

PARENTS' MAIL

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

In September, we made a number of big changes to how we manage behaviour and to how teaching is organised. We are delighted with the impact these changes have had.

First of all, behaviour is now very good in all lessons. When I walk around the school, I rarely see a student off-task, never mind misbehaving. Students and teachers all say that behaviour is excellent. This is borne out by a huge reduction in the number of behaviour points compared with the Autumn term in 2015. What is especially pleasing is that the number of behaviour points reduced week by week throughout the term, hitting an all-time low in December. Same-day after-school detentions clearly work as a deterrent.

Another big improvement has been punctuality. It is rare for students to arrive late. This means that first lesson always gets off to a good start. However there are still too many students whose attendance is low. Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to make good progress. On the other hand, the correlation between high attendance and excellent GCSE results is striking. This is why we are extending the use of catch-up cards to everyone who has been absent to make sure that all missing work is caught up. If you need any support or advice in relation to your child's attendance, Mrs Cox (Office Manager/Attendance Officer) will be happy to help.

As you know, GCSEs are changing. There are new exams in English and Maths this summer, graded 9-1 instead of A*-C. Most other subjects will change next year, with new specifications now being taught in Y10. The new GCSEs test more content and rely on end of year 11 exams with very little coursework / controlled assessment. This means that revision for exams is an essential skill. It is for this reason that we have rearranged teaching into 8 week cycles with regular testing so that students revise regularly and learn their work. Data from the most recent progress checks shows that the vast majority of students are making very good progress. Please can you continue to encourage your child to revise carefully for assessment week. This will really help to develop the skills needed to do well in new-style exams.

During the last few weeks, we have had three external reviews: our annual Challenge Partners review of the school by Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers from other schools, a Department for Education visit and an Ofsted monitoring visit. Whilst I am not at liberty to disclose the outcome of the Ofsted visit, we were pleased that the other reviews recognised the many strengths of the school. Ofsted will write a letter to us in the next 2 weeks which will then be published and made available to you. The letter will say whether we have taken appropriate action to be judged good at the next inspection and will comment on what the inspector saw.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming Parents' Evenings this term:

Wednesday 15th February - Year 7 Parents' Evening

Thursday 16th March - Year 9 Options Evening

Tuesday 21st March - Year 10 Parents' Evening

➔ ParentPay – the next stage

By introducing ParentPay, Woodham Academy has greatly simplified the process of collecting dinner money, allowing parents to make on-line payments for meals and saving time in the school office. Parents and students no longer need worry about losing money and parents can even login to see which meals their children are enjoying.

The use of ParentPay has been so successful that we are proposing to use the system for trips and other items where previously students have been required to bring cash into school. We will notify parents as and when these opportunities arise but the process is relatively straightforward. After you have logged in to ParentPay, you will select “Pay for other items”, where you will see a list of all the items available to you as they are added. PayPoint users will require a different bar code for each item and will be directed to contact the school when necessary.

Your support in using ParentPay will help the school enormously



➔ More Able Academy

I hope that you have received our recent newsletter outlining all of the fantastic activities we have planned for our More Able Academy students this term. If not, please check the school website to see a copy of the newsletter. Here is a quick outline of what we have available this term and next for our students;

Y7 16th February- University of Durham Workshop

Y8 28th February- University of Durham workshop

Y9 Big Deal Launch- University of York

Y9 24th March- University of Durham Workshop

Y9 University of Durham- Careers in Law- date tbc

Y9 3rd July- Medicine and Dentistry Day

Y10 3rd February- Speakers into Schools- What is a book?

Y10 University of Durham- Careers in Law- date tbc

We are constantly updating our programme to provide as many opportunities as possible for our students so please keep checking the school website and Facebook page for more details. Students will also be informed by letter and email of any opportunities we have available for them.

