business style suit, shirt and tie. Smart shoes must be worn and trainers, boots or leisure style shoes are not acceptable. The dress and appearance code for Sixth Form Students is of a professional, business standard.

Sports Clothing

For Physical Education lessons, boys are required to wear a House vest, white shorts, white ankle socks and clean training shoes (which should ideally be **for indoor use only**) for gymnasium/sports hall use.

For Games lessons, a reversible House rugby shirt, white shorts, House socks, football/rugby boots (fitted with correct safety studs) and outdoor training shoes are required.

We strongly recommend the use of mouthguards for both rugby and hockey. Custom fitted mouthguards can be purchased from school in September when dentists come in to take impressions during the first week of term.

In summer, House vest, white shorts, white ankle socks and both indoor and outdoor training shoes are required for athletics; and for cricket, cricket whites –including sweater, shirt and trousers. It is not necessary to purchase this equipment until the summer term.

Uniform Stockists

School uniform is available from the following stockists:

Cain of Heswall: 187 Telegraph Road, Heswall Wirral CH60 7SE
Tel: 0151 342 1769 www.cain-of-heswall.co.uk

Wirral Uniform Centre: 2A Princes Pavement Birkenhead
Wirral CH41 2XY Tel: 0151 647 9588

The Local Education Authority is prepared to assist parents in need with the cost of purchasing school uniform. Details can be obtained from: Director of Education (Uniform Enquiry), Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 4FD.

Personal Possessions

As a school we regret that we are unable to accept responsibility for boys’ personal possessions that are lost or damaged in school. Please do not allow your son to bring large amounts of cash into school. Students bringing sports equipment should mark their names on these items. Students who bring instruments to school for music should place these in their lockers or in the music store room. This can be arranged either through the Form Tutor or the Music department. Parents are advised to ensure that instruments are “covered” by household insurance arrangements; the same applies to net book computers/laptops.

Lost Property

Any items of property found by pupils should be handed in at the School Office. If a boy has mislaid an item he should enquire at the School Office to see if it has been handed in. It is important that all personal items (bags, pencil cases, calculators, uniform, PE Kit etc are clearly named). Each term accumulated items of ‘lost’ clothing are put on display near the PE changing rooms for boys to look through; following this, remaining items are disposed of.

Blue ‘Bag Bins’

Large blue containers are strategically placed around the school for boys to place their bags in at break and lunchtime. The ‘bag bins’ provide safe, temporary storage and they are emptied at the end of each week. It is important that all bags are clearly labelled with the pupil’s name and tutor group. A ‘key fob’ label attached to a loop on the bag is ideal for this purpose.

Mobile 'phones/Audio Devices

Our policy could not be clearer. We understand that mobile phones provide both parents and students with security and there is, on occasion, the need to communicate before or after school. During the school day, mobiles must not be used under any circumstances. This includes: phoning, text messaging, use of blue-tooth, recording and photography, as a clock or as a calculator. Mobile phones should be switched off on entering the school site and remain hidden in bags or pockets during the day. This rule also applies to sixth form students. Boys seen using mobile phones will have them confiscated and they will be available for collection at the end of the following school day. On occasion we will require a parent to collect the confiscated item. Boys who misuse mobile technology will receive an appropriate sanction which may involve a period of exclusion from school which is then recorded on his school records. We have equipment in school that can detect when a mobile phone is switched on.

Any boy who needs to use a telephone during the day to contact parents must seek the permission of his Head of Year or Form Tutor and must do so under their supervision. Alternatively, the boy may approach the school office and explain the nature of the emergency.

For Y7 – Y11 pupils, audio devices such as MP3 players, ipods etc are not permitted in school and any such item will be confiscated.

Please note any such items are brought to school at the boys' own risk. The school cannot promise to devote time and effort to recovering lost or stolen items of this kind.

Sixth form students must not use their mobile phones on the premises and they must be switched off as they enter the building. Sixth form students are allowed off-site at break and lunchtimes and are free to use mobiles at these times. Audio devices such as MP3 players and Ipods etc may be used during private study sessions (but at the discretion of the supervising member of staff). They must not be a distraction to others at any time and students who use them inappropriately will have them confiscated. All such items are brought to school at the students own risk and the school does have the resources to recover lost and stolen devices.

Laptops/Net books

Areas of our school provide pupils with WiFi access. The Learning Resource Centre, Dining Hall and Sixth Form Centre have an enhanced WiFi provision. Pupils are permitted to bring laptops or net books to school to use at lunchtimes to assist with their studies. Such items remain the responsibility of the pupils and the school cannot take responsibility for loss or damage. We advise parents to ensure laptops/net books are 'covered' on home insurance policies.

Sharing Responsibility

Promoting positive behaviour is the collective responsibility of parents, staff and pupils. Parents and carers take responsibility for the behaviour of the child both inside and outside the school. As a school we have excellent parent support, attendance at Parents' Evenings is very high and whenever the school imposes a sanction, parents provide their support. We see the success of students as the product of a purposeful partnership between home and school.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

We define acceptable behaviour as that which promotes courtesy, co-operation and consideration from all pupils in terms of their relationships with other pupils within/outside the school, school staff and visitors to our school.

