

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Last week we held an Employers Evening – our inaugural careers fair. We hosted a couple of dozen exhibitors including from higher and further education, police and other public services, armed forces, high-tech firms including Microsoft, the NHS, local government, dentistry and law firms, and AWE. Following this success, we now intend to hold the event annually. If you were unable to attend this time around it is certainly one for the diary.

We also used the week, Anti-bullying Week, to reinforce the message with our students that the Willink School has zero tolerance of bullying. Our approach is outlined in our [policy](#) which can be found on our website. Parents may be interested in our online 'Report and Restore' function which allows students to report incidents electronically should they wish to instead of reporting direct to staff. However, students can also report issues in person to their tutor, teachers, Head of Learning, Pastoral Assistants, Inclusion Mentors or any other member of staff.

Also, last week, we received the following reminder from the Department of Education about the strictures placed on schools during the run up to an election:

“During this period of heightened political activity and sensitivity, you should ensure your school and staff avoid activity that could be construed as partisan or favouring a particular political party.

You should not use school ICT facilities for the distribution of political material, including that produced by third parties, either within the area of the school site or beyond.

Local-authority-maintained schools’ delegated budgets are only for any purposes of the school or such purposes as prescribed in regulations. Schools should not use their budget for other purposes”.

All of this is, of course, eminently sensible. We certainly encourage all candidates to come meet our students, particularly those in the Sixth Form. I guess the reminder is a sign of how education is never far away from the political surface. After all, in the last general election a [survey](#) of 1,000 parents of schoolchildren conducted by YouGov ranked education alongside health and Brexit as the most important election issues. And, of the 43 per cent who named education as a prime issue, four out of five said they were more likely to vote for candidates who would tackle school funding. Since when – despite recent spending promises of £7.1 billion on schools – the funding crisis across education has unquestionably deepened. It is important that the education sector is heard during the general election debate – loud, clear and, of course, strictly impartial.

Finally a reminder about the Parent Information Evening, this Thursday at 6.30 – 7.15pm in the School Hall. During this event, senior leader, Dave Green will explain flight-paths, Attitude to Learning reports, target grades and Learning Review Day reports. All parents are welcome, but it will be very useful for Year 7 parents and those new to Willink.



Mr P Fry, Head

EMPLOYER EVENING

The Careers Team would like to thank all of the students and parents/carers who attended our first Employer Evening on Wednesday 13th of November.

We feel that it was a huge success but would like to hear from those of you who attended about what you felt worked well and any changes you would like to see for future events.

We would welcome any feedback on the event from those who attended and have created a feedback form which can be accessed [here](#).



*Mrs C Desai,
Independent Careers Advisor*

PADWORTH COLLEGE LANGUAGE AFTERNOON

On Friday 18th October students from Padworth College came to the Willink to teach us about different languages and cultures. We learnt some Chinese, French and Spanish to name just a few. Each student had organised different activities to help us learn their language in a fun and exciting way. My favourite one was the one where we painted flowers and how you can hold the paintbrush to have a darker or lighter shade. I could see that each of the students put a lot of effort into their activity. I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

Sophie, 7Y



9U KIVA BAKE SALE

On Tuesday 12th November 9U impressed with their baking and sales skills, raising an amazing £47.90 during break time with a bake sale for KIVA. Year 9 will now need to decide where they will invest the money in the [KIVA](#) scheme.



YEAR 8 STEM EVENT

A group of our year 8 students recently took part in a First Edition STEM Event run by the Engineering Development Trust and RSA Digital Risk Management & Cyber Security Solutions. Students engaged with a range of STEM subject areas while they took part in hands on activities. The day was designed to excite and enlighten students on how STEM is fun, interesting and could result in a rewarding career. The day was split in to four parts:



What is Risk Management? Students considered the personal information that is held about them online, and explored the ways in which that information can be lost, and the steps they can take to keep that information safe.

How do cyber attacks happen? Students learnt about the most common methods of stealing data, and how to recognise phishing scams.

Code Breakers: Cyber Detectives Students learnt the basic principles of encryption, and used a Caesar cypher wheel to solve a cyber crime against the clock!



