



18th October 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

## Term One Summary

As we approach the end of the first half-term of the academic year, I would like to thank you for your support and engagement with our school's continued journey. Whilst it has been a particularly busy term, it has been pleasing to see the number of new students joining us across all five year groups, the excellent community engagement we have seen and the respectful atmosphere within school.

### This Term

This half-term has been a productive and successful one. Our new Year 7 students have started in a really positive manner and a number of our Year 7 students attended a recent Trustee meeting to present their initial thoughts and ideas to our Trustees. Our Open Evening was very busy and we have welcomed many new students into all year groups; a promising sign of our reputation in the local area. This half-term has also seen the introduction of our new 'Period 6' offer, which includes additional GCSEs for over a quarter of our Year 10 students in a number of subject areas. The 'Period 6' offer is part of our enrichment programme, which sees a wealth of clubs, events and visits support the teaching and learning which takes place within the classroom.

### Community Engagement

A real highlight of this half-term has been the work we have undertaken with our local community. We have begun to develop links with the Shepton Mallet Community Fridge and have engaged with our local Rotarian group. Links with our partner Primary Schools and Strode College have been further strengthened through joint planning and by offering local organisations the opportunity to attend our staff training events. Recent meetings have also seen the creation of a Shepton Mallet Youth Council, created by Whitstone School students, and providing a voice for young people within the local area.

### INSET Days

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October, school will be closed to both students in line with the calendar circulated to parents/carers last year. School will finish for the half-term break on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 3pm as usual. Students will return after the half-term break on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November, as Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October is a scheduled INSET day.

Please can I also take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that the autumn term will finish on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 12.30pm. Buses will collect students at 12.30pm and transport them home via the usual routes.

## **Preparation for Learning**

I would like to thank our students and all parents/carers for the positive start to the academic year. Student behaviour for learning has been some of the best I have seen in my time as Headteacher at Whitstone School and students have arrived at school fully prepared for learning. The new 'Preparation for Excellence' has resulted in a smooth start to the day and student voice has evidenced the belief of our young people that this is a positive change. It has also been pleasing to see the number of students arriving at school with both the correct equipment and uniform. Both of these are important in reducing the time spent at the start of each lesson discussing issues not related to learning.

May I take this opportunity to remind parents and carers about our uniform expectations, drawing particular attention to the following. Further detailed information regarding our uniform expectations can be found on our website.

- Skirts should be knee length and either pleated or A-line
- No slim fit trousers
- No trainers
- Facial piercings (such as nose studs) are not permitted and students will be asked to remove them.

## **Cost of Living**

As a school, we are very aware of the financial challenges facing families at this current time. As a result, we have continued to freeze the cost of our canteen food and drink (despite the soaring cost of ingredients), have provided free breakfasts for those students who most require it, subsidised the cost of trips and visits and have provided uniform at no cost to a large number of students. Please do contact us if you require support of any form; we remain very keen to support all students and their families.

I hope that your family enjoys a relaxing half-term break. As is always the case, please do contact us should you have any questions. My new email is [guy.swallow@whitstoneschool.org](mailto:guy.swallow@whitstoneschool.org); I continue to be happy to be contacted regarding your child's education.

Yours faithfully,



Guy Swallow

Headteacher