Unacceptable behaviour includes name-calling, bullying and harassment. Violence of any description is clearly never tolerated. It is unacceptable to behave in lessons in a manner which prevents the teacher from teaching and disturbs the learning of others.

ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Students and parents are required to sign the policy. The full document is issued separately from school. We take the view that ICT has the potential to enrich pupils' learning in new and exciting ways. However, with the provision and use of ICT go responsibilities for ensuring that its use is appropriate and user confidentiality is maintained. Abuse of our ICT infrastructure and the internet will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Dealing with Inappropriate Conduct

As a school we employ a range of strategies and parents can obtain full details in the school's Behaviour, Attendance & Anti-Bullying Policy; this is available separately. Strategies include: a verbal reprimand for a minor matter. A formal reprimand is entered by a teacher on a boy's record. The boy will be informed that he has been given a reprimand by the teacher or his form tutor. A reprimand for poor behaviour is sometimes known as a "blue reprimand" and one for a failure to meet a learning expectation (e.g. not doing homework) as a "pink reprimand". If a boy receives five reprimands, parents are informed and the boy is placed in after-school detention (refer to the section on "Detention Procedures").

Heads of Year may put a pupil on lesson-by-lesson report for a fixed period. Blue reports monitor behaviour and pink reports monitor academic progress. If matters become more serious, a Deputy Headteacher may place a boy on report. In addition, boys may be placed in the school's referral room for part or all of a day either following serious misbehaviour or during investigation of an incident. Boys work in isolation in this room which is supervised by a member of staff.

Formal detentions are held each day at lunchtime and after school each Tuesday for 1 hour. In cases of after school detention, 24 hours notice is given. Parents will also be informed of the reason for the detention (usually the number of reprimands collected) and the length of the detention.

If a boy fails to attend an after-school detention with no reasonable excuse, this will result in a more serious sanction and potentially a fixed term exclusion from school. From time to time detentions are applied at weekends or holidays. These are "voluntary" from a

parental perspective and are most effective when both parents and the school consider it to be justified.

On occasion, there is a need to restrict a boy's movement around school at breaks and lunchtimes. This is different from a lunchtime detention in so far as a boy is required to confine his movements to particular area(s) of the school, for example, the dining hall, LRC and main hall. A policy of 'restricted movement' tends to be a short term measure that is used to prevent the potential for poor conduct.

For persistent or serious offenders, parents or carers will be asked to visit school to discuss the issue. Exclusions from school are the most serious sanction as this is entered on a boy's school record. Boys excluded from school for any period are required to attend a re-integration meeting on the morning of his return. Parents, a Deputy Headteacher and the Headteacher are present at this meeting. Permanent exclusion can result from a single act of inappropriate behaviour, for example, violent, pre-meditated assault, drug use or persistent non-compliance to school rules.

It is totally unacceptable behaviour to use violence on another person whatever the provocation. Boys will be warned, particularly through assemblies, that while name-calling, taunting and other forms of non-physical harassment are not acceptable behaviour, they do not provide justification for the use of physical force against the perpetrator. While all use of physical force may result in a sanction being imposed (and the school will use its judgement to determine what sanction is appropriate), punching, head-butting, stamping on or kicking a fellow student will result in the perpetrator being excluded from school for a fixed period or permanently. For the welfare of all pupils we adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to such conduct. Fortunately, in a school like ours, instances of such behaviour are infrequent.

OUR CURRICULUM

Introduction

The curriculum contains all the learning experiences of pupils. These include the subjects taught and all of the extra-curricular experiences that enrich the opportunities that our students receive.

Our main concern is to encourage all pupils to experience and succeed in all aspects of the curriculum.

The curriculum of our school:

- Offers opportunity for the highest academic achievement
- Provides extended opportunities for able boys to gain additional experiences and qualifications
- Is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs and demands of an ever changing society
- Provides scope for choice from Year 9 enabling boys to focus on particular areas of interest and ability
- Makes use of new technology as a tool to enrich learning.

In our most recent school inspection, the curriculum was considered to be 'outstanding'. Inspectors commented: *"Carefully balanced options and a wide range of extension courses give students excellent scope to prepare for GCSE."*

In 2010, our school was in the top 150 nationally for the percentage of pupils gaining the English Baccalaureate (minimum of Grade C in English, Mathematics, a Language, History or Geography and two Science subjects). On average, 80% of pupils achieve this standard at the end of year 11.

Curriculum Guides

In Year 7 to 9, all parents receive a "Curriculum Guide" specific to that year group. This contains information ie, course content for each subject, assessment arrangements, the time that homework takes and how parents can support their son's learning.

The Curriculum in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

In the first three years, the curriculum consists of the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Languages (French and Spanish), Geography, History, Art, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Information Technology, Design and Technology, Citizenship and Personal Health and Social Education.

In Year 7, all boys study Science as a combined subject and from Year 8 onwards Biology, Chemistry and Physics are taught separately. Spanish is introduced from Year 8.