Thank you
Mrs Dickinson

➔ Vacancies

Woodham Academy currently has a number of vacancies available including;

Teacher of History

Behaviour Support Worker

Exam Invigilators

For further information and to download the application pack please visit www.woodham.org.uk



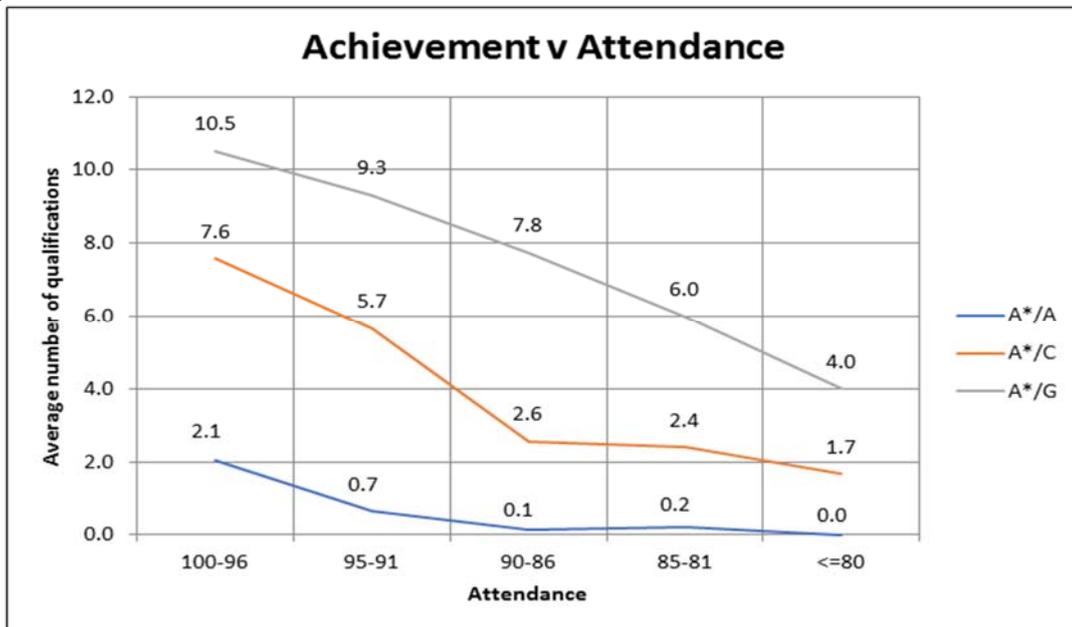
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The Importance of High Attendance

Excellent attendance is a vital part of achievement at school. The chart below is a clear demonstration of this. As a school we are always looking to improve the attendance of young people in order to maximize their chances of success. As a result we do not authorise holidays during term time unless there are extenuating circumstances for the request. Please be advised that an unauthorised holiday of seven days or more can make you liable to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

We also ask that all those who are absent from school catch up on the work that they have missed during their absence. This is done through the form of a 'catch up' card. This will be given to a young person by their Tutor and they will be asked to visit all their teachers whose lessons they have missed during their absence to collect the work they will need to catch up on. They will be given until the following Friday to complete this work, presenting it to their teacher and getting the card signed off to then show to their Tutor, therefore demonstrating that all work has been completed. This will help to support all students in ensuring that they do not miss out on vital parts of their learning



There are also a variety of levels of attendance that would initiate the school monitoring the attendance of a young person more closely. In some circumstances it may be necessary to ask that if a student is absent from school medical evidence may be requested. If this is the case then you will be informed by letter. We judge attendance in the following categories:

Attendance Percentage	Level
98% – 100%	Outstanding
97%	Excellent
95% - 96.9%	Good
91% - 93%	Below average
90% - 90.9%	Requires improvement
90% and below	Unsatisfactory – considered as a persistent absentee by government guidelines

➔ Key Stage 3 - Understanding the New Progress Report

Parents of all Year 8 and 9 students should have received their child's progress report for the Autumn Term. Year 7 progress reports will be available for collection at the upcoming Parents' Evening on Wednesday 15th February. This information will be useful as you discuss your child's progress with the relevant subject teachers.

In light of changes to how student performance is indicated at GCSE and the removal of national curriculum levels, we have adjusted our reports and grading system. This has now replaced what was the Rising Stars. When your child receives their final exam results at the end of Year 11, they will no longer be graded from A*-G but on a scale from 9-1 where 9 is the highest grade achievable. This new scale is now reflected in the reports you will receive throughout Woodham Academy.

