

Our ref: MMC/NWI

27 February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you all enjoyed a restful and enjoyable half term. It has been a pleasure to welcome students back to the academy, and I am delighted with the positive and purposeful way in which they have returned and that attendance has been great this week.

I would like to formally place on record my sincere thanks to the staff who delivered sessions for our year 11 students over the half term break. These sessions were extremely well attended and reflect both the commitment of our students and the dedication of our staff. I am truly grateful to colleagues who generously gave their time to support students during non-compulsory sessions. Their willingness to go above and beyond exemplifies our commitment to doing whatever it takes to ensure our students succeed. When our students need support, we will always provide it.

This week has also marked the start of the second round of trial examinations. I am pleased to report that these have begun smoothly, with students demonstrating focus, maturity and determination. They have approached this important stage with a commendable attitude, and we are proud of the way they are conducting themselves. These examinations provide a valuable opportunity for students to refine their preparation ahead of the summer series, and we look forward to supporting them every step of the way.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11 February Half Term Achieve Sessions

Over February half term, we hosted a number of Achieve sessions to support students' preparations for trial examinations and we were incredibly impressed by the level of investment of students, with many choosing to come in almost every day.

Year 11 Trial Examinations

This week, students have undertaken the second round of trial examinations, starting with English Literature, Biology, Mathematics, English Language, Business, Technology, Music, Geography, French and History. Trial examinations will continue until Monday 9 March for academic subjects, with all year 11 students invited to attend pre-Achieve sessions in the activity hall from 7:30 am on the mornings when an examination is taking place. Free tea, coffee and toast will be available, as well as the support of subject teachers, to ensure each student is fully prepared for each examination. Students are reminded to ensure they are fully equipped with a pen, pencil, ruler, highlighter, calculator and the relevant revision guides. Following the written trial examinations, practical examinations will commence in Food and Art.

Tassomai

Students' investment in Tassomai continues to go be incredible, with students in year 11 completing over 170 hours and students in year 10 completing almost 100 hours!

In year 10, we have launched a rewards strategy, where students who achieve 100% of their weekly goals in all subjects will receive a sticker to help them build a seven-a-side football team of subject leaders.



Sparx

As an academy, we have completed over 5,900 hours of personalised learning, answered a half a million questions correctly and over 300 students have improved their times table fluency this year. We thank every parent and carer for their support and encouragement in completing Sparx mathematics tasks.

Every student from years 7 to 10 will be improving on their required needs using the Sparx "Fix-Up" application.

This half term year 10 should start to complete mathematics Tassomai tasks. This will create the "little and often" revision needed for success in mathematics. Year 10 paper revision tasks will start this week, handing out and being returned every Thursday period 4.

We ask that all year 10 bring in their revision guides for use during period 4 lessons every Thursday for the remainder of the term.

Events

World Book Day

Next week, we will celebrate World Book Day and share a love of reading with our students. Throughout the week, there will be various opportunities for students to celebrate the day. From Monday, we will be launching numerous competitions for students to take part in - students will find out about these during tutor time and they will be shared on social media. This includes a competition with Waterstones to create a review of a recently read book, with the best reviews being displayed in the Doncaster store. Students will also have the opportunity to complete a World Book Day culture booklet, which encourages them to explore different cultures and how they celebrate reading.

As World Book Day falls on Thursday 5 March, we will be hosting a Book Swap at break and lunch in the library. We have already had over 100 books donated to our Book Swap! There will be 30 House Points awarded to students for each book they donate. In addition, on Friday, we will be hosting World Book Day events in the library. Students who show full investment in reading will receive an invite to the event. To further share that reading is for all, staff across departments will share with their students, throughout the day, their favourite books and what they are currently reading. We can't wait to continue sharing a love of reading with our students.

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) meet once per term with members of staff and the Senior Leadership team. Our next PCAB meeting will be held at STWA on Tuesday 3 March from 5:00 until 6:00 pm – we hope you can join us.

Royal Armouries Museum Visit

Our Year 10 Photography students will visit the Royal Armouries Museum on Thursday 5 March as part of their GCSE Photography course.

This educational visit will provide students with the opportunity to capture original images for their Unit 2 project, which focuses on historical events and storytelling through photography. The museum's extensive collections of arms and armour, spanning different time periods and cultures, offer a rich and visually engaging environment for students to explore themes such as conflict, power, heritage, and historical narrative.