The Curriculum in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

Pupils in Year 9 make selections as to which options courses they are to follow during Years 10 and 11. Staff provide careful guidance and parents are invited to an Information Evening to explain the options process. All boys are provided with information about the courses available in Years 10 and 11 so that they can make informed choices.

All boys follow "core subjects" in English, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Physical Education, Religious

Education, Personal, Health & Social Education (including Careers Education and Food and Cookery), Information Technology and Citizenship, French or Spanish and History or Geography.

Boys are able to select two "option subjects" from: History, Geography, Spanish, Music, Business Studies, Design and Technology (Resistant Materials or Graphics), Information Technology and Media Studies.

With the exception of Physical Education, Citizenship, Personal Health and Social Education and Religious Education as part of the "core subjects", all subjects lead to a full GCSE qualification.

Some boys are entered for the Science Double Award, which is worth two GCSEs instead of studying the three separate sciences. This decision is taken at the start of Year 11.

Extension courses are also available for study on an independent basis. These courses include: GCSE Astronomy, GCSE General Studies, AS Critical Thinking, GCSE RE (short course) and GCSE PE.

'Fast track' routes are available to more able pupils in some subjects. This involves the pupils taking their GCSE exams a year early at the end of Year 10 allowing them to broaden their studies with extra courses in Year 11.

The Sixth Form Curriculum (Years 12 and 13)

In Year 12 students choose four subjects to study to AS level. They are also asked to indicate which of the four subjects they may consider studying to AS level only. In Year 13 students study three or four subjects at A2 gaining the full A level qualification. All students will complete A level General Studies during Year 12. Some students will complete the AQA Extended Project Qualification during year 12/13 and others will be studying for a CMI Management Qualification. Full details relating to the Sixth Form Curriculum are contained in the 'Sixth Form Prospectus'.

Teaching and Grouping Arrangements

There is no "streaming" at all in this school and all boys are placed into mixed ability classes on entry. In Year 7, all boys are taught all subjects in mixed ability groups based on their forms. Of course, in a Grammar School, all of the boys are of similar ability and the range of ability of the boys is not as wide as in comprehensive schools.

In Year 8, all boys are taught in the mixed ability groups with the exception of Mathematics which is setted. In Year 9 boys are also taught in ability sets for French.

In Years 10 and 11, the same pattern continues with setting for Mathematics and partial setting for French, Sciences and English. Other groups are mixed ability.

Business & Enterprise: A Specialist Focus

In September 2006, we were designated as a Business and Enterprise Specialist School. We believe that we have established a pervasive culture of enterprise that extends across the curriculum and through wide-ranging extra-curricular processes.

To become competitive in an increasingly global economy, we believe that we have a duty to equip our students with the skills and knowledge to fulfil their potential and take their place in a vibrant, fast changing world. Teachers across all subject areas are already incorporating enterprising skills within their lessons:

- Dealing with uncertainty – risk management, prioritisation, decision making
- Teamwork and networking – working with others and relationship management
- Creativity and problem solving – identification and pursuit of opportunities
- Empathy and people skills – mobilising and motivating people
- Taking initiative – leadership and commitment
- Positive “can do” attitude – bias for action, high energy, strong work ethic
- Communication – verbal and written skills
- Vision and anticipation – planning
- Independence – resourceful and self confident individuals

In addition to curriculum led initiatives, there are numerous activities that are taking place outside the classroom, including: Target 2.0%, Young Enterprise, Young Cooperatives (a Fairtrade Group), the “£1 Challenge”, Make your Mark Challenge, Engineering Education Scheme, The Learning Game (WRL Year 10), Tomorrow’s Managers Today, Work Experience, Proshare – Fantasy Share League, Shares4Schools – a real Stock market experience, Y9 “Outdoor Enterprise” in Conwy, Financial Capability courses in Year 8 and Year 10, School Radio Station Project and the Healthy School Fruit Tuck-Shop Initiative.

“The school’s work in business and enterprise is at the cutting edge and has raised the profile of the school both regionally and nationally. It has had a particularly beneficial effect in helping students to develop as budding entrepreneurs” Ofsted 2009

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught throughout the school following the framework set out in the Wirral Locally Agreed Syllabus. Religious Education has a key role in helping students to develop a personal framework of values, attitudes and belief and concept for religious belief and values. Students come to an understanding of the nature of religion and how it is expressed in lives of believers. The major world faiths are covered including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. RE at Wirral Grammar School is not about teaching a set of beliefs, it is about exploring different views on the subject of belief so as to establish a broad understanding of how different faiths affect people’s lives.

Morning assemblies help to explore different aspects relating to values, attitudes and beliefs and the themes for the assembly follow a set theme for the week. Parents who wish to withdraw their sons from morning assembly and for RE lessons may do so by writing to the Headteacher.

