

# WEST GRANTHAM UPDATE



WEST GRANTHAM  
Church of England Secondary Academy

Friday 24th January, 2025

## Welcome to our new, fortnightly newsletter!

As we step into the new term, let's take a moment to reflect on the fantastic activities and achievements from the last term. Our clubs and enrichment programs have been bustling with energy and creativity, bringing students new opportunities to explore their interests and talents. The students will have completed their first session of the new enrichment choices today!

Firstly, some highlights from the end of last term. Congratulations to our new Head Boy, Head Girl, and their deputies—Connor, Layla, Keanen, and Lilien. Their leadership will surely inspire their peers. We also saw a remarkable turnout for the KS3 Literacy Awards, with nearly 100 students having their poems published. Our aspiring female football coaches gained valuable

experience through the Inspire+ program, setting the stage for future successes.

The term ahead promises even more excitement. Look forward to insightful assemblies, engaging club activities, and further enrichment events designed to ignite curiosity and passion among our students. Stay tuned for updates, photos, and stories that capture the spirit of West Grantham.

Each issue of our newsletter will feature a guest author, bringing fresh perspectives and insights, as well as photos from the previous fortnight. We hope you enjoy this new venture as much as we enjoy sharing it with you. Here's to another term filled with learning, growth, and unforgettable memories!

## A word from...

### Connor, Head Boy

When I first came to look around this school, I was skeptical and not confident that I would do well, as I believed I wasn't exactly a smart person. However, in the five years I have been here, I can confidently say that this school has had a positive impact on me, and I'm glad I chose to come. I've met countless great friends and some good teachers who genuinely care about my education - not just treating it as a job, but as a chance to make a positive impact, as they have on me.

Now that I'm in Year 11, I wish I hadn't taken the earlier years for granted or worried so much about the future. I think everyone should try to live in the present more and enjoy the moment. I believe school isn't solely for education (as much as that's a big part), but for the experiences and people I've met, which have genuinely shaped who I am. No matter how big or small, I'm thankful for each one.

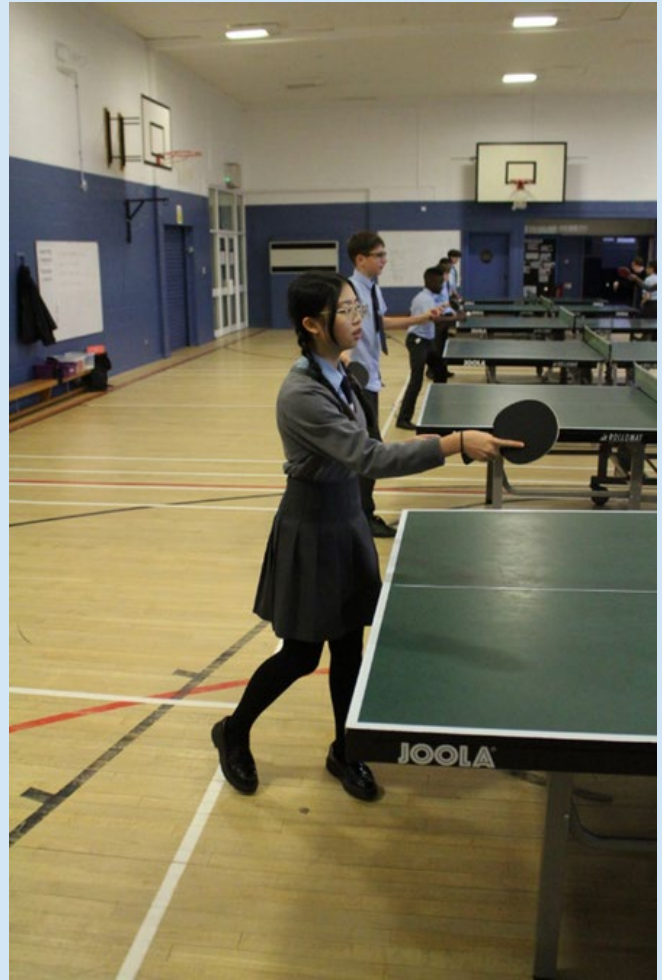
Soon enough, I'll leave this school with my GCSEs and, hopefully, be proud of them. I also hope to keep some of the friends I've made along the way.

## WEEK A - JANUARY 27

Mon Football Clubs Fitness Gym Gardening Club Library Club	Tue Library Club Table Tennis	Wed STEM Club Fitness Gym Library Club	Thu Homework Club Fitness Gym Debate Club Positive Futures Design Tech Club	Fri GCSE Geography Field Trip - Sheffield Art Club Library Club
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## WEEK B - FEBRUARY 3

Mon Football Clubs Fitness Gym Gardening Club Library Club	Tue Library Club Table Tennis	Wed STEM Club Fitness Gym Library Club	Thu Homework Club, Fitness Gym, Debate Club, Design Tech and Art Club, Positive Futures	Fri Library Club
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# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.

## 1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in crafting a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

## 2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

## 3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

## 4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (featuring shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

## 5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

## 6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

## 7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

## 8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or explaining a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

## 9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it their all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

## 10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.

## Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK: 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School.



The National College