

NEWSLETTER

Term 1, Issue 1

11 SEPTEMBER 2026

Key term dates

17 September 2026 - Year 11 Parent information evening

24 September 2026 - Open Evening for Year 6 Students (TWS Students leave School at 12.55pm)

25 September 2026 - Staff Development Day

28 Sept - 01 Oct - Open morning tours

20 October 2026 - End of Term 1

02 November 2026 - Start of Term 2

Stay Up to Date

For a full breakdown of daily activities and club timings, please visit our website.

TWS School Calendar

For our new school meals menu, please visit our website:

School Meals



CONTACT US

Email: tw_s_admin@swale.at

Telephone: 01227 931300

Option 1 - Attendance

Option 2 - Pupil Admissions

Option 4 - Main Reception

To report an absence or other attendance enquiries:

Email: tw_s_attendance@swale.at

Stay informed, follow us for weekly updates, school news and student highlights.



[@TheWhitstableSchool](https://www.facebook.com/TheWhitstableSchool)



[@tws_thewhitstableschool](https://www.instagram.com/tws_thewhitstableschool)

NEXT WEEK - A TIMETABLE

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families had a good break over the summer. It has been a real pleasure to welcome our students back as we begin a new academic year.

I would particularly like to welcome our new Year 7 cohort, as well as those students who have joined us from other schools. I hope they quickly feel part of the culture and community of The Whitstable School and enjoy everything that school life here has to offer.

Our vision is for every child to leave The Whitstable School as a confident, principled and respectful individual, with exceptional examination results and the confidence to succeed in their next steps.

We began the year with a series of assemblies to welcome students back and reinforce our expectations and ambitions for the year ahead. Building on the work we started last year, our new pastoral structure will provide additional support for students, alongside a rich programme of activities, enrichment and celebration. We want to recognise success in all its forms while ensuring every child is supported to make strong academic progress. After several weeks away from school, it naturally takes a little time to settle back into routines and I would like to thank you for your continued support. In particular, the changes to PE changing arrangements are going well. I recognise that this represents a significant change from previous practice, and I appreciate the efforts of students, families and staff in making it successful.

We have also introduced our new mobile phone pouches for Years 7 and 8. Again, this is a change, but we are already seeing the benefits of reducing distractions and allowing students to focus fully on their learning. For all other year groups, it remains important that mobile phones are switched off and kept securely in bags throughout the school day. Attendance will also continue to be one of our key priorities this year. Being in school every day and arriving on time makes an enormous difference to a child's learning, progress and sense of belonging. Even relatively small amounts of absence can result in valuable learning being missed, so I ask for your continued support in ensuring that your child attends school every day wherever possible and is ready to learn on time.

Finally, thank you for your continued support as parents and carers. Strong communication between home and school is incredibly important, so please do contact us if you have any concerns or if there is anything we can do to support your child. We are always here to listen, work with you and help ensure that every student has a successful and fulfilling year at The Whitstable School.

I look forward to celebrating many achievements with you over the coming year.

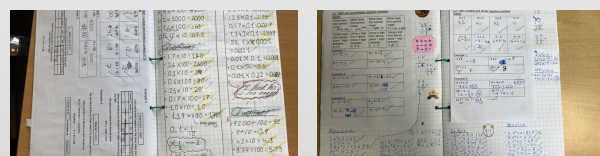
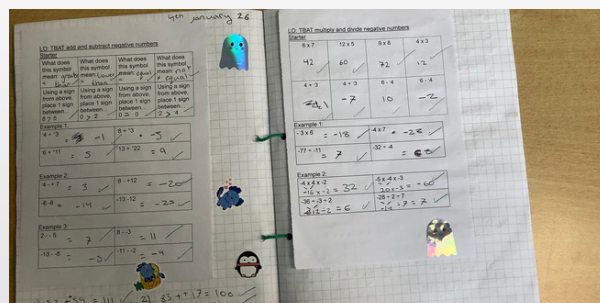
Warm regards,
Mr A Holmes, Headteacher



Book of Commendation This Week's Celebrated Students

Year 10

Sienna, Mia, Aila, Dexter and Vinnie - for an outstanding effort in maths during our first week back to school.



NEW
UPDATE

TWS Open Events

Open Evening:

Join us on Thursday 24th September 2026 from 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM.