Sex and Relationship Education

Sex and Relationship Education at our school aims to promote an understanding that positive, caring environments are essential for the development of individual responsibility for both the body and behaviour. Facts are presented in an objective and balanced way with pupils being encouraged to consider their attitude and values. Sex and Relationship Education is taught as part of the Personal Social Health Economic Education programme. It is taught by experienced teachers with some support from the school nurse. These lessons are complemented by visits from outside speakers during our Activity Days. Pupils follow a programme from Year 7. Materials used in the sex education programme are available for parents to see upon request. Boys may be withdrawn from part or all, of the Sex and Relationship Education programme by parents writing to the Headteacher.

Drama

Drama is a vital extra-curricular activity and our school has an excellent reputation for the quality of its productions. Our school performs at least one major production each year. The range of plays is enormous. Over the last few years productions have included: High School Musical, Little Shop of Horrors, Fame, Oliver, Grease, West Side Story, Les Miserables and Cabaret. Students are encouraged to audition for these productions and there are always technical and support roles to assist with.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

PSHE complements the academic life of the school by giving pupils the skills and knowledge to lead healthy and independent lives and become responsible citizens in a rapidly changing world. We use a range of teaching and learning styles to suit the different learning styles of our students. We place an emphasis on active learning and 'co-operative' learning by including all students in discussions, investigations and problem solving activities. In Year 7 pupils remain in their form groups. In other years the form groups in each year are split into six mixed groups – they are grouped together randomly but will stay in these PSHE groups for Year 8 to Year 11. We regularly consult pupils in order to shape the curriculum according to our pupils' needs and last year we added additional Sex education to the Year 10 rotation because of student consultation. Our curriculum complies with all elements of both the Economic and Personal Well-Being Programmes of Study. In addition to our PSHE Education Programme each year group has an Activity Day in which students are introduced to different leisure activities such as yoga and archery as well as listening to experts discuss crucial aspects of Health Education.

Cookery and Nutrition form part of our PSHE Programme and from September 2011 we will have a new teaching area created to develop this aspect of our curriculum.

Careers Guidance

Our school places a high priority on providing a first class Careers Service. We are proud of the fact that virtually none of the Year 11 and Sixth Form leavers are still seeking employment or a place in higher education within twelve months of leaving us.

We have a well-stocked Careers Area which is situated within the LRC with up-to-date information on Careers and university courses. Boys are able to use the computers to search careers options and find out about university entry requirements through on-line prospectuses. Visitors and lecturers deliver presentations on careers. We have excellent links with industry and many contacts who help in arranging visits and work experience opportunities. Every other year, we hold our own 'Careers Fair' which is attended by representatives from a wide variety of occupations.

Our Head of Careers is always available for consultation and boys are able to call in to his office at lunchtimes, or make an appointment to see him. Careers Education lessons deal with a range of practical skills including interview techniques, application writing and preparing a curriculum vitae amongst a range of other activities with the younger pupils.

We work very closely with the connexions organisation. All pupils from year 9 onwards are given the opportunity to have interviews with the link officer who is in school on average approximately 1.5 days a week. These interviews are arranged through the Head of Careers.

Special Educational Needs

Students are identified as having Special Educational Needs if they regularly receive additional help with their education over and above that available to the majority of boys. Students are placed on the Special Needs Register at either School Action or School Action Plus, depending on their level of need, following a period of careful consultation and monitoring. The Deputy Headteacher (Pupil Welfare and Guidance) establishes how to offer the most appropriate support and then works closely with the Head of Year, the Learning Mentor and outside specialist agencies. We consult regularly with an Educational Psychologist who advises us in how best to support our pupils. In class, our Teaching Assistant is able to support some boys with practical help in lessons. Our team also includes a Learning Support Assistant who works with pupils on a one to one basis whenever necessary. We believe that in order to ensure that each child's needs are met, it is essential that parents are directly involved in helping us to plan, and we welcome their input in trying to ensure that all of our pupils reach their full potential.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils have equal rights, equal opportunity and equal access to their education. They are entitled to receive the appropriate support they need to become valued and active members of the community. Discrimination on difference by gender, race, language, culture, sexuality and physical and mental ability is not accepted. Racist, sexist and other forms of prejudicial behaviour can never be tolerated and such incidents are challenged when encountered and dealt with appropriately.

MONITORING EACH BOY'S PROGRESS

Keeping track of each boy's progress in relation to his target grades is essential in order to ensure that academic achievement is maximised.

Using Target Grades

All schools are provided with target levels and grades based on pupils' prior achievement. This information, together with the professional judgement of teachers, enables us to monitor each boy's progress towards the achievement of their target levels and grades.

Challenge Target Statements

In the Autumn Term all parents are issued with a Statement that details the levels at KS3 (Year 7 to 9) and grades at GCSE (Year 10 and 11) that each boy is capable of achieving. All pupils are provided with this information to stick inside their Planners.

These targets are estimates based upon national analysis of student achievement using prior attainment data. The grade estimates are calculated using a cognitive abilities test at KS3 and the University of Durham's year eleven information system (Yellis) at KS4. Providing parents and pupils with this information ensures that there is absolute clarity regarding what we are aiming for in terms of examination attainment.

