



Autumn 1
2024/25

NEWSLETTER

As we reach the end of the autumn term, I want to take a moment to reflect on our achievements and share some important updates.

Students new to The Westminster family have settled well into the school. This is testimony to the excellent transition package we offer before they join us and their commitment and dedication to the school values of Safe Happy and Learning Together. They have demonstrated they are able to adapt well to change and forge new relationships with staff and peers.

This term, we introduced a new mobile phone policy aimed at fostering a focused and engaging learning environment. We believe that by minimizing distractions, our students can fully immerse themselves in their studies and interact more meaningfully with their peers. Thank you for your support in helping your children adapt to this change. More information can be found on page 3 of this publication.

Additionally, our recent school trips have been a highlight of the term. From exploring local history to participating in hands-on workshops and preparing for our Duke of Edinburgh Award. These experiences have enriched our students' education and sparked their curiosity. I am incredibly proud of their enthusiasm and the positive feedback we've received from both students and staff.

The school and the School Governing Board would like to formally thank Mrs S Harvey who has been an important part of the school community for such a long time as parent governor. Over the years she has robustly championed the challenges students and their families face and has had a real impact in the school and wider community of SEN. We would like to thank her for her dedication and commitment. With this in mind, an opportunity has opened up for a new parent governor.

Finally, TWS were proud to launch our new Humanities and SHaLT Curriculum in September. This revision of existing work brings to life important concepts relating to history, geography and RE whilst making them meaningful and relevant for our students. The new SHaLT Curriculum launch encompasses important PHSE concepts and those of cultural life around Britain. Next term's topic is DEMOCRACY IN ACTION. Students will be learning about important democratic principles and will have the chance to vote in the upcoming School Council elections.

A message from the

Headteacher

Mr O M Flowers



Inside this issue....

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Parent Governor Vacancy

Due to the current parent governor's term of office coming to an end, we have a vacancy for this position on the Governing Board.

A parent governor is a person who is elected as a member of the Governing Board of the school, by parents of registered pupils at the school and who is a parent at the time of their election. Governors come from all walks of life and bring a rich variety of skills and experience to schools. What Governors at The Westminster School have in common, is a passion for education and a commitment to furthering the life chances of all of the young people we serve.

Parents include:

- The parent of a registered pupil at the school.
- An individual who had or has had parental responsibility for, or cares or has cared for, a child or young person under the age of 19.

A person cannot be a parent governor if they are:

- An elected member of the Local Authority; or
- Paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve-month period (at the time of the election or appointment).

Parent Governors attend regular meetings throughout the school year and will receive an induction and other relevant training and development. All Governors are appointed for four years. If there are more nominations than vacancies, we will conduct a secret ballot. If that is necessary, voting instructions will be sent to all parents and carers. If you would like to learn more about the role please email headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk

If you would like to stand for election as parent governor, please complete the form at <https://forms.office.com/e/1zu8vz788F> (or scan the QR code) by 15 November 2024.



Attendance

The Westminster School continues to strive for excellence for all its pupils. In order to achieve this the school takes attendance very seriously. We firmly believe that good attendance leads to students:

- Making friends and feel included.
- Learning new things and developing skills.
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem.
- Improving their social skills.
- Having better career prospects.
- Achieving their full potential and fulfilling their aspirations.

The school is working hard to raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance and our Attendance Monitoring Group (AMG), chaired by the Head Teacher, meet weekly to discuss attendance and develop strategies to support students and their families to improve attendance. We will continue to update you with your child's attendance. If you would like to discuss any issues regarding attendance or require further support please contact the school through the main office or at attendance@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk. A gentle reminder that morning registers close at 9.20am each morning. Any arrival after this will result in your child having a late mark.

During the summer holidays in 2024 the government changed the guidance for schools regarding attendance and these changes have been reflected in our new school attendance policy which can be found in the policies section of our website.

Mobile Phone Policy

The School has updated its Mobile Phone Policy from 4 November 2024 to align with the Department for Education's guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools.

