

Re: December 2023 update

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This half-term has been a busy one. Despite the short, dark days and cold weather, the atmosphere in school has remained bright, buoyant and purposeful. Our new **Every Lesson** focus is taking hold, helping students to focus their efforts *inside* and *outside* every lesson. By providing them with a blueprint for success at Wickersley, our students know exactly what they need to do to achieve the best outcomes.

Things at Wickersley move quickly, we're always thinking of new ideas and ways to improve our teaching and students' learning. To help you fully support your child with their education, I would like to outline a few important messages and changes:

Homework update

In my last letter, I wrote to explain the importance of homework. Since then, we have been exploring teachers' use of homework to extend learning, how it is assigned, and what our students think about it.

We believe that homework is a vital part of our students' learning journey, and as such, it features several times in our new **Every Lesson** guidelines. It is important to us that students' experience of homework is consistent across all subjects and year groups. To reflect this, based on the opinions of approximately 1000 students and teachers who responded to our survey, we are working on a new approach that outlines clearly how homework should be used.

I look forward to sharing our new approach to *home learning* with you in our next letter.

Mock exams, revision, and support

It's been a busy half-term at Wickersley, and our calendar of mock exams is well underway. Our Year 13 students have completed their first round of mock exams. Best of luck to our Year 11 students who have just started theirs. There are further mock exams scheduled next term:

- Year 12 assessment week: Begin on Monday the 8th of January 2024
- Year 13 mock exams: Begin on Monday the 19th of February 2024
- Year 11 mock exams (for selected subjects): Begin on Monday the 4th of March 2024

Our teachers will explain in class how to effectively revise for their subject. Although there are many revision strategies, the most impactful strategies are beginning early and using past exam questions or papers. Here are some other study strategies to consider:

Make a plan that covers everything	Does your child know the topics they are studying, what they've studied before and what is coming next? If they have an upcoming test or mock, what will it cover?
Have a productive revision space	Encourage your child to work in a well-lit room and remove any potential distractions. Listening to podcasts or audiobooks whilst revising is not advisable!

Pick out key information	The process of simplifying their notes will make students actively engage with the content and reinforce the information. One of the simplest ways to do this is to write shortened versions of them cure cards or sticky notes.
Space out revision over time	Cramming is not an effective way to study. Instead, students need to organise their studies into chunks and spread them over a few weeks and months.

Outside every lesson

As the term comes to an end, students may have more opportunities to **take part in activities that push their learning beyond the classroom**. We would like our students to become mini subject specialists, embodying our subject ways by exploring their passion and interest in their subjects. You could help by encouraging your child to listen to a podcast or watch a documentary that is linked to a subject in school.

I was proud to see our students perform in this year's pantomime production of Robin Hood last week. In my October letter to students, I challenged them to join a club or activity at break or lunch. After witnessing how much our students enjoy, thrive, and develop from participating in activities such as our pantomime, I am extending this challenge into the new year. Please encourage your child to get involved in **Wickersley Extra**, and join a new club in January.

Attendance

Good attendance is important to us. If students are not here, they are not learning. Punctuality is just as important, too. Often, teachers will plan activities at the start of their lessons that flashback to previous learning. Missing this is a missed opportunity. Please encourage your child to arrive on time for all lessons, and in the mornings too at 8:40 am so they are in their form rooms and ready to start at 8:45 am.

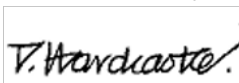
All the best from Wickersley

Over the next two weeks, many of us will be spending time with our families and celebrating. During this time, I encourage our students to be *thankful*. We must acknowledge that not everyone is as lucky as we are, both within our school community and beyond. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to those students who have contributed to fundraising efforts in school throughout December. At Wickersley, *we support each other, and we look after our community* - this is the **Wickersley Way**.

It all starts again bright and early on Monday the 8th of January 2024, when, as always, no less than total commitment, concentration and ambition will do.

We wish you and your family a very restful break.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Hardcastle
Headteacher