The first column on your child's report is their current working grade. This has been calculated in each subject against clear, subject specific criteria that have been assessed formally throughout your child's time at the school. The number equates to the new GCSE grading.

To help provide perspective on this current grade, the report also indicates your child's end of year target grade. This grade indicates the levels students need to be attaining, at the end of this school year, in order to be on track to make good progress in their time at Woodham Academy. These target grades have been calculated, individually, for each student based on their Key Stage 2 data and are mapped all the way to the numerical grade they should be achieving at the end of Year 11. In order to ensure that your child is being challenged and stretched to make good progress throughout their time at school, the end of year target will rise each academic year.

Finally, the report indicates whether your child is on track to attain their end of year target grade, indicated simply 'Y' for yes and 'N' for no. It is important to note that, as we have only completed one full term of the year, a student does not have to be quite reaching their target grade yet to be deemed 'on track'.

We hope this new system will provide you with a clear and consistent format for tracking your child's progress throughout their time at Woodham Academy. Parents will receive an update relating to the progress made during the Spring Term in due course. However, if you have any concerns or wish to discuss your child's progress sooner then please do not hesitate to contact your child's subject teachers or Head of Learning.

Important Contacts

Head of Learning Year 7 – Mrs McGinnety

Head of Learning Year 8 – Mrs Fawcett

Head of Learning Year 9 – Mrs Kell

Important Dates

Y7 Parent's Evening – 15th Feb 4pm – 7pm

Y9 Options Evening – 16th March 6pm – 8pm

Y8 Parents' Evening – 3rd May 4pm – 7pm

Y8 Options Evening – 17th May 6pm – 8pm

➔ School Uniform

The school uniform continues to look smart and always receives compliments from visitors to the school. The major items of school uniform are available to buy from the link below. We have now made normal ties available to purchase for key stage 3 alongside the clip ties. WWW.SWI.CO.UK We DO NOT ALLOW tight or stretchy skirts, leggings, jeggings, jeans or trousers which look like them. Please do not put yourself to extra expense by buying or being persuaded to buy these items, which will have to be replaced with acceptable Woodham Academy uniform. Please see images below for acceptable school uniform.

For further information and images visit our website



We update our pages daily with news, events, exciting things we're doing in school, photos and videos.

Pop over and follow us!

➔ Contact Us

If you need to get in touch with us urgently, please telephone 01325 300328. If we can't resolve a problem immediately, someone will call you back the same day. Please be aware that staff are often unavailable during the school day due to teaching commitments and will return your call after 3:15pm. If you need to report that your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please telephone school before 8:50am.

@woodhamacademy



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➔ Durham Unwrapped 2016

Students from Y9 More Able Academy visited Durham University to gain an insight into university life. The visit included talks on the academic and social side of university as well as a tour of some of the colleges at Durham University. Students gained a valuable understanding of the academic as well as the social elements of university life and the benefits of studying at a prestigious university like Durham.



➔ Durham Unwrapped 2016

On Thursday 12th January, Y10 Woodham More Able Academy students attended Durham Unwrapped hosted by Durham University who provided students with a variety of information about higher education and student life. Students gained an increased understanding of the various routes to University and through a variety of interactive sessions, students learned about the benefits of higher education and worked with current undergraduates to gain an invaluable insight into university life.



➔ Durham Medical Day, New College 30 November 2016



Medical Days are arranged for young people who are interested in pursuing a career in medicine. The days give the young people the opportunity to speak to practising medics, and to learn about the entry requirements for medical school. Woodham More Able Academy attended the Durham Medical day and gained a fantastic insight into the medical profession. Throughout the day our students participated in three different medical activities led by a team of medical students. Students learned skills such as the CPR/Recovery position, Medical Ethics and a new Diagnostics activity.



Save the Date

Write them in your phone or stick them on the fridge so you don't forget.