RSA Digital Risk Management Competition Students spent the afternoon producing a summary of what they will take away from the day, which could be in any format: a presentation, a poster, a concept for an app etc.

CAREERS TRIP TO PORSCHE, READING

Eleven of our year 9 girls took part in a Dare to be Different Event, at The Porsche Centre, Great Britain, Reading. An action-packed day was planned, full of activities to engage, motivate and inspire them into possible future careers within motorsport and STEM.

On the day, the girls were given the opportunity to:

- work alongside some of the Porsche Cars Great Britain and Porsche Centre Reading Team
- learn about the importance of marketing products well for maximum gain through a role play experience
- find out more about the fascinating heritage of the Porsche brand
- get creative with the social media team and embarking on a social media challenge
- learn life-saving CPR skills from the Porsche race doctor
- experience life in a racing pit lane by performing a Pirelli pitstop challenge
- meet some of the inspirational D2BD Ambassadors who are incredibly successful women in the field of motorsport



Mrs F Morris, Careers Lead

HEALTH & WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



We would like to congratulate our newly qualified RSPH Young Health Champions. Fourteen of our Year 9 students have joined the national and local West Berkshire Young Health Champions movement. For the Health Campaigns module the students developed and presented messages on Exam Stress, Mental Health and Self Care and they are now looking forward to working with their peers to help develop strategies to combat the pressure and stress teenagers feel in today's society.



SPORTING INSPIRATION

Three students recently attended the Berkshire Inspire Academy at Theale Green. Anna, Eimile and Sam were chosen to represent the Willink and learned how to encourage and inspire students to participate in sporting activities. The students heard a presentation from Toby Garbett, an Olympian and world and European champion in rowing, who explained how he had been a poor student, but been inspired by his PE teachers to achieve things that everybody, including himself, thought were impossible. They also learned what was a good coaching lesson, what was a bad coaching session and how to plan an activity to appeal to the greatest number of participants.

Anna, Eimile and Sam will now deliver a series of activities and sporting events within school to showcase how important sporting activities are to Willink aged students and demonstrating that sports can be fun at the same time.

All three students were an absolute credit to our school.



Mr L Ellams, PE Department

WEST BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS KS3 GIRLS BADMINTON

On Wednesday 13th November our Willink Girls Badminton team competed in the West Berkshire School Games. The Competition was played against local schools where 9 teams entered and battled on the courts playing both single and double games. Willink convincingly beat Kennet and St. Barts B, and went into the play off against St. Barts A and Park House for first, second and third placings!! With only two points deciding first and second Willink beat Park House to claim the gold!!

Congratulations to our five players who were amazing and really did Smash IT on the night!!

Daisy, Reshmi, Taymar, Eve, Kristina

Mrs L Ellams, PE Department



YEAR 7 RUGBY INVITED TO SEASON FINALS

Following strong season with the new year 7 Rugby players, we were pleased, but not surprised to be invited to the finals on Tuesday 5th November at Bohunt School Wokingham. A narrow loss to a fast Gillotts side put us into the third / fourth play off against St Birinus - a school who had been strong against us during the league stage. Try after try followed with St Birinus edging ahead and Willink responding. Our players countered their strong forwards with creative and fast movement of the ball with our backs and increasingly solid defence with the ruck and maul. Sadly a final try by St Birinus finished the match with them four tries to our three, but all concerned agreed an excellent game had been seen.

Mr G Read , Head of PE

LEGO MASTERS CLUB

Lego Masters is a lunchtime club predominantly for year 7, but we do welcome year 8 and year 9 especially if they have been club members in the past. It is held in G4 each Friday lunchtime.

Students are free to create whatever their imagination will allow them to. Some work on their own but many work in pairs or teams. Models are looked after at the end of each session and worked on again next time, making the models bigger and more creative each week.

"I love coming to Lego – it is the best time ever. We can make awesome models. It's a chance to be creative" Alisdair

"It's a really great club and any person would certainly rate it 5 stars!" Caitlyn

"It really is awesome, I wish we could stay all day" Emma and Tilly

"It's a great club as you can let your imagination run wild!" Ryan

Mrs J Moxon, Inclusion Mentor



MOVING FORWARD DAY

Yet another great showing of the virtue of the Sixth Form students took place on Friday 15th November, as they hosted the current Year 11 students for the annual Moving Forward Day, putting on display the Sixth Form and the opportunities available for those that choose the Willink for their next step in education.