Open Morning Tours:

Our Open Morning tours will run from Monday, September 28th until Thursday 1st October 2026. We will have two tours each morning:

First tour: 9:00 AM - 9:40 AM

Second tour: 10:00 AM - 10:40 AM

Advance booking is required for all Open morning tours.

To book please scan the QR code or go to: ticketsource.co.uk

We can't wait to welcome you!



The
Whitstable
School

ADMISSIONS OPEN
SEPTEMBER 2027
JOIN NOW!



Welcome to the Whitstable School, the highest performing non-selective school within the district recently graded GOOD in all areas by Ofsted.

The Whitstable School is a passionate, purposeful and progressive place to study; our pupils foster a deep love for learning and continually strive to reach their full potential.

For current Year 6 pupils for Admissions in September 2027, the school will hold an open evening and morning tours. Families and prospective pupils will have the opportunity to hear from the Headteacher, meet staff, current pupils, tour the school facilities and visit subject classes.

OPEN EVENING

Thursday 24th Sept 2026

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Headteacher talks will be at: 6:00 PM, 6:45 PM
and 7:30 PM

No booking required for Open Evening

OPEN MORNINGS

Monday 28th Sept-Thursday 1st Oct 2026

First tour: 9:00 AM - 9:40 AM

Second tour: 10:00 AM - 10:40 AM

Please book below

Advance booking is required for all Open Morning tours, with two tours each morning.
Please note: Each parent will need to book an individual ticket. One child is permitted per parent and tickets are not required for children.

To book one of our Open Morning Tours please scan the QR
code or book via [Ticketsource](https://ticketsource.co.uk)



We are open to applications outside of Whitstable. Students have the opportunity to apply for a 25% travel bursary. *T&C's apply.

Swale
ACADEMIES
TRUST

Free School Meals & Allergy Safety Notice

Free School Meals & Extra Support

Families receiving Universal Credit may qualify for Targeted (income of £7,400 or less) or Extended Free School Meals (income above £7,400, starting September 2026). Registering also unlocks discounted bus passes and holiday activity programmes.

Apply online for immediate processing at apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent.

Benedict's Law & Allergy Safety

Under statutory Benedict's Law guidelines, we must maintain up-to-date allergy records for all students. If your child has a medical allergy, please notify us at: twsw_admin@swale.at.

As we aim to be a nut-free school, please ensure all packed lunches are free of nut products.



School Menus & Catering Information

Please find our current school menu on our website at thewhitstableschool.org.uk/information/school-meals.

We will continue serving the Spring/Summer menu until the October half term.

This week 07-11/09/2026, we are serving the Week 1 menu of our three-week rotation (Weeks 1, 2 and 3). As soon as we receive the new menu from our caterers, we will update the website accordingly.

MFL Announcements

Spanish Books (Ms Amboage's Classes):

If you were taught Spanish by Ms Amboage last year, did not collect your exercise book, and would like to keep it, please visit room GZ11 at break or lunchtime before the end of next week. Any uncollected books will be recycled after this time.

Year 9 Duke of Edinburgh Volunteering Opportunities: The MFL department is looking for reliable Year 9 DofE candidates to lead two Year 7 lunchtime clubs once a week. Multiple roles are available, so you are welcome to sign up alongside friends!

Textivate Club: Assist Year 7 pupils with navigating Textivate, keep an accurate register and ensure laptops are returned and stored correctly.

Year 7 Spanish Choir: Help coordinate and teach the choir a Spanish Christmas carol ahead of a holiday performance. Playing an instrument for this group can also count toward your DofE Skills award.

For further information or to register your interest, please contact twsw_admin@swale.at.

THIS WEEK

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Careers Business breakfast yesterday!

It was fantastic to meet so many passionate individuals eager to support our careers programme and help inspire the next generation.

If you are able to lend your time or expertise at any of our upcoming careers events, please take a moment to complete our **interest form**

We truly appreciate your support and look forward to collaborating with you!



Geography trip

Our Year 13 Geographers have got stuck in on the Essex coastline, at Walton-on-the-Naze! From measuring beach profiles along the coastline to studying coastal management and biodiversity out on the saltmarshes, students are putting physical geography theory into real-world practice as they gather primary data for their A-Level NEAs. Great teamwork, brilliant data collection, and only a few muddy boots!