While the School understands the convenience and importance of mobile phones in today's world, we have reviewed our policy on the use of mobile phones by pupils, staff and visitors during school hours. The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. The Westminster School agrees with these principles as we agree that they create significant challenges when used within School. The School is an environment where students deserve to learn without distraction and mobile phones can impact on their ability to engage and communicate effectively with their peers.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, including:

- **Distraction:** Mobile phones can be a significant distraction to students' learning. Constant notifications, games, and social media can interfere with focus and concentration.
- **Cyberbullying:** Unfortunately, mobile phones can be used as a tool for cyberbullying, which can have a negative impact on students' mental health and well-being.
- **Theft and loss:** Schools have experienced increasing numbers of mobile phones being stolen or lost. This can lead to financial hardship for families and disrupt the learning environment.
- **Data protection:** mobile phones may be used to record video or take photographs which could be shared with other people

The overarching principles of the policy are:

- **Pupils can keep mobile phones in a secure location, such as their bags or on their person, but when in school they need to be switched off at all times.**
- **Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at break times and at lunchtimes.**
- **If students are unable to self-regulate based on these principles the school expects they will hand them into their Form Tutor at the start of the day during registration time.**

We understand that pupils may need to carry phones with them if they are independent travellers or to self-regulate whilst travelling to and from school in minibuses/taxis, which is why we are asking pupils to turn their devices 'off and away, all day' whilst in school.

We believe that by restricting the use of mobile phones during school hours, we can create a more conducive learning environment for all students. We appreciate your understanding and support in implementing this policy.

Our Mobile Phone Policy can be found, along with all our other policies, on the school website:

<https://thewestminsterschool.co.uk/parents/school-policies/>



My Community

Hazel Class have been collecting donations of clothes and bric-a-brac from staff to take to the local charity shops in Blackheath Town Centre.

Nationally, charity shops have seen a reduction in donations as people are now choosing to sell second-hand items through sites such as Vinted and DePop.

By collecting good quality items, Hazel have been able to support local charity shops and learn about how they work and the important role that they play in the community



Black Country Living Museum Visit

In October, Willow, Kinver and Elm classes joined together to travel back in time at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley. They were learning about the daily lives of people throughout history, including seeing what shops looked like in the past.

Students also visited the School House and experienced a 1912 school lesson!



Kinver and Willow classes visited RSPB Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve and used the bird hides to spot all sorts of waterfowl.

Mulberry and Wenlock classes took a trip to the Waseley Hills Country Park and took in the views, despite the mud!



Careers at Westminster

Our students have been gaining valuable work experience and learning about different careers and workplaces this term.

Nearly 80 students are out in work placements at least once a week, gaining real-world experience and developing employability skills. We would like to say a huge thank you to our fantastic network of supportive employers who make this possible – we couldn't do it without them. This is an amazing opportunity for our students to gain workplace experience, develop essential skills, and build their confidence. We couldn't be prouder of how well they've taken on the challenge.

Students have been on placement at a local McDonald's. They have been given their staff uniforms and have also completed their staff induction. They've already jumped straight into their new roles and are excelling. They have been dealing with customer questions and complaints, waiting tables and ensuring that the whole restaurant is clean and tidy. Students have also been involved in work placements at a local care home. They have worked in different departments, experiencing a range of activities including cleaning, care, activities, and hair & beauty. Another student has been on placement at a local soft play centre. We're incredibly proud of our amazing young people taking part in work experience.

We've also had some very special visitors from the DRP Group, a creative agency that specialises in a wide range of services including campaigns, film production, digital solutions, and event management. Their staff introduced us to an amazing new project that students will be taking part in, which involves them applying for roles at DRP such as Show Director, Host, Scriptwriter, Presentation Designer, Animator, Camera Operator, Vision Mixer, Audio Operator, and Lighting Designer. We are going to produce our very own talk show whilst learning all about show productions.

These opportunities are fantastic for developing skills, building confidence, and making a positive impact on the community. Well done to all our students involved!



What's Cooking?

Students have been very busy learning about food and nutrition and developing essential life skills in Food Technology this term.

Clent class have been working together to make brunch. Willow class have been getting into the Autumnal spirit and embracing the chilly weather this week by preparing healthy tomato soup. Wrekin class have been busy preparing a healthy vegetable Chow Mein that was full of nutrients and tasted delicious.



Leading Parent Partnership Award

Just a reminder that the school are continuing to work towards the Leading Parent Partnership Award with the intention of improving how we engage with our parents and carers.

Thank you for all the parents and carers who have completed our recent surveys which including evaluation of our Meet the Staff evening, our school transition programme, and our parental engagement survey.

We are in the process of analysing the results of these surveys with the hope of implementing the feedback over the next half term.

If there are any parents and carers who would like to support the school with achieving this award, please contact the School Office.

Pictured is our recent Parent/Carer Pumpkin carving Workshop session, held after school in October.



