

WEST GRANTHAM UPDATE



WEST GRANTHAM
Church of England Secondary Academy

Friday 21 November, 2025

Remembrance, Reflection, and Red-Hot Wins

West Grantham is buzzing with excitement this week as opportunities, activities, and achievements take centre stage! First up, the Verse Novel Challenge is calling all creative voices to step up and shine. Next week, pupils can join forces in groups of up to four to record a 1–2 minute audio performance from a verse novel and potentially win £500 in Amazon vouchers. These are up for grabs nationally and with extra prizes for school participants, it's a chance to boost confidence, show off oracy skills, and have fun with friends. Judges will be listening for expression, emotion, clarity, and creativity, so get ready to pause dramatically and sprinkle in those sound effects. Speak to Miss Jackson to sign up - don't miss this poetic opportunity!

Meanwhile, the school came together in solemn unity for Remembrance Day, honouring the lives lost in wars past and present. Through shared silence and reflection, we paid tribute to their sacrifice and reaffirmed our commitment to peace.

On the sporting front, our Year 8 boys' football team turned up the heat in freezing conditions, blazing past Charles Read with a commanding 5–1 victory. Goals from Leo, Oscar (twice), and Jaden (twice) sealed the win, while Nik's stunning save kept the momentum alive. Star player Abdul delivered an outstanding performance from start to finish—what a frosty fixture with a fiery finish!

Elsewhere, Anti-Bullying Week brought a burst of positivity with form-time activities and the colourful celebration of Odd Socks Day, reminding us that being different is what makes us special. We also powered down for Switch-Off Fortnight, saving energy one light switch at a time... small steps, big impact! Year 7 pupils took part in a thought-provoking workshop on hate crime, led by some of our local police officers, reinforcing the importance of respect and understanding in our community.

Creativity has been in full swing at the DT 'Sew'cial Club, where pupils stitched up a storm with felt donuts, tie-dye pumpkins, and poppies for Remembrance. Now, the festive spirit is taking over with Brussels sprout pom-poms, felt baubles, and plans for bunting and holly soon to deck the halls with handmade cheer!

And speaking of excitement, this Friday we welcomed 47 lively Year 6 pupils from WGPA for a Humanities and DT taster morning. They whipped up pizza wheels in the food room, explored South American civilisations in History, and navigated OS maps in Geography. After a break on the tennis courts, they headed back to primary with full minds and (hopefully) full stomachs. It was a morning of maps, munchies, and Mayan mysteries! From poetry to pizza, football to festive crafts, it was a week packed with creativity, community, and celebration - proof that at West Grantham, there's never a dull moment!

A word from...

Jack, Y9

It's hard to believe we're already thinking about choosing our GCSE options. It feels like Year 7 was only yesterday. I'm excited but also a bit nervous because there are so many choices and it feels like a big decision. Right now, I'm really torn between Construction and Engineering because I like doing practical things in Science and building things, but I really like Drama too. I think it would be fun to try acting and work on confidence. Some of my friends are going for Art and Music, and I've heard Health and Social Care is a good option if you want to work with people. There's also BTEC Sport, which sounds great if you're into fitness, and of course we all have to do English and Maths. It's a lot to think about, but it's nice to have so many different things to choose from. I just hope I make the right choices for what I want to do in the future, although right now I'm not really sure what that will be.

WEEK A - OCTOBER 13

Mon

Football Clubs, Fitness Gym, Gardening Club, Library Club

Tue

Library Club
Basketball (Positive Futures)
Christian Union
Y11 Parent's Evening

Wed

Fitness Gym
Library Club
STEM Club
Dodgeball
Sewcial Club (DT)

Thu

Homework Club
Fitness Gym
Debate Club

Fri

Library Club

WEEK B - NOVEMBER 3

Mon

Football Clubs, Fitness Gym, Gardening Club, Library Club
Year 7 Hate Crime Workshop

Tue

Library Club
Basketball (Positive Futures)
Christian Union

Wed

Fitness Gym, Library Club, STEM Club, Dodgeball, Sewcial Club
Year 7 Stay Safe Day

Thu

Homework Club
Fitness Gym
Debate Club

Fri

Library Club





SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/v>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>