**UPCOMING
EVENTS****A-Level Film, Art & Textiles Showcase**

The Film and Art departments warmly invite you to our A-Level Showcase on Wednesday 16th September at The Stage. Join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating the incredible vision and creativity of our Year 13 artists and filmmakers!

Event Details:

Time: Doors open at 17:30 | Film screenings run from 18:00 to approximately 20:00 (includes a refreshment interval)

Location: The Stage, The Whitstable School

Highlights: Display of high-standard A-Level Fine Art & Textiles work, 17 featured student films, and an awards presentation recognizing top achievements in film categories.

Admission is free, but tickets are required. Please reserve your seats in advance via [TicketSource](#).

Girls' Football & Whitstable Town FC Scholarship Pathway

We are excited to announce a fantastic new opportunity for our Year 10 and Year 11 girls to participate in our developing Girls' Football Programme! In partnership with Football Futures, we are forming a dedicated Girls' U18 team to compete in fixtures and represent The Whitstable School against other schools.

Led fully by professional Football Futures coaches, the programme will feature weekly training sessions—held at both the school and Whitstable Town FC Stadium—giving players access to high-level coaching, guidance, and development.

If your daughter is in Year 10 or 11 and interested in taking part, please register your interest by emailing: tw_sixthform@swale.at.



 Important School Updates & Reminders

- **Parking & Student Safety**

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, please adhere to our site parking and driving guidelines. We ask that parents avoid using the staff car park and ensure all entrances remain clear of vehicles at all times. Please reserve disabled bays strictly for Blue Badge holders and maintain a slow, vigilant speed while driving on school grounds. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our community safe.

- **Community Respect & Litter**

We have received reports of littering and disrespectful behavior toward local residents. The School takes these reports very seriously; any students identified behaving disrespectfully or dropping litter, inside or outside of school grounds, will face appropriate sanctions and negative behavior points. We expect all students to represent our school with pride and respect for our neighbours.

- **Allergen Awareness**

The safety of our students is our top priority. While it is impossible to guarantee a 100% allergen-free environment in a busy school, we strive to be as allergen-aware as possible. We kindly ask for your support by ensuring packed lunches and snacks do not contain:

- Packaged nuts (peanuts, tree nuts, etc.)
- Nut-based bars (cereal, granola or chocolate bars)
- Spreads (Peanut butter or chocolate-hazelnut spreads like Nutella)
- Sauces (Peanut-based sauces like satay)
- Sesame (Seeds, hummus or sesame crackers)

- **Investing in Excellence: Support TWS**

We are launching a community initiative to modernise our facilities in Technology, Sports and Literacy. Every donation directly impacts our pupils' daily experience.

If you would like to support our students, please complete and submit our donation form. We sincerely appreciate your generosity!

TWS Donations Form



*Thank
You*

Kent School Health Service Support

The Kent School Health Service offers confidential health and wellbeing resources for pupils aged 11 to 19. Students can connect directly with a qualified healthcare professional via ChatHealth, a confidential texting service available Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm (Text: 07520 618850). Additionally, young people can explore age-appropriate advice on physical and emotional health, stress, and relationships at healthforteens.co.uk. For parents seeking expert resources to support their child's ongoing development, please visit family.kentcht.nhs.uk.



A poster for BRIT KIDS. The background is a gradient of orange and purple. On the left, a silhouette of a person in a dynamic pose is shown within a white square frame. The text 'BRIT KIDS' is written in large white letters across the frame. At the top left are logos for 'The BRIT SCHOOL', 'Canterbury College', and 'wk Westminster Kingsway College'. To the right of the silhouette, the text reads: 'SATURDAY COURSES IN CREATIVE, MEDIA & PERFORMING ARTS FOR 7-18 YEAR OLDS AT CANTERBURY, KINGS CROSS AND CROYDON'. Below this, it says 'WHAT DO WE DO? MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE'. At the bottom left, it says 'TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO BRITKIDS.ORG'. Below that, 'FOLLOW US ON:' is followed by Facebook and Instagram icons. On the bottom right is a QR code.