Year 7 Parents' Evening

Wednesday 15th February 4-7pm

End of Term

School closes Friday 17th February

School reopens Monday 27th
February

Year 9 Options Evening

Thursday 16th March 6-8pm

Year 10 Parents' Evening

Tuesday 2nd March 4-7pm

Friendship Day

Saturday 25th March 10-12pm

Dance Showcase

Thursday 30th March 7-9pm

Art Exams

Monday 3rd to Friday 7th April

End of Term

School closes Friday 7th April

School reopens Monday 24th April

Year 5/6 Events

If you have a child in Year 5 or Year 6 at primary school, there are a number of opportunities for your child to visit Woodham Academy before moving to secondary school.

The dates below include events organised with your child's primary school as well public events where parents and siblings are also invited to attend.

Public Events

Dance Showcase 30th March, 7pm - 9pm

Summer Fair 8th July 12pm - 2pm

Art & Design Exhibition 12th July 4pm-6.30pm

Summer Concert 14th July, 7pm

By Invitation

Summer School August (dates to be confirmed)

Year 6 Friendship Day 25th March, 10am - 12pm

Year 5 Parents' Coffee Morning 13th June, 9:30am

Year 6 Induction Evening 12th July, 6pm

Children's Activities Open to All

Nano Bit IT Club 15th March, 10th May, 21st June
3:30pm - 4:30pm

Sparkies Science Club 15th March, 10th May,
21st June, 4:30pm - 6pm

Events Organised Through Primary Schools

Year 5 Visits 12th - 29th June

Year 6 Induction Day 29th June

Year 5 Maths Challenge 29th June

Please monitor the school's website and facebook page for further updates



Calendar 2017 – 2018 School Terms and Holidays

Autumn Term 2017

Monday	4th	September	Professional Development Day school closed to students
Tuesday	5th	September	School Year begins – Year 7 only
Wednesday	6th	September	School Year begins – All Pupils
Friday	20th	October	School closes for half term
Monday	30th	October	School re-opens
Friday	24th	November	Professional Development Day school closed to students
Friday	22nd	December	Autumn term ends

Spring Term 2018

Monday	8th	January	Spring term starts
Friday	9th	February	School closes for half term
Monday	19th	February	School re-opens
Thursday	29th	March	Spring term ends

Summer Term 2018

Monday	16th	April	Summer term begins
Monday	7th	May	School closed for May Bank Holiday
Tuesday	8th	May	School re-opens
Friday	25th	May	School closes for half term
Monday	4th	June	School re-opens
Friday	29th	June	Professional Development Day school closed to students
Friday	20th	July	Summer term ends



Woodham Academy Football Fixtures 2016-17

Date	Opposition	Venue	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
01/03/17	St Johns	Home	✓	✓	✓		
07/03/17	Teesdale	Away	✓		✓		✓
08/03/17	Sunnydale	Away		✓			✓
14/03/17	Staindrop	Home	✓	✓			✓
22/03/17	Greenfield	Away	✓	✓	✓		✓
28/03/17	Whitworth Park	Home	✓	✓	✓		✓
04/04/17	King James	Home	✓	✓	✓		✓
05/04/17	Wolsingham	Away	✓	✓			

All games are subject to weather conditions and therefore could be postponed on the day of the game. For away games we anticipate being back between 5.30-6.00pm.

Year 9 Option Evening

The Year 9 Option Evening will be held on Thursday 16th March. This will be an opportunity for parents and students to find out about potential subjects they can study in Years 10 and 11.

This can be a challenging time for students, many of whom will be unsure and undecided about possible qualifications and routes and further education or employment opportunities. For that reason, it has always been the philosophy at Woodham to offer as broad an options process as possible. Personally I have always advocated a diverse key stage 4 curriculum and whilst that has become more difficult as a result of recent government performance measures, I am still confident it is something we are able to deliver. At Woodham, it is our intention to maintain the diversity in the curriculum rather than restricting the types of subjects that are available. Maintaining the element of choice in the process will allow students greater choice when they leave us at the end of year 11.

The options evening will allow me to explain the process further and there will be a carousel of presentations by Heads of Department in options areas who will explain the key stage 4 curriculum in their subjects in greater detail.

Should you require any more information about the process please do not hesitate to contact me at Woodham.