

4 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Start of Term Messages, September 2025

I hope this letter finds you and your family well, and that your child is excited to return to school after the summer break. I would like to take this opportunity to share a couple of important messages with you; thank you in advance for your attention.

Phones and Social Media

Two years ago we wrote to all parents and carers of students in Years 7 to 11 in our community to implement a new phone policy at The Weald. In essence, currently phones are not to be seen or heard during our working day, namely between 08.45am and 3.05 pm. This new approach was very warmly welcomed by parents and carers, as well as staff, and students are perfectly used to not being permitted to use their phones during school hours.

There is a great deal of evidence to show that smart phones can be very damaging to young people's mental health and well-being, and pressure is mounting on governments to regulate social media companies more rigorously as a result. There is also a significant rise in the numbers of parents and carers wanting to wait until their children are older before allowing them to have smart phones, even using national campaigns such as [Smartphone Free Childhood](#). The vast majority of schools are now 'phone free' to varying degrees.

With this in mind, we are keen to respond as we recognise that we hold an important role in protecting children and young people from harm, and also in supporting parents and carers in enforcing boundaries. Therefore, we are taking a step further in our phone policy. From this term, phones are not to be seen or heard (for students in Years 7 to 11) on the school grounds from the time students arrive until the end of the day. Phones seen or heard before 3.05pm will be confiscated and must be collected at the end of the day. Students in the library, attending homework clubs or detentions after school may not use their phones until they leave.

The same exceptions for students with medical conditions will remain as they are currently.

We are often contacted by parents and carers with requests to investigate young people's misuse of social media apps. Please be aware that our ability to do this is limited, because we are not permitted to view inappropriate and/or explicit content and often evidence is deleted by the time we are made aware. These issues arise most frequently when students are out of school so we may not be able to impose sanctions. We can, of course, and always do advise parents and carers to report issues to the police (via 101) or to the [Integrated Front Door](#), where there are professionals to support; in addition, we will always support parents and carers (and indeed students) with this process if necessary.

Our main advice to parents and carers is to look at their child's device regularly with them and to be aware of the age limits on social media apps, which are:

- Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Snapchat - 13 years old
- WhatsApp - 16 years old

Comprehensive advice and support is available [here](#) from CEOP, a branch of the National Crime Agency.

Attendance

The Secretary of State for Education has reiterated the Government's commitment to ensuring high attendance rates at school for all students (BBC news report [here](#)). We know you will also want this for your child in order for them to maximise their potential and our staff are here to support them. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's Form Tutor or Head of House if you have any concerns about attendance. As a reminder, please be aware that I am not permitted to authorise holidays taken in school time unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Transport and Extra-Curricular Activities

We are tremendously proud of the enrichment opportunities we provide for our students at The Weald. We know this is one of the key reasons many of you value the school. In order to ensure that all students can benefit from after school activities, we run late buses and transport students via minibuses at no cost to parents and carers. Currently we find ourselves in difficult times financially, but our commitment to these activities is unwavering. Therefore, we are asking for a voluntary parental contribution towards the cost of this transport which will be added to ParentPay accounts. Thank you in advance if you are able to support us with meeting these costs.

I very much look forward to seeing you at the 'Meet The Tutor' (for Year 7) and 'Welcome To The Year' (for Years 8 to 11) events in the coming weeks. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs S Edwards
Headteacher