During the visit, students will develop their practical skills in composition, lighting, texture, and detail, while also responding creatively to historical artefacts. The experience will support both their technical development and their ability to produce meaningful, contextually informed photographic work for their coursework portfolio.

Yorkshire Sculpture Park Visit

Our Year 11 Photography students will visit the Yorkshire Sculpture Park on Thursday 12 March as part of their GCSE Photography exam unit.

This visit will give students the opportunity to capture original photographs in response to their exam theme, using the park's large-scale sculptures and natural landscape as creative stimulus. The diverse range of contemporary sculptures, set within expansive outdoor surroundings, provides an ideal setting for students to explore composition, scale, perspective, texture, and the relationship between art and environment.

During the trip, students will gather high-quality primary source images to support the development of their exam coursework. The experience will encourage independent thinking, creative experimentation, and purposeful image-making, helping them to strengthen both their technical skills and conceptual responses in preparation for their final exam submission.

School Production

Get ready for a night of laughter, love, and a little bit of... plant-based terror!

Sir Thomas Wharton Academy proudly presents **Little Shop of Horrors** on **18 and 19 March 2026 at 6 pm** — and trust us, you won't want to miss it!

Since September, our incredibly talented cast and crew have been working tirelessly to bring this cult classic to life. From unforgettable musical numbers to jaw-dropping set pieces, every detail has been crafted with passion, dedication, and a whole lot of hard work. And now... **Audrey II has officially arrived in the building!**

Join us for an unforgettable evening packed with big laughs, and a story that's delightfully dark in all the right ways.

Tickets are £5 each and are sure to go fast — don't wait until it's too late... because this plant is hungry!

Secure your seats and support our amazing students as they take to the stage for what is set to be a spectacular show! Tickets are available to purchase via ParentPay and by cash or card at the academy reception.

House Update

Brodsworth have managed to maintain their lead in the top spot, but Cusworth have made a huge comeback securing second place which has been achieved through their investment in the extended house projects. They are being closely followed by Wentworth in third place and then Chatsworth in fourth. This half term, our extended house project centres around Alan Turing where students will need to research his impact on technological advancements.

Our next house reward will take place on Monday 16 March—a matinee performance of The Little Shop of Horrors. All students in the winning house, who have a minimum of 40 house points and less than 50 negatives, will be invited to attend.

Attendance

We are pleased to be recognising and rewarding strong attendance this half term with a range of exciting incentives for our students.



Attendance Prize Draw

Any student achieving approximately 97% attendance or above this half term will be entered into a prize draw to win one of the following rewards:

- 4K Drone
- 50-inch television
- AirPods
- £200 JD Sports voucher
- £100 shopping voucher

Non-Uniform Day

If, as a school, we manage to achieve above 93% this half term, students will be able to take part in a non-uniform day on the final day of term as a reward for their commitment to attendance.

Weekly Form Attendance Challenge

Each week, over this five week half term, the form group with the best attendance will be entered into a draw. At the end of the five weeks, the overall winning form will receive a £10 Amazon voucher per student to take away for Easter. Please note that students must be in school on the final Friday to be eligible for this reward.

Why Attendance Matters

We are placing a particular focus on attendance as Friday attendance continues to be lower than the rest of the week. It is vital that students attend school five days a week, as there is no reason for higher absence on Fridays. Missing school has a direct impact on students' education, progress, and outcomes. Thank you for your continued support in promoting excellent attendance.

Standards

We are committed to maintaining high standards around the academy. Any incidents of bullying are taken very seriously and dealt with swiftly. We encourage students to speak up if they experience or witness bullying, so we can keep our academy a safe and respectful place for everyone. We also have an anonymous reporting tool on our website if you have any concerns to report: [Sir Thomas Wharton Academy - SOS Can I Talk to You?](#)

Please also be reminded that fur hoods are not allowed in the academy. If students bring coats with fur hoods, they will need to either remove the fur or hand the coat in at single point at the start of the school day. We appreciate your support in helping students follow our uniform expectations.

Transport

First 552 Bus Service (Plantation to STWA, via Alverley Lane)

School services' arrival times have been raised as an immediate issue with the Traffic Commissioners for punctuality and late starts/arrivals etc. Therefore, from Monday 23 February 2026, First Bus have been instructed, by the Traffic Commissioners, to commence their bus service from Woodfield Way at the earlier time of 7:31 am, calling at Alverley Lane at 7:53 am, arriving at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy for 8:05 am.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald

Principal

