

21 September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to welcome you and your child to the new school year, to update you on how our students have settled, and to share the dates and events you will want in your diary for the rest of the autumn term.

A warm welcome to our newest students

We are delighted to welcome our new Year 7 and Year 12 students. They have made an excellent start. Settling into a large secondary school takes time, and we have been struck by how quickly our new students have found their way around the building, formed friendships, and risen to the expectations we hold for every child here.

We also welcome those students joining us in other year groups. Whatever point your child is joining us at, they will have a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, an Achievement Co-ordinator, and a Director of Student Achievement who know them well and will be points of contact for you and your child throughout their time at the school.

Onboarding and transition arrangements

Our first few weeks follow a structured onboarding programme, delivered through form time and assemblies, so that every student is clear about what is expected of them and how to succeed:

- Weeks one and two focused on onboarding and setting goals for the year, including routines, the school day, uniform and equipment, and how to use our systems.
- Week three focused on manners
- Week four focuses on attendance and punctuality, and week five on respecting our school.

For our new Year 7 students, transition continues beyond the first fortnight. Reading age screening and baseline assessments take place over the coming weeks so that we can identify quickly where a student needs additional support or challenge. Our Year 7 Parent Information Session was held on Wednesday 16 September; if you were unable to attend, please contact your child's Achievement Co-ordinator and we will share the materials with you.

Our new Year 12 students have begun their sixth form induction programme, covering goal setting, organisation and independent study, with the UCAS and careers guidance programme starting shortly.

Lockdown – Thursday 17 September

As you will know from the letter sent last week, the school implemented a temporary lockdown on Thursday morning as a precautionary measure following an incident at the school gate. The lockdown was lifted as soon as it was confirmed to be safe, and the school returned to normal operations the same day.

I would like to thank you sincerely for your patience, understanding and support during and after the lockdown. We know that the wait for news is difficult when your child is inside the building and you are outside it, and we are grateful for the calm way in which families responded to our communications. I would also like to share how proud I am of our students and staff, who followed our procedures exactly as they have practised them.

As the matter remains with the appropriate authorities, we are not able to share further detail at this stage. If your child has been unsettled by Thursday's events, please do let us know so that our pastoral team can offer support.

ParentPay – delays to enquiries

I am sorry to report that a technical problem has caused delays to the handling of ParentPay enquiries over the past few weeks. Some of you will have contacted the school about payments, balances or access to your account and will not yet have received a reply.

The problem has been identified, and we are working through the outstanding enquiries now. We anticipate that all queries will be resolved over the next few days. You do not need to contact us again – your enquiry is in the queue and will be answered. If your query is urgent, or if your child's account is affecting their access to meals, please e-mail the school office directly and we will deal with it straight away. Thank you for your patience.

Attendance

All children should aim to attend school at least 97% of the time. This means they can miss no more than five school days per year.

We know that students who are absent in the first weeks of school are significantly more likely to be persistently absent for the remainder of the school year, so the habits formed this month matter a great deal.

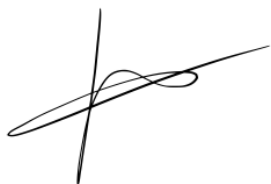
We believe that every parent/carers should know that:

- Each day of absence in secondary school is statistically linked to a loss of £750 per year in future earnings by the time your child reaches the age of 28.
- Students who are persistently absent (19 or more days absence per year) could earn £10,000 per year less by the age of 28.
- Students who are severely absent (less than 50% attendance) could earn £20,000 less by the age of 28.
- Students with near-perfect attendance are twice as likely to achieve a grade 5 in English and Mathematics. Missing 10 days per year reduces your child's likelihood of achieving these grades by 50%.
- Children in our school who have a higher rate of absence do not achieve as well as those who attend school consistently.
- Absence (except for those instances that are unavoidable) is disrespectful to others within our education community. Teachers must take additional time away from other students, prepare additional resources, and provide extra sessions to help every child who has missed a day. This makes it harder for them to help others.

Thank you for ensuring your child attends school every day.

Thank you, as ever, for your support. I look forward to working with you and your child over the coming year.

Yours sincerely,



Mr H. Derry
Principal
Waverley School – Secondary & Sixth Form

Parent/carers events this term

These are the events at which we would most like to see you. Consultation evenings are the single most useful hour you can give your child's education, and we ask every family to attend.

29 September 2026	– Year 10 & Year 11 Parent/Carer Forum
29 September 2026	– Sixth Form Parent/Carer Forum
30 September 2026	– School Open Evening – early closure for all students
2 December 2026	– Year 11 & Year 13 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening
9 December 2026	– Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening

Invitations, booking arrangements and timings for each event will follow separately.

Autumn term – key dates

29 September 2026	– Year 10 & Year 11 and Sixth Form Parent/Carer Forums
30 September 2026	– School Open Evening – early closure for all students
1 October 2026	– National Poetry Day; Black History Month begins
10 October 2026	– World Mental Health Day
w/c 19 October 2026	– Year 11 and Year 13 mock examinations begin
23 October 2026	– School production: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
26–30 October 2026	– Half-term holiday – school closed to all students
2 November 2026	– All students return to school; mock examinations continue
16–20 November 2026	– Anti-Bullying Week; Maths Week England
19 November 2026	– Data Capture 1 – progress data collected for Years 7 to 13
26 November 2026	– Mock examination results released to Year 11 and Year 13
27 November 2026	– Staff Training Day – school closed to all students
2 December 2026	– Year 11 and Year 13 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening
9 December 2026	– Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening
17 December 2026	– Christmas lunch and Christmas jumper day
18 December 2026	– Last day of term – early closure for all students