Year 13's led a presentation describing all of the aspects of Sixth Form life, from the senior student committee and day to day life to trips and extra curriculars, using their ever-developing public speaking skills as well as highlighting their self-confidence. With a wide range of experiences between them, the year 13's were able to share many different personal experiences to give the visiting students a great idea of what they might get up to in their spare time next year.

Some year 12 students were on hand to answer any and all questions posed by the year 11's. There were some great questions, covering all parts of the Sixth Form from dress code to home study and the year 12's gave brilliant answers that gave a truthful insight into their past few months in their first year of A-Levels. It was great to see the pride that is taken in the common room and Sixth Form life in general, partnered with the excitement for upcoming events and trips.

Workshops were also held to give year 11 students an understanding of the skills they will learn if they join the Sixth Form. Teamwork, revision and communication were all rolled into one in a pattern copying challenge that sparked a competitive streak in all of the teams. Time organisation, research skills and options after A-Levels were also all touched upon to give students an idea of the options that will be available to them even if they don't choose the Willink for their A-Level studies.

A huge thank you to all the help received from both year 12's and 13's to provide the best possible experience for the Year 11's. Also, many thanks to Mr Leach and the Sixth Form team for setting up the day and making sure it all ran smoothly.

Peter Talbot, 13 GRE

LAUNCH OF THE WILLINK'S ECO COMMITTEE



Almost a year ago, Greta Thunberg said at the UN's Climate Change Conference in Poland, 'Imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to.' On our own, we achieve little, but together we can bring about change.

For this reason, on Wednesday 6th November, we launched the school's first Eco Committee, made up of representatives from each year group. We are a group of committed environmentalists, all of whom want to bring about change. Our goal is to make the school more sustainable and reduce our carbon footprint.

To do this, we will be working towards the Eco School's award, an 'internationally recognised award for excellence in environmental action and learning.' Together we hope to bring about significant, beneficial change to our school community, encouraging students and staff to improve their own lifestyles at home.

Francesca Laven, Year 12

WILLINK CHRISTMAS FAIR

Games and competitions
Beauty products and experiences
Sizzling sausages
Mince pies and cakes
Mulled cider and hot chocolate
A Selfie with Santa
Chocolate treats
Christmas gifts and crafts

Saturday 23rd November
11am – 1pm
Willink School Hall

Join us for games, competitions, tombola,
raffle, Christmas gifts and refreshments
and oodles of festive cheer

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

The Willink School are supporting Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day On Friday 13th December. Creative adapted jumpers or T Shirts are very welcome, or take advantage of a Black Friday bargain. Money goes to support struggling children in the UK and around the world.

£1 can be paid to tutors on the day.



Save the Children

**CHRISTMAS
JUMPER DAY**

Make the world better with a sweater!



WE WILL ROCK YOU

Preparations are in full swing for our school production. Students are learning their lines, the band are rehearsing the music and our stage management team are constructing the scenery for what is set to be another fabulous production from the Willink School. Tickets are now available for £5 each and can be bought using Parent Pay.



SCHOOLS WILL ROCK YOU

Tickets £5

Wednesday 4th December
Thursday 5th December
Friday 6th December

VACANCIES

We currently have a vacancy for a Senior Finance and Contracts Manager. For further details please see our [website](#).

KEY DIARY DATES

- 20th November - Sixth Form Open Evening 6pm
 - 21st November - Berlin Trip Departs
 - 21st November - Parent Information Evening (Reports, Assessments & Flight Paths) 6.30pm
 - 23rd November - PTA Christmas Fair
 - 28th November – Duke of Edinburgh Award parent information evening 6.30pm
 - 4th – 6th December - Schools Will Rock You Production
 - 5th & 6th December - Learning Review Days
 - 5th & 6th December - Year 12 Exams
 - 9th December - Year 11 Mock Exams Start
 - 13th December - Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day
 - 18th December - Year 11 Interview Skill Workshop
 - 20th December - End of Term, 12.40pm
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