The Westminster School Calendar 2024/25

September 2024							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
35							1
36	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
37	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
38	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
39	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
40	30						

October 2024							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
40		1	2	3	4	5	6
41	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
42	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
43	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
44	28	29	30	31			

November 2024							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
44					1	2	3
45	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
46	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
47	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
48	25	26	27	28	29	30	

December 2024							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
48							1
49	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
50	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
51	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
52	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1	30	31					

January 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1			1	2	3	4	5
2	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
3	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
4	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
5	27	28	29	30	31		

February 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
5						1	2
6	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9	24	25	26	27	28		

March 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
9						1	2
10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
12	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
13	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
14	31						

April 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
14		1	2	3	4	5	6
15	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
18	28	29	30				

May 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
18				1	2	3	4
19	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
22	26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
22							1
23	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
24	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
27	30						

July 2025							
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
27		1	2	3	4	5	6
28	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
29	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
31	28	29	30	31			

INSET Day Bank Holiday
 School Holidays

At A Glance
 4th November - West Brom
 11th November - Forge farm
 18th November - West Brom
 25th November - West Brom
 2nd December - West Brom
 9th December - West Brom
 16th December - West Brom

Family Club
 November to December 2024

Family Club returns Monday 4th November
 Please read all information carefully

@ West Bromwich Leisure Centre, Moor Street, West Bromwich, B70 7AZ
 5:00pm - 6:30pm
 Parking at the rear of the leisure centre is pay and display but refundable at centre's reception

The venue is wheelchair accessible but please note there are no changing facilities.

It's all about having FUN together!

Our sessions offer families the chance to take part in a variety of active/sporting and creative opportunities each week.

There will be a different creative theme each week and a mixture of sporting activities, so please take a look and book for those weeks that will appeal to you and your family.

How to book for Family Club
 Please email your expressions of interest in the Club to spdcbooking@sp-dc.org

Your email should clearly state
 *Your name
 *Which dates you would like to attend
 *How many (adults/children) will be taking part in the sessions

Please provide this information in full as without it we may not be able to process your bookings properly.

Once the team have processed all of the bookings you will receive an email confirming the places you have been allocated at Family Club. Confirmation emails will be sent out during week commencing 21st October.

Please make sure you send your requests to us as soon as possible as we are unable to accept booking after **9am Wednesday 23rd October**

Please note that bookings will not be accepted via Facebook or Messenger, and you must be registered with SPDC to access the Family Club.

If you have requested or are allocated places on a particular session but can no longer attend it, we would ask you to let us as soon as possible by calling Diane 07594 486930 or Gary 07763 593877 so that we can offer a family on our waiting lists the opportunity to join us.

Club Activities 5.00pm-6.30pm

Monday 4th November
Bonfire crafts/firework art

Join us for an evening of colour, create cupcake fireworks, breadsticks sprinklers and much more.

On the active side we have a visit from Vince for a Zumba session between 5:30pm-6:00pm followed by our ever popular sporting opportunities

Monday 11th November
Forge farm- Play Barn
Forge Mill Farm, Forge Lane, West Bromwich, B71 3S1

A first for Family Club, lets explore the NEW play barn at the farm. Craft activity will be available in a quieter zone of the barn.

To access the play area you will need to wear long trousers/socks and shoes will need to be removed.

There will be drinks and snacks on offer for you to purchase. It is a pay and display car park.

Monday 18th November
Lets feed the birds

Tonight we will be making toilet roll birdfeeders and fun/easy bird crafts.

Sensory and games

There will be a chance to take part in a whole range of sporting opportunities. Basketball, Badminton, Football, Table Tennis and Parachute.

Monday 25th November
Autumn Printing

This week we will be creating Winter collages.

Leaf printing, apple,potatoes, sponges, bubble wrap etc.

Active opportunity to include: Basketball, Badminton, Football, Table Tennis, Hockey and Parachute.

Monday 2nd December
Christmas Crafts/Decorations

This evening we will be joined by Sharon, a parent carer who has special crafting talents! Sharon will be helping us to produce some fabulous Christmas crafts and decorations.

There will be a chance to take part in a whole range of other activities and sporting opportunities.

For our younger visitors (under 8's and those with specific sensory needs) we have exclusive use of the soft play area situated on the ground floor of the Centre from 5:30pm-6:30pm.

Club Activities 5.00pm-6.30pm

Monday 9th December
Christmas Decorations/Crafts

This evening we will be joined by Liz, a parent carer who has an excellent crafting skills! Liz will be helping us to make a sock snow man.

Our very own Janis Box will be supporting us to decorate Christmas biscuits.

Take part in the Reindeer sporting challenge.

