



Whitburn Church of England Academy

A community of hope and aspiration, enabling all to flourish

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'Excellence for All'

17th July 2026

End of Term Letter

Dear Parents, Carers and Members of our School Community,

As we reach the end of another successful school year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on all that we have achieved together and to thank everyone who has contributed to making our school the vibrant, caring and successful community that it is. Our vision of 'Excellence for All: A community of hope and aspiration, enabling all to flourish.' Is clearly lived out on a daily basis.

Our annual Sports Day yesterday was a wonderful way to round off the year. It was inspiring to see so many students participating with enthusiasm, determination and, above all, excellent sporting behaviour. Whether competing on the track, cheering on friends or helping to organise events, our students demonstrated the values that make our school such a special place. My thanks go to the staff who worked so hard to organise the day and to sixth form students, past and present who came along to support and celebrate with us.

Our annual Democracy Day elections took place on Friday 3rd July, to elect our Head Girl and Boy for the 2026/27 academic year. Students faced interviews from Mr Crowe, Miss Smith and Mr Shaw in advance of the day. From there, the field was whittled down to 5 students for each role. This was a difficult decision to make, and all potential candidates should be congratulated for their efforts. The calibre of all candidates this year was exceptionally high, and it was pleasing to see students who started at Whitburn as rather shy and quiet presenting themselves in the interviews with confidence and ability. The ten candidates gave speeches to their peers in Year 10 and students in Year 9. Themes included raising awareness for mental health, ensuring they were an advocate for the voices of all students and raising money to help fund various initiatives. We also had a number of music performances from students in Year 10. Staff impressed upon students the importance of using their vote wisely: considering voting for candidates who they trusted to do the job well, not just using their vote to support their friends. Students voted in our polling booths, with many commenting seriously on the professionalism of the voting operation. After much suspense, the results were announced. Our Head Girl is Alice Harrison, with Grace Frank elected as her deputy, and Thomas Gill becomes our new Head Boy with Jacob Cauwood becoming his deputy. Well done to all involved.

Throughout the year, our students have continued to impress us with their commitment, resilience and willingness to embrace new opportunities. Our "Be Values" have certainly been ever present. Their achievements extend far beyond the classroom, encompassing sporting success, musical performances, creative endeavours, community service and countless acts of kindness that often go unnoticed. It is these everyday actions that define our school and create the welcoming, inclusive community of which we are all so proud.

Document available in large font, alternative language or audio format on request



To all of our students, thank you for your hard work, your enthusiasm and the positive contribution you make every day. You are the heart of our school, and it is your kindness, ambition and determination that make this such a wonderful place to learn and flourish. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated staff and to our parents and carers for their continued support throughout the year. The partnership between home and school is invaluable, and together we provide the encouragement and opportunities that enable our young people to grow into successful adults.

This partnership has been clearly evident when recently we introduced our school ban on mobile phones and digital devices. Nationally this ban came into law a month ago and so far, the benefits of the ban have been incredible. We never really had any issues with phones during lesson times, however the increase in noise at break and lunch times as students talk with each other and attend more lunchtime clubs has been quite remarkable. Over time I am sure we will reap the rewards over much improved mental health and well being in our young people and a realisation that you can exist as a teenager without a mobile being permanently attached to your hand!

To those students who have recently completed their examinations, I wish you every success as you await your results. I know how much effort, perseverance and determination you have shown in preparing for this important stage of your education. Whatever the outcome, you should be proud of everything you have achieved, and I hope your results reflect the hard work you have invested. We look forward to celebrating your successes with you.

As we look ahead, schools continue to face significant financial pressures. While costs continue to rise, school funding has not kept pace, and recent staff pay awards have not been fully funded. Like many successful schools across the country, we are expected to deliver an outstanding education while operating on an increasingly tight budget. Despite these challenges, our commitment to providing the very best education and opportunities for every student remains unwavering. We will continue to make every decision with our students' best interests at heart and to protect the high-quality experiences that define our school.

As you will know, our school remains a very popular choice in the local area. This year we had 420 applications for 205 initial places. One of the only options available for a school to stay financially stable in the long term is to increase the number of students in the building. Therefore, for Year 7 starting in September 2026, we decided to temporarily increase the Pupil Admission number, from 205 to 240. Our Year 7 cohort in September 2026 is expected to be 237. We will review this situation in the following years going forward. This year's decision means for the following financial year of 2027-2028 we can set a healthy surplus budget. (Schools funding for pupil funding is always lagged for one year).

Can I also take this opportunity to thank all parents/carers and their extended families for your financial donations in helping fund our 2 school minibuses. As promised, I've checked the bank statements and since the 21 May (when my initial plea went out) we've had new donations of £2,609. We are now receiving monthly donations of £117 set up via a standing order. The money that has been donated will help ensure that our students are able to be involved in learning and extra-curricular activities outside of the school building. If anyone still wishes to donate either by a one-off donation or a standing order, please see our previous correspondence or contact the school business office. Thank you.

This year we say our farewells to several teaching and support staff. We have said goodbye to Mr Layfield (Science teacher on Maternity cover), Mrs James (Science Teacher) who leaves for a promoted post in Sunderland. We also wish our Director of Maths, Mrs Bartch the very best of wishes after 23 years of service to the school. She has taken up a teacher post also in Sunderland. We also wish Mrs Bentley the very best of luck as she returns to her home roots in Lancashire after 15 years at Whitburn. Lastly, we are also sad to see Miss Devine leave her role as an Inclusion Support assistant from the pastoral team and wish her the very best in her new school.

Finally, I hope that everyone has a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break. Take time to relax, spend time with family and friends, and return in September refreshed and ready for another exciting year.

Thank you once again for making this school such a remarkable community. It is a privilege to work alongside such talented students, supportive families and dedicated colleagues.

With my very best wishes for a happy summer and every success for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Crowe
Principal