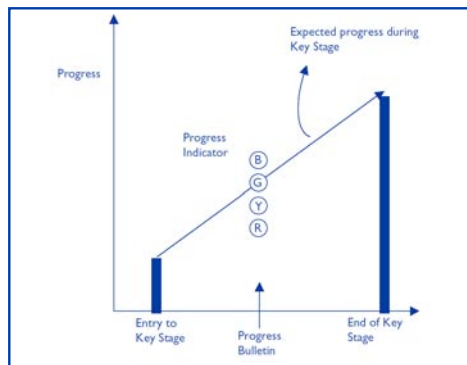
We ask parents to discuss target grades with their sons and work with us in seeking to maximise each boy's potential. Over the last few years we have seen a significant increase in the proportion of passes that are at the highest grades of A*/A because of this collective approach.

Reporting on Progress

These are the ways in which we monitor and report on your son's progress:

- A full written report is issued for each boy in each academic year. The annual report is written by subject teachers, form tutor and Head of Year.
- Progress Bulletins are issued each term. This records each boy's current level of attainment in relation to his target grades using a progress indicator. Grades for attitude to learning and barriers to learning are also included.

The Progress Indicator shows your son's current performance with respect to his overall Challenge Target. This is represented for KS3 in the figure below.



The colour scale enables you to see at a glance whether your son is on course to reach his challenge target. The key for the progress indicator is as follows;

VALUE	RED	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE
Description	Below target	Slightly below target	On or above target	Exceptional performance

A single red indicator should not be a concern if the trend over the year shows improvement.

Parents will be contacted by Heads of Years to celebrate success or when concerns arise.

- Tutors and Head of Year monitor progress carefully and intervene where necessary to help boys get back on track. This support can take the form of extra study sessions, regular mentoring and meetings with parents.
- Parents' Evenings take place each year and this is an opportunity for parents to meet individual subject staff. We are conscious that Parents' Evenings can be busy occasions and keeping to the time allocation can be a challenge. We do expect all parents to attend as this helps to ensure that each boy is supported by both school and home. Many boys attend along with their parents. Please be aware that it may not be possible to see all the subject teachers during a parents' evening.
- Where a teacher has a number of groups it may not be possible for the teacher to see all parents at a Parents Evening. In such a situation, the teacher would typically write to parents and provide the opportunity for verbal feedback.
- Whenever parents feel that they would like an "up-date" on their son's progress we are happy to provide this. Weekly monitoring is arranged for every lesson when we feel there is a need to do so.

For pupils who are considered to be performing significantly "below target", intervention meetings are arranged with the Headteacher and Head of Year. Where it is considered necessary, parents may also be asked to attend these meetings so that there is a unified approach to supporting those individuals concerned.

Sixth Form Targets and Progress Grades

All students are set aspirational A level grade targets during the first few weeks of their Sixth Form career. Progress is regularly reviewed against target and progress reports will be sent home approximately every half term. A full formal report is produced in the Spring Term of each year.

Where there is concern about a lack of progress meetings will be arranged with parents and the Deputy Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) and or the Headteacher. Parents are encouraged to contact the Deputy Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) at any time during the school year if they have concerns about their son's progress.

ASPECTS OF OUR SCHOOL ROUTINES

The Timing of our School Day

Our timetable is a two-week one, comprising 50 periods in each cycle. Each day is divided into five one hour lessons. All pupils will be issued with a two-week timetable that clearly indicates "Week A" and "Week B". The structure of the school day is as follows:

8.55 am	Bell
9.00 am – 9.15 am	Registration/ Assembly/Tutor Time
9.15 am – 10.15 am	Period 1
10.15 am – 11.15 am	Period 2
11.15 am – 11.35 am	Break
11.35 am – 12.35 pm	Period 3
12.35 pm – 1.35 pm	Lunch
1.35 pm – 1.40 pm	Registration
1.40 pm – 2.40 pm	Period 4
2.40 pm – 3.40 pm	Period 5

Equipment

Being prepared for learning is an essential expectation. All boys are expected to have the right equipment for their lessons (pens, pencils, rulers etc). Student Planners must always be available in lessons to record homework details.

Break and Lunchtime Arrangements

During break and lunchtime, boys are not permitted to leave the site without a specific written request by a parent and the permission of a Deputy Headteacher. A strength of our school from a safety perspective is that boys are on the site at all times – it is an extremely rare exception for a boy in Year 7 to 11 to go home for lunch.

Our dining hall staff provide a variety of hot and cold food menus each day and boys are able to pay on a daily basis for the food that they purchase. Some boys prefer to bring sandwiches to school each day. All boys eat their food in the dining hall although the school hall may be available for boys in Years 7 to 9.

When the weather is fair, boys are expected to be outside although the boys may use the Learning Resource Centre for quiet reading and study and supervised computer rooms are available for a similar purpose. The playing fields are available when they are dry. On occasion (and particularly during wet lunchtimes) boys are permitted to use the school hall to sit and talk quietly. When the hall is open, boys in Year 7 to 9 who bring sandwiches are expected to use this venue to eat in. Boys may only be in classrooms at lunchtime when there is a teacher present.