Complete the various sporting challenges to gain a little surprise.

Test your skills in the sports hall with the SPDC team.

Monday 16th December
Christmas Decorations/Crafts

To end for the Christmas Holidays, Sharon a parent carer will return to help us to produce some fabulous Christmas crafts and decorations.

There will also be Christmas music and dancing

Andy Jelly Legs will be filling the sports hall with lots of fun and exciting activities for us all to take part in.

Sandwell Parents for Disabled Childrens team would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Contact Us!
 Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children
 Galton Valley Children's Centre, Great Arthur Street, Smethwick, B66 1DH
 Tel 0121 565 2410
 Email info@sp-dc.org
 Website www.sp-dc.org

Charity Reg: 1125576



Accreditations at Westminster

We are now able to offer the most diverse range of qualifications to support our young people to achieve their potential. They are tailored to the Areas of Learning and will undoubtedly support their trajectory to further education, employment or training.

Please see the following table for the qualifications on offer. All students at The Westminster School will be given the opportunity for a formal programme of study relevant and meaningful to them.

Area of Learning	Board	Qualification Name
My Care and Independence	AIM	Skills for Living and Work
My Care and Independence	Princess Trust	Personal Development and Employability Skills
My Communication	NCFE	Functional Skills in English
My Communication	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (English)
My Community	WJEC	Humanities
My Community	DofE	Awards at Gold, Silver and Bronze
My Community	ASDAN	Personal Development Pathway
My Creativity	RSL Awards	Musical Theatre
My Creativity	WJEC	Creative Media and Performing Arts
My Thinking	AIM	Science
My Thinking	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (Science)
My Thinking	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (Maths)
My Thinking	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (ICT)
My Thinking	NCFE	Functional Skills in Maths
My Thinking	WJEC	Information and Communications Technology
My Wellbeing	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (PE)
My Wellbeing	ASDAN	Life Skill Challenges (RSE)
My Wellbeing	OCR	Entry Level Cert in PE
My Wellbeing	Pearson	RSE BTEC Personal Growth
My Wellbeing	Leadership Skills	Sports Leader

We are excited to be able to discuss student progress at key points throughout year during progress review meetings.

School Uniform



We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents/carers of our school uniform policy. We pride ourselves in preparing students for their lives after Westminster, and this includes wearing appropriate clothing for the setting and activity involved. We are therefore asking for your support in ensuring your child is wearing the appropriate uniform as outlined below.

We do have a bank of school uniform available each day that your child can borrow if required.

Uniform for Pupils in Years 3-11:

- Plain black or grey skirt, trousers or joggers (no large logos)
- Plain White blouse, shirt or polo shirt (embroidered polo shirt available to order)
- Royal blue Jumper or cardigan (embroidered jumpers available to order)
- No hoodies

Uniform for Pupils in Years 12-14:

- Plain black or grey skirt, trousers or joggers (no large logos)
- Plain Black polo shirt (embroidered polo shirt available to order)
- Plain Black sweatshirt (embroidered jumpers available to order)
- No hoodies

PE Kit:

From September 2024 we have been phasing in our new PE kit. This features our new school logo which we will slowly be introducing through the academic year with the official launch in September 2025. The old school logo below will continue to be used on normal school uniform. In order to support parents and pupils with this, we have supplied all students with one bundle of PE kit for academic year 2024/25 only. PE kit can be purchased (should parents wish to buy extra kit) and for future academic years from Ace Embroidery.

The majority of students now have two timetabled PE lessons each week, and should come into school wearing their PE kit on the days that they have PE.

Offsite My Community Visits:

If your child is due to go offsite and the nature of the visit requires alternate clothing, you will receive a letter/text to inform you of the dates for this. On this day, students can come to school in appropriate clothing as outlined in the letter. Please can you ensure that all clothing and belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Ordering Uniform:

If you require financial support to order school uniform or outdoor curriculum clothing for your child, please contact school and ask to speak to our Family Support Worker. For students who are entitled to Pupil Premium, a £75 voucher (one per academic year) can be used partly or in full against a uniform order. There will be either a check box or code to be added at the checkout point which will be verified by the school before the order is delivered.

Uniform can be ordered from Ace Embroidery Ltd, Ace House, Malt Mill Lane, Halesowen B62 8JF. The embroidered uniform products include jumpers, cardigans, polo shirts, book bags, fleeces and many other items. There are sizes available to fit all students. Orders can either be collected from Ace Embroidery directly which is free of charge or can be delivered to your home address with a delivery cost.