

# Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form's letter to students 1 - October half-term

Dear student,

As we approach the end of our first half-term together, I am writing to congratulate you on our successes and share important messages for the year ahead. We are one of the largest schools in Rotherham. Thousands of students come to Wickersley, and we are fortunate to have a big sixth form as part of our school too. Hundreds of staff work here who are always thinking of new ways to support and challenge you, and because of this, things can change quickly. It's important that we keep you up to date about what is happening in your school, after all, **we learn, believe and succeed together.**

## 1. The Wickersley Way

As our oldest students in school, it is your responsibility to model the Wickersley Way to our youngest. In fact, as our oldest we have even higher expectations of you - we expect you to be **exemplary.**

The Wickersley Way is more than just the big posters you see on the walls around the school, it influences everything we do and say. We believe that if you fully embrace the values of the Wickersley Way it can help you be successful long after you finish school. Our school, and indeed this country, has produced many successful people who have helped change the world for the better. If you think carefully, I'm certain that you'll spot many of our Wickersley Way values in their personalities and characteristics.

However, as our oldest students in school, we expect even more from you. Wickersley Sixth Form students must become exemplary scholars, role models, citizens, and progress to exemplary destinations. To help with this, I encourage all of you to work diligently in your own time, maintain a strong sense of determination towards your goals, and remain optimistic even when things don't go according to plan – nothing less than exemplary effort will do.

*How many Wickersley Way values can you name from memory?*

## 2. Before, during and after every lesson

We know that sixth form study is difficult. We understand that all of you want to do your best, so we've created an easy-to-follow plan that we call **Every Lesson.** Every lesson is a list of your responsibilities before, during and after every sixth form lesson. Throughout the year, teachers will assess your effort in each of these categories and share results with your parents:

The infographic is a dark blue graphic with three main sections: 'Before Every Lesson' (orange text), 'During Every Lesson' (green text), and 'After Every Lesson' (blue text). Each section lists specific student responsibilities. In the top right corner, there are logos for Wickersley Park School, the Rotherham Council logo, and the Wickersley Partnership logo.

**Before Every Lesson**

- You know your target grade and current grade.
- You know what you need to do before your next lesson, e.g., wider reading or homework.
- You understand what knowledge and skills you need to master to reach the next level or grade.
- You understand your learning journey, e.g., what topic you're studying, and how this fits into what you studied before.

**During Every Lesson**

- You embody the subject way.
- You complete all activities set by your teacher.
- You tell your teacher if you do not understand the content or how to perform a skill.
- You volunteer answers to questions rather than waiting to be asked by your teacher.
- You enter debate with your teachers and peers when appropriate.
- You communicate with confidence and finesse: verbally, non-verbally and in written work.

**After Every Lesson**

- You review your learning after the lesson and address any misunderstanding with your teacher.
- You organise your time and studies effectively over a long period - you are a project manager.
- You commit lots of time and effort to your learning by completing many hours of proactive study at home, e.g., past papers.
- You act on the feedback provided by your teacher and improve your work. Afterwards, you seek additional feedback.
- You engage in super and extracurricular activities such as reading, podcasts and documentaries.

*Do you want to attend the best universities or work for the best employers?*

*How many supercurricular activities are you completing each week?*

### 3. Student support

Your sixth form has a dedicated team to support you with any personal or educational issues. Please come and speak to a member of the sixth form team if you have any questions or worries. Alternatively, you can speak to your class teacher or any other member of staff in the school. We closely monitor your academic progress and take necessary actions if you fall behind.

We also have multiple layers of support if you are having difficulty with your sixth form studies:

Directed Study	Designed for students who are struggling to organise their time and learning.	To be completed in <i>some</i> of the student's free periods.
Subject Support Plan	Designed for students who are working hard but need subject-specific support to meet their target grades.	Activities to be completed by students independently and then reviewed by their teacher weekly.
Performance Review	Designed for students who need our deepest level of support.	Students will have a meeting with a member of the sixth form team to discuss study strategies, set clear targets, and agree on a review date. Parents may also be invited to be a part of this process.

*How much proactive study [tasks not set by your teacher] do you do outside of lessons?*

### 4. Attendance

Exemplary attendance is important to us. If you are not here, you are not learning. We have an expectation of 95% attendance for all our students. Without a valid reason, if your subject attendance falls below 92% you must pay for your examinations. If you are unable to attend school due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances, please telephone 01709 542147 or e-mail [sixthform@wickersley.net](mailto:sixthform@wickersley.net) as soon as possible. Holidays should not be taken during term time.

*Is your attendance 100%? If not, have you caught up on missed learning?*

### 5. Mock exams and parents' evenings

The Year 13 assessment week will begin on Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 and will end on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. Exams will be sat in classrooms. There will be no normal lessons during periods 1 and 2 this week, all other lessons will be as normal. Year 13, please check your inbox for more information about how these exams will run. Other important dates for your calendar:

- Year 13 Parents' Evening will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2023.
- Year 13 mock exams will begin on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 and will be sat in exam venues.
- Year 12 assessment week will begin on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 and will be sat in classrooms.
- Year 12 Parents' Evening will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2024.
- Year 12 mock exams will begin on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 and will be sat in exam venues.

*Do you know how to revise for each of your subjects?*

Finally, I would like to end this letter by saying well done for several things. Well done to our Year 12 who have completed arguably the hardest transition in education, the jump from Year 11 to sixth form. Well done to our Year 13, who have made a strong start to the most defining year of their lives. And finally, well done to those of you who selflessly walked or volunteered on sponsored walk day, the money we all raised for charity means a lot to those who need it. Continuously strive to think of others and be exemplary.

Have a good half-term break and see you on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October.

Yours sincerely,

Mr T. Hardcastle, Headteacher  
Mr S. Gaynor, Head of Sixth form