

The Wallington Week

21st September 2026

It has been another busy week at Wallington, with lots happening across the school.

This week we welcomed all our new Year 7 parents to our Parent Information Evening. It was lovely to see so many of you and to have the opportunity to talk about how we support our youngest students as they begin their seven-year journey with us. It is already clear that our Year 7 students are settling well, and we are looking forward to getting to know them even better as the year progresses.

I also spent time with our Year 13 students this week at an assembly provocatively titled 'Year 13 is a Waste of Time!' Of course, I don't actually believe that! My message was that, while examination success is important, I don't want their final year at school to become entirely about grades. Year 13 is also an opportunity to grow, develop and make a difference. I encouraged students to take on new challenges, run clubs, support younger students, contribute to school life and make the most of the opportunities around them. We want them to achieve excellent results, but we also want them to leave Wallington having continued to develop into the young adults they are becoming.

Thursday saw our Clubs and Societies Fair, and it was fantastic to see the breadth of opportunities available to our students. We now have more than 100 clubs and societies across the school. Particularly pleasing was seeing so many of our Sixth Form students taking the lead by running clubs and sharing their interests and expertise with younger students. This is exactly the kind of student leadership and contribution that we want to encourage.

Congratulations to Aleena (Year 12), who has been named a Finalist in the LSE Generate Global Innovation Challenge Regional Round. Competing against more than 2,000 participants from around the world, Aleena's project was recognised by the judging panel for its originality, depth of analysis and potential for real-world impact. A fantastic achievement and a wonderful example of the curiosity, initiative and ambition we encourage at Wallington.

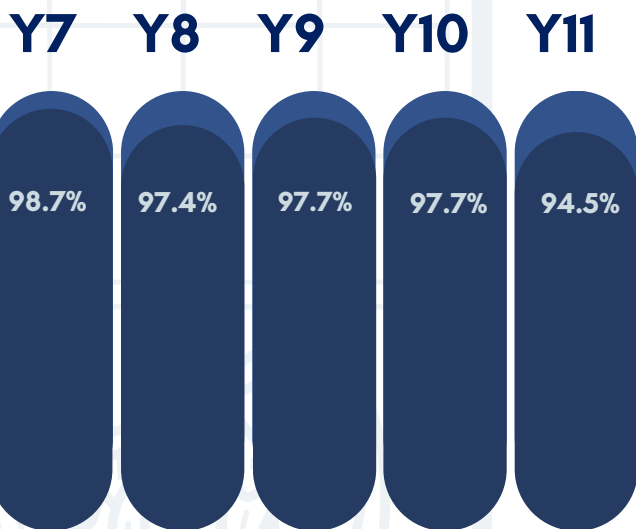
A reminder that the Year 7 'Meet the Tutor' event on Monday 12 October will take place online via SchoolCloud and will be by invitation only. Appointments will be 10 minutes long, and invitations will be sent to families during the week commencing 5 October. Not all families will have appointments.



- Ms T O'Brien
Headteacher

Calendar

Attendance



Week B

Monday 21st September

- UCAS Early Entry Deadline (Year 13)

Tuesday 22nd September

- Mathematical Olympiad/Competition for Girls (Yr 12/13 FM students)
- Beijing Parent Information Evening (online) 5pm

Wednesday 23rd September

- Central Detention 15.10-16.10pm

Thursday 24th September

- Year 13 Wakehurst Place

Friday 25th September

- Year 13 Wakehurst Place
- Central Detention 15.10-16.10pm

Upcoming Events

26th Sept- 2nd Stage SET test
6th Oct- KS3 Study Skills
Workshop
12th Oct- Y7 Meet the Tutor
15th Oct- Sixth Form Open
Evening

Careers Noticeboard

For live updates on careers related opportunities please [click here.](#)

Please see the latest careers newsletter [here.](#)

Current Vacancies

Click here for a link to our [vacancies page](#)



Events

Clubs & Societies Fair

The annual Clubs & Societies Fair took place this week in the Hall, giving students the opportunity to explore the wide range of enrichment activities, clubs and societies on offer at WHSG. With dozens of stalls showcasing both long-established favourites and exciting new initiatives, students were able to meet leaders, learn more about different activities, and sign up for clubs that match their interests and passions.

