



## WICKERSLEY SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE

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HEADTEACHER: Mr T Hardcastle

### Re: May 2024 update

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Many students started to sit their exams this half-term, marking the culmination of months or even years of preparation. The summer exam season is a time of mixed emotions for students as they progress through this nerve-wracking, but necessary, milestone. Well done to all students for their positive attitude and conduct throughout the exam period so far. Attendance, punctuality and effort in exams and revision sessions have been excellent. I encourage our students to remain calm, continue to work hard, and make the most of the support available in school, no matter how difficult the challenge may seem - **We believe in ourselves** at Wickersley and **rise to the challenge**. It's an important time for our younger students too, they have been doing their bit by following the 'no entry' exam signs and being quiet, calm and considerate when walking past exam venues, after all, at Wickersley, we are one big family.

To help you fully support your child with their education, I would like to outline a few important messages and changes:

#### Mobile phones

We have been carefully considering how mobile phones fit into our vision for learning at Wickersley. Undoubtedly, smartphones are a powerful tool, but their use in the classroom can be limited, and often, detrimental to learning.

Academic studies have shown that despite being an efficient tool, mobile phones generally harm learning and distract students. Young people often overestimate their ability to multitask and may not realise that their phones are distracting them, even when they are not using them. Evidence suggests that the presence of a smartphone, even when idle on a student's desk or in their pocket, can significantly affect memory recall and accuracy. Just thinking about a smartphone is enough to break concentration.

Our teachers have noticed this in our school too, and as a result, from **Monday 1st July 2024**, we are changing our approach to mobile phones.





Our <u>current</u> approach	Our <u>new</u> approach
<p>Mobile phones must be turned off and stored in students' school bags. They may only be taken out in seated areas at break time, e.g., canteen, or when instructed to by a staff member.</p>	<p>Students in Years 7-11 must keep their mobile phones <b>invisible</b> at all times.</p> <p>Mobile phones are <b>prohibited</b> throughout the school premises, including classrooms, hallways, and seated areas during breaks.</p> <p>They should be switched off and out of sight whilst at school.</p>

From **Monday 1st July 2024**, any mobile phones seen in school, without an urgent, valid reason, e.g., checking blood sugar levels, will be confiscated until the end of the school day. Our Year 12 and 13 students are expected to be role models and will be reminded not to use their mobile phones whilst walking around school.

We recognise the importance of mobile phones in keeping our students safe and connected with parents and carers in the community. For this reason, we have carefully considered the language used in our new approach. Rather than imposing a complete ban on phones, we have decided that students must keep their phones **invisible** at all times, and keep their mobile phones turned off in their school bags, so they can use them while travelling to and from school.

This is a bold move. The easiest thing to do would be nothing, but we have *high expectations* at Wickersley and are not afraid to take decisive action to improve teaching and learning.

### **The start of the school day**

Please remind your child that school starts promptly at 8:45 am. They should be in their form room, ready to begin the day at 8:45 am. To ensure that students have enough time to settle in their classroom and start their form period session on time, they should arrive at school no later than 8:40 am.

### **Important dates**

Students are welcome to collect the results from their summer exams from school at the following times:

- Year 13 - Thursday 15th August from 8.00 am - Main Hall.
- Year 12 - Thursday 15th August from 9.00 am - Main Hall.
- Year 11 - Thursday 22nd August from 10.00 am - Main Hall.

If your child has applied to Wickersley Sixth Form and is currently holding a conditional offer to study with us in September 2024, please note the following:

- **Wickersley Sixth Form Offer Day - Friday 21st June.** This is an opportunity for Year 11 students to meet their sixth form teachers and classmates and get a feel for their first sixth form lessons. We strongly advise all students with a conditional offer to attend the full day. If your child is currently holding an offer, please check that they have booked their place.
- **Wickersley Sixth Form enrolment - Thursday 22nd August [online].** It's important that all students, even Wickersley Year 11 students, enrol and confirm their option choices on results day. Further information about how to register online will be shared during our Offer Day.

The combination of home, school and student here at Wickersley School and Sports College is proving to be unbeatable.

Have a good half-term break and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Hardcastle  
Headteacher