Outdoor seating areas are available for pupils to use at breaks and lunchtimes; these are situated in areas of the playground. The new quad has sufficient seating for approximately fifty pupils at any one time. The quad area is intended for pupils who wish to sit in a quiet area with their friends, away from the 'run-around' / 'ball playing' areas of the playground.

Sixth form students are allowed to leave the school site during break and lunchtime. It is important that all students behave in a way that both upholds the excellent reputation of the school and is respectful to local residents. Under no circumstances must students consume alcohol or visit public houses at lunchtime. Late return from break or lunch will not be tolerated.

Care of Exercise Books

The organisation and presentational standards in exercise books must be maintained to a high level. Plastic book wallets are available to cover and protect exercise books. Basic requirements are for boys to write neatly, make titles and headings clear and include the date at the top. In our experience there is a high correlation between taking a pride in presentation and high levels of achievement. Work that is clear, neat and set out properly is easier to revise from when it comes to tests and examinations.

Use of the Learning Resource Centre

The LRC combines library resources with multi-media provision. It provides students with not only a place to read, study and research but also to access one to one support when needed. Enhanced wireless access is available in the LRC and pupils are able to borrow net-book laptops to support independent study. Pupils are welcome to bring their own laptops into school and will be able to access the internet in the LRC although the school does not accept responsibility for pupils' personal laptops. Opening into the Dining Hall the LRC does provide a flexible space for both class groups and individual pupils. Access is available before school from 8.30 and during lunchtime. An after school Independent Study support club takes place in the LRC on Mondays to Thursdays from 3.45 to 4.30 pm.

Classroom Expectations

Classrooms including labs, ICT rooms, design rooms and gyms are our places of work. All boys are expected to respect our learning areas and take responsibility for their appearance and tidiness.

At the start of lessons boys are expected to enter the room in an orderly manner on the instruction of the teacher. Equipment should be taken out of boys' bags ready for the start of the lesson. During lessons, the standard rules of courtesy, concentration and commitment apply.

Boys may have water to drink during lessons whenever the teacher feels that this is practical. Drinks other than water are not permitted in lessons. "Sports Cap" bottles are ideal for this purpose. Under no circumstances are boys to drink from bottles while walking around the school. Water bottles can only be filled at break and lunchtime.

Security of Belongings

In an attempt to avoid boys carrying bulky or heavy items around in their bags every day, the school provides secure lockers. If you wish your son to hire a locker at a cost of £5 per year. This information is issued separately. Bags may be stored in the blue 'bag bins' that are situated around school for a temporary period such as at break and lunchtime.

School Calendar

At the start of each term boys and parents are provided with a copy of our school calendar. This provides details of key events including: Parents' Evenings, visits, important activities and sports fixture arrangements. Additional calendars containing examination dates are issued to boys taking external exams. Amendments and late additions can be seen on our website and in the weekly Parent Newsletter.

School Holiday Dates

The school holiday dates for the 2011-2012 school years are as follows:

Autumn Term Starts Wednesday 7 September 2011
Half – Term Monday 24 October – Friday 28 October 2011
Term Ends Friday 16 December 2011
(Bank Holiday Monday 2 January 2012)

Spring Term Starts Tuesday 3 January 2012
Half – Term Monday 13 February - Friday 17 February 2012
Term Ends Friday 30 March 2012

Summer Term Starts Monday 16 April 2012
May Day Monday 7 May 2012
Half – Term Monday 4 June – Friday 08 June 2012
Term Ends Friday 20 July 2012 (last day of term)

School Development Days 2011 – 2012 (School Closed to Pupils)

Monday 5 September 2011
Tuesday 6 September 2011
Friday 21 October 2011

The school holiday dates for the school year 2012-2013 have not yet been issued and will be available later in the next academic year.

As soon as the school holiday dates are available for 2012-2013, they will be displayed on the school website: www.wirralgrammarboys.com

MONEY MATTERS

The Wirral Grammar School for Boys “Friends Programme”

An important strength of our school is parent support for our “Friends Programme”. We are very proud of the wide-ranging opportunities available for our boys, many of them would not take place without the Fund. An annual donation of £10 or more allows us to maintain a breadth of activities, subsidise travel and pay for some of the ‘extras’ around the school like playground seating. Payments can be made by standing order or online through the +Pay System. All such donations are eligible under the Gift Aid Scheme approved by HMRC by simply signing the Gift Aid Declaration attached to the standing order form.

Completing the standing order form that has been provided with the starter pack would be greatly appreciated. As an additional incentive, we enter all standing orders into a prize draw. Details of the annual prize will be circulated separately.

Making Payments to School

We have recently introduced an on-line system for making payments to school through your Parent Mail Account, known as the +Pay Facility. All we require is an email address in order that correspondence regarding your son and school events can be sent to you. Once this has been set up, you will be able to make payments on-line for any activities that your son is involved in.

Where cheques are sent, these should be made payable to “Wirral Grammar School for Boys”. Envelopes should be clearly marked with the following information: Boy’s name, boy’s tutor group and the purpose for which the payment is being made.