The event highlighted the creativity, talent and enthusiasm that make our school community so vibrant.

We look forward to another exciting year of enrichment and student engagement.



Selective Eligibility Test (SET)

On 15th September, WHSG welcomed prospective students and their families for the Selective Eligibility Test (SET). We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our Senior Prefects and members of the CCF, whose support throughout the day was invaluable. From assisting with registration and guiding candidates to their test rooms, to ensuring students were safely reunited with their parents afterwards, they demonstrated exceptional organisation, professionalism and care. Their willingness to give their time and serve as ambassadors for the school helped the day run smoothly and made a positive impression on all those attending.

THANK
YOU!

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 0800 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 and [insert NC courses I have written].



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See full reference list on our website

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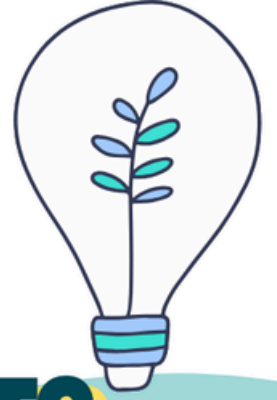
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Sustainability



FACTS

World Car Free Day

In 2000 it was decided to make a day self-standing and held on Sept 22 each year with cities worldwide being invited to participate, encouraging people to leave their cars behind and use alternative transport to reduce air pollution and promote sustainable transportation.

Venice, Italy: The historic centre (Centro Storico) is the largest urban area in Europe completely free of cars, relying entirely on walking and boats across its canals.

Fes el-Bali, Morocco: listed by Guinness World Records as one of the largest contiguous car-free urban areas by population (over 150,000 residents), where goods and people move strictly by foot or donkey.



TIPS/SOLUTIONS

Going car-free, even for a day, offers numerous benefits: reduced air pollution, decreased traffic congestion, lower fuel consumption, and improved public health through increased physical activity. It also fosters a stronger sense of community.

Sustainable alternatives to travelling in a car

Walking/Public transport/Car sharing

Lime: Founded in 2017, Lime is a global leader in shared electric vehicles, including scooters and bikes.

Operating in over 150 cities worldwide

Forest: operating across multiple London boroughs

Santander Cycles: operating across multiple London boroughs



Attendance

Requests for absence, including illness or appointments should be sent to:

attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk

Please provide at least 2 full school days notice of a planned absence for the school to complete the required processes before the event.

Absences for longer than one day need to be confirmed at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Families should note that requests for holidays during term time will not be approved and penalty fines can be issued.

To notify WHSG of a leave of absence, please complete this [form](#) and return to the email above.

Contact Information and emails

If you need to update your home address or contact telephone number, emergency contacts or any other information, please send the updates to:

attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk

When replying to any SchoolComms emails, please use the individual contact email provided and for general enquiries use info@wallingtongirls.org.uk



Parking

Please note that parents are unable to park or drive into the school grounds between the hours of 7.30am-4.30pm for safeguarding reasons. Families can contact our reception to ask for permission, where the need arises for a student with mobility issues.

reception@wallingtongirls.org.uk

Please also ensure that when dropping/collecting your child at school each day, you are respectful of our local residents by not blocking drives and roads or impacting others' safety by pulling in/ parking irresponsibly.

Punctuality

Good punctuality to both lessons and to school is expected of all students. We know that employers place great importance on punctuality and attendance, therefore it is important for our students to understand the value of being on time.

If a student is late 3 times within a half-term (roughly 6 weeks) they will receive a 60 mins detention on a Wednesday or a Friday. If the student is late again within the half-term they will receive an automatic 60 mins detention, a late report and there will be a meeting with parents. This will re-set at the start of each half-term.

We ask that parents support these actions as important processes for the school and understand that detentions cannot be moved for any after school clubs or enrichment events. Should a detention clash with a medical appointment, evidence will be requested for the school to show flexibility.