A poster for STAGE COACH. The background is dark with yellow and orange geometric shapes. Four young performers are shown in dynamic poses, wearing black t-shirts with 'STAGE COACH' logos. The text 'STAGE COACH' is in a yellow box at the top. Below it, 'PERFORMING ARTS WHITSTABLE & FAVERSHAM' is written. The main text 'COME & JOIN US!' is in large white and yellow letters. Below that, 'START THE TERM WITH STAGE COACH' is in yellow, followed by 'SING • DANCE • ACT'. At the bottom, a yellow box contains the text 'WHITSTABLE & FAVERSHAM NEW TERM STARTING NOW'.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CHARACTER.AI

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Character.AI is an entertainment platform where users create and chat with AI-powered characters. These chatbots can act like existing favourite characters from movies or books, or like friends, mentors, or even romantic partners, responding in an emotional, personally engaging way. Although this can encourage creativity, it can also make a generated conversation feel like a genuine relationship, which is concerning if it takes the place of human relationships.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

AI replies are generated in real time rather than chosen from a fully checked script. Even with safety filters on, conversations can still move into sexual, violent, discriminatory, or self-harm material. These AI characters are often made by users, so a familiar name or child-friendly description does not guarantee that every response from the character will be suitable for a young person.

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Characters on Character.AI can use the language of friendship, love, and empathy without ever feeling anything. Vulnerable young people may struggle to separate this simulation from genuine understanding. Romantic role-play or a character that demands attention, loyalty, or secrecy could also risk distorting young people's expectations around consent, disagreement, and the give-and-take involved in healthy human relationships.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

Characters, like other chatbot platforms, are at risk of inventing facts or giving inappropriate advice while sounding completely confident. Characters may also echo a young person's assumptions instead of questioning them. This can become particularly risky when users rely on a character for guidance about health, mental wellbeing, relationships, money, or personal safety instead of checking with a credible source or trusted adult.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

Character.AI chatbots can appear endlessly attentive, supportive, and affectionate, which is one of the hallmarks of the generative AI models that such companions are built on. A young person may start turning to a character chatbot whenever they feel lonely or upset and believe that it understands them better than the humans in their life. This can become more concerning when chatting starts to replace sleep, schoolwork, hobbies and friendships.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Character.AI chats may feel private, especially when a bot sounds personal and caring, but they take place on a company's online systems. Users could intentionally or unintentionally reveal their name, school, location, routines, images, or intimate concerns. Character.AI says some data may be retained to improve its services and AI models, so young people should never treat a chatbot like a confidential diary.

UNHEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

Be aware of warning signs such as secret accounts, bypassing age restrictions, hiding phone use from adults, chatting late at night, distress when access to the platform or character stops, withdrawal from other people, falling interest in school, or believing the character is conscious. Increased use may also signal that the young person is already lonely, anxious, or seeking help.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Ask what the young person enjoys about Character.AI and invite them to show you how the platform and their favourite characters work. Useful questions include, "Has it ever said something that felt wrong?" and "How can you tell it doesn't have feelings?" Avoid shaming them for using platforms like Character.AI or making them feel there is something wrong with them for doing so.

PAUSE, CHECK AND ASK

Teach young people to pause before accepting an answer from characters on Character.AI. Encourage them to check important claims against a trustworthy source and ask a safe adult when the issue matters. Never use a character as the sole source of medical, mental health, legal, financial, or safeguarding advice. Remind them not to share passwords, contact details, school information, live locations, or private images.

CHECK AGE, SETTINGS & LIMITS

Character.AI's minimum age is 16 in the UK, but open-ended companion chat is restricted to adults aged 18 or over. Users aged 16 to 17 receive a different experience built around guided 'Stories' and other creative or social features. Check their current settings, never help or encourage a young person to give a false age, and apply the same safety rules to other chatbot apps.

NOTICE AND RESPOND

Take action if chats involve sexual content, threats, coercion, abuse, self-harm or danger. Save relevant evidence, report the character and follow the setting's safeguarding process; educators should involve the designated safeguarding lead. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services. Childline is available on 0800 1111 and the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is an educator with almost 30 years' experience across teaching, school leadership, and governance. He works internationally, supporting schools and colleges with AI leadership and governance, as well as teaching the key fundamentals of AI use and safety to educators at The National College.



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See full reference list on our website



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