Registering for Free School Meals

Parents/Guardians are eligible to apply for free school meals for their children if they receive:

- Income Support, or
- Income –Based Jobseekers Allowance, or
- Guaranteed Pension Credit, or
- Child Tax Credit with a total annual taxable income of less than £16,190 and are NOT receiving Working Tax Credit, or
- Have successfully obtained asylum status, or
- People who claim Employment and Support Allowance income

The Local Authority manages the application process and parents who consider themselves eligible need to complete a short section of the Welfare Benefits Form. The whole form itself is 36 pages long but only pages 29 and 30 relate to Free School Meals. The form can be obtained from the Council Website at the following link: www.wirral.gov.uk then select ‘free school meals’ in the search box.

In the Event of Financial Hardship

It is our utmost concern to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure boys are able to share in the

experiences that our school offers. In cases of genuine hardship, parents should contact the Finance and Business Manager in writing and mark the envelope ‘Private & Confidential’. We can extend the payment period to reduce the amount owing at any given time. All financial concerns are treated with confidentiality. Please note that our funds for this purpose are very limited and usually only small subsidies are available and these are primarily intended for parents of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a school, we are keen to provide what support we can and our priority is for boys who are eligible for free school meals.

Alternatively, if you require assistance with this, please contact our Finance and Business Manager. From September 2011, our new cashless payment system will mean that there is no way in which other pupils are aware of who is in receipt of free school meals.

Charging Policy

We hold dear the notion of “free education” and “entitlement for all”. However, in any school environment there are occasions when charges have to be made. Visits that are directly linked to curricular provision, for example, participation on a fieldwork visit, can only take place if sufficient pupils participate and pay the relevant amount. All such activities are subsidised by the school. The financial hardship arrangements will apply for boys who are in receipt of free school meals. Examples of where we have to charge parents include:

- Enrichment visits such as non-curricular day trips, residential visits etc.
- Replacement of lost or damaged exercise books/diaries.

- Exam fees in certain circumstances (separate details are available from school).
- Damage to school property through negligence or malicious damage.
- Extra courses beyond the main entitlement.
- For some course booklets and revision guides, where there is a printing cost.

Learning Resource Centre Fines

For most boys this is hardly ever an issue. As with public libraries, fines act as a reminder that books should be returned promptly for the convenience of other boys who may be waiting. All fines are “ploughed back” into resources for our library.

For books on standard loan of two weeks, the fine is 10p per school day, up to a maximum of £4.00. For books on upper school short-term loan of two school days, the fine is 60p per school day and for lower school project loans on an overnight loan, the fine is 30p per school day.

For audio recordings, video, DVD, CDs etc the standard loan period is two weeks with fines charges of 10p per school day. For short-term loans of two days, the fine charges are 60p per school day.

Pupils will be expected to replace lost books or DVDs as well as pay the fine. In order to avoid running up fines pupils should always speak to the librarian as soon as they are encountering difficulties in either returning a book or paying a fine.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Partnership for Pupils' Achievement

At Wirral Grammar School we believe that education of our boys is a partnership between teachers, parents and the pupils. We appreciate that parents expect, not only to be fully informed about the progress their son is making at school, but also to be involved in their education. Parents of boys at Wirral Grammar School are very supportive and there is a genuine sense of collective responsibility in securing the highest of expectations for our pupils.

Home: A Place to Study

Having a space whether it be the bedroom or part of another room in the home in which your son can work is important. Effective, independent learning habits contribute to success. Establishing a routine for study that fits in with home life is also important and this is especially the case when it comes to coursework preparation and exam revision.

Saturday School

At certain times of the year, we operate an additional facility called 'Saturday School'. This is for those students where there are concerns about progress and performance and where we feel that additional supervised time would be of benefit. Boys are expected to attend on a Saturday morning from 9.30am – 12.00 noon. The main purpose of Saturday School is to provide pupils with some extra 'quality time' in which to catch up and progress with their work.

"Study Leave" for External Examinations

Prior to the start of external examinations in Year 11, 12 and 13, at the discretion of the school and with the agreement and support of parents, boys are allowed time at home to study. Study leave is not an automatic entitlement. For some boys independent study is something that they can responsibly engage with; for others, continued school-based support is needed. In considering eligibility for study leave each boy's track record for effort and coursework completion are taken into account.

Parents' Evenings

Attendance at parents' evenings is always very high and we strive for 100% attendance.

There is a Parents' Evening for each year group and we also include an additional afternoon for Year 7 in the Autumn Term when parents are able to meet with Form Tutors.

Ahead of a Parents' Evening, boys arrange appointments with subject staff. Please be aware that it may not be possible to see all of your son's teachers because some staff teach more than one class in a year group. During the course of a Parents' Evening, parents are asked to register their attendance on the "signing in" sheet in the Atrium Entrance. This provides a clear picture of who is present on the evening. Parents will be issued with a "Parents' Evening Guide" to explain where teachers are located. "Parent Surveys" are available for parents to complete and hand in on their departure. Surveys provide valuable information relating to the views and perceptions of parents and carers. Beyond Parents' Evening, we have an "open door" policy for parents and will be pleased to organise appointments. Where a parent has a concern about their son's progress, they should contact their son's Head of Year.

