

Our ref: MMC/NWI

16 January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by warmly welcoming you and your family back to Sir Thomas Wharton Academy as we start a new year together. I hope the Christmas break provided time for rest, reflection and special moments with those who matter most. As we return to learning in January, I want to thank you sincerely for your continued support, partnership and trust. Despite the challenges of the winter weather, it has been a pleasure to see our students return so positively, demonstrating resilience, maturity and pride in our academy. We look forward to a successful and ambitious term ahead, working closely with you to ensure every young person continues to thrive.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11 Examinations

Our first weeks back saw our first formal examination for Year 11, with BTEC Sport students sitting their Component 3 examination. All students demonstrated the highest levels of investment, and we were pleased to see such fantastic attendance to the breakfast Achieve session ahead of the examination. A special thanks goes to Miss Rusby and Mr Webb for delivering Achieve sessions to ensure students were fully prepared.

Sixth Form Examinations

Several year 12 and 13 students have sat examinations for their BTEC qualifications, with more to come next week. Students have been invested and well prepared for their exams, attending additional pre-exam sessions and showing high levels of investment throughout.

Tassomai

Students' investment in Tassomai continued to be a real strength, not just in the final week before Christmas, but during the holidays as well, as we maintained our position in the top 1% of schools nationally up to the end of 2025. There were also four students in year 11 who continued to quiz on Christmas Day, so they have been rewarded with a free drink at the Grumpy Mule in recognition of their commitment.

We look forward to students continuing their impressive investment in 2026! Weekly leaderboards will continue to be shared on the STWAchieve Instagram account.

Sparx

As an academy, we have completed over 4000 hours of personalised learning, answered a half a million questions correctly and over 235 students have improved their times table fluency this year. We thank every parent for their support and encouragement in completing Sparx mathematics tasks.

Revision remains on Sparx until students have completed their next assessments, every student should aim to do 100% to revise and prepare for their next assessment.



Careers

On Thursday 8 January our year 9 students on the Better Learners Better Workers programme made their Health presentation at the AWRC in Sheffield. Students approached this in such a mature way to the Master Cutler, Mayor of Sheffield, the AWRC team as well as 10 other schools. Students received the award for being incredible mental health champions. What a great result for this 3-month project!

On Tuesday 13 January 2026 the careers team held a remote session to launch the work ready programme to parents. This was a really successful event and was a great opportunity for parents/carers to ask questions about work placements.

Events

Year 9 Options Evening

This half term, year 9 will begin the process of choosing their GCSE options subjects. This week they have been looking at careers, as part of our life skills curriculum and they will be undertaking more activities in the coming weeks.

On Tuesday 20 January, we will be holding our year 9 Options Evening events at the academy, starting at 4:15pm and 5:15 pm, which will provide you with a greater understanding of the options process and how to choose the best options for the coming years. We will provide you with all the information needed to support your child to make an informed decision.

Gym and Dance Spectacular Showcase

On Thursday 12 February, STWA will be holding its annual Gym and Dance Spectacular Showcase. Students are working exceptionally hard, both in and out of lessons, to ensure their routines are flawless and I am sure they would appreciate your support!

House Updates

After the success of our Christmas house competitions, Wentworth maintained their lead in the house system with 24500 points followed closely by Brodsworth with 24300 points, Chatsworth with 22455 and Cusworth with 19500. This term, we have launched the third instalment of our Extended House Project which focuses on Misty Copeland

Students are competing to earn a place on our end of year house trip to Alton Towers! Students can still take part in weekly wins, online quizzes, extended house projects and box tasks to earn their house points.

Attendance

It has been great to see attendance start back at the same high level as last half term. As the temperature continues to be cold and more students are being driven to school. Please ensure that plenty of time is given for the journey to take traffic and other issues into account to ensure that that students are on time for school, and they are through the gate before 8:20 am.

Please continue to prioritise attendance to the academy. Last term, every parent received their child's attendance figures via A-Star Attendance. Please take the time to open this information, review your child's data, and read the details explaining why attendance is so important to the academy.

It is vital that students attend every day and arrive ready to learn. Regular attendance has a significant impact on academic progress, wellbeing, and overall success at school



Parents and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

To enable us to reflect on the areas of strength and the opportunities for development within our academy, our Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) meets once per term with members of staff and the Senior Leadership team. Our next PCAB meeting will be held at STWA on Tuesday 27 January from 5:00 until 6:30 pm – we hope you can join us.

Academy Car Park

Please can you ensure that if your child is dropped off or collected by car, you adhere to the following sections below for the safety of all students at the academy.

1. All students should be dropped off and collected in the designated location on the entrance road into school, **ensuring you do not block the bus bay. Students should not be picked up in the car park or at the front of school.** Only students with medical issues are permitted to do this.
2. When exiting school, **please use the one-way system and do not exit through the main entrance gates.** We have over 1,300 students leaving at once on Wednesdays and it is important that the signage is followed.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a fantastic 2026.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald
Principal