ICT at Home

ICT provides exciting learning opportunities and we are continuously investing in our ICT at school. The pace of technological change is tremendous and increasingly boys are making use of many types of ICT equipment at home to support them with their studies. There are a number of free applications available on the internet to allow your son to continue to work at home, a list of these with direct links are available on the Virtual Learning Environment. Parents who would like advice regarding computer equipment at home are welcome to contact the school and speak with our ICT Strategy Leader.

From time to time issues arise because pupils are making inappropriate use of ICT resources and the internet outside of school. The development of social networking sites for example 'Facebook', 'MySpace', 'MSN' and 'Twitter' have, for a significant minority, become a major distraction for school work. We do our best to advise pupils on how to manage their time effectively and we advise parents to monitor the time pupils spend on such resources. At their best, networking sites provide a means of constructive social interaction between friends. At worst, they become an unhealthy distraction when use becomes habitual. Within school, students learn how use the internet safely and appropriately, however access to social networking sites is restricted. For information on how you and your son can remain safe on-line at home, please refer to the E-Safety area on our website.

Our Home-School Agreement

Our home-school agreement is a document that has been arrived at through consultation with parents. The agreement defines the expectations that we share as a community from the perspectives of parents, teachers and pupils. Signing our home-school agreement is more than a "paper exercise"; it expresses a sincere commitment on the part of all involved in ensuring that each boy achieves his potential.

Curriculum Guides: Keeping you Informed

At the start of each school year parents of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are provided with a curriculum guide to the subjects that your son will be studying each year. These guides provide information about the themes/topics being studied, how boys will be advised and how parents can support students with their learning.

“Nuntius”: our Termly News Publication

At the end of each term or sometimes at the very beginning of a new term, parents will be issued with a copy of “Nuntius”. This contains details about events, activities and achievements. Boys contribute their own articles to this publication and it contains dates and reminders for the following term.

School Website

Our school website is an important source of information and a vehicle for communication between school and home. Our website address is www.wirralgrammarboys.com. All letters which are sent home via your son are also emailed from Parent Mail. If you have not given the school your details please email your name, your email address, your son’s name and tutor group to parentmail@wirralgrammarboys.com. We are also developing a Parent Portal which will allow you to have secure access to your son’s attendance, assessment, achievement and behaviour data.

Disclaimer Our Parent Handbook is renewed on an annual basis. To accompany this publication we provide separate information on examination results, staff lists etc. Specific publications provide curriculum details and course information. While we endeavour to keep our Parent Handbook as up-to-date as possible, changes to school policy do occur from time to time.

Learning and Teaching

Wirral Grammar has always demonstrated strengths across the whole range of subjects and this is reflected in our excellent examination results. Despite this, all subjects strive to meet the demands and challenges of an ever-changing technological world. In doing so, we hope to provide students with the skills and abilities that will enable them to successfully enter the world of learning and work beyond school.

OFSTED (April ‘09) commented on our “teacher’s enthusiasm” and we are making Wirral an exciting place in which to learn for our students and staff. We endeavour to utilise the most successful practices and create an effective learning culture.

“SAM Learning”

All boys at Wirral Grammar School have free access to a number of online resources to help maximise their potential. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is an online area which teachers regularly upload content which is relevant to the topics being taught. Homework is often set, accessed and marked through the VLE. We believe the VLE assists with all areas of school life and we are developing pastoral and extra-curricular activity mini-sites.

SAM Learning, (*SAM is an acronym for Self Assessment Method*) is packed with revision exercises and practice examination questions to support boys preparing for GCSEs and A Levels. In addition to the VLE and SAM Learning there are a number of subject specific websites which are regularly used for homework. Parents are asked to encourage their son to make use of these resources. Logon and password details are issued to all students each year and there is a reminder in their Student Planner.

Parents’ Association

We have a flourishing Parents’ Association at Wirral Grammar School. All parents become members of our PA and we always welcome parents to our committee meetings. During the course of the year our PA holds a range of fund-raising activities and separate notification of these is sent home via pupils. Each year significant sums of money are raised and all of this is invested in resources for the boys. Examples of recent purchases include: a new school minibus, sponsorship for our successful application to become a Business & Enterprise Specialist School, ICT equipment for classrooms, new noticeboards for corridors and support for the school Radio Station. Members of our PA are always on-hand at school functions: school plays, musical evenings, open evenings etc. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

The Governing Body

Our Governing body includes representatives from our community. Many of our Governors are, or have been, parents of boys attending the school. Our Governors have a wide range of professional backgrounds and are able to provide advice, support and “critical friendships” with regard to strategic development at the school. Governing Body meetings take place every term with additional committee meetings for Finance, Personnel Matters and Health & Safety. The Headteacher prepares a termly report to the Governing Body.

Raising Concerns

While we try to get things right, we are aware that from time to time parents will wish to raise concerns more formally. We believe that the most important first approach is to talk to us about your concerns so that we can investigate and respond. Details of our full concerns procedure is available on our school website or can be obtained by contacting the school.



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