



## WEDNESDAY LETTER

25<sup>th</sup> February 2026



### A WORD FROM MR BANKS...

A School Where We All Belong. This is what we strive to be.

This week we have said 'bon voyage' to over 100 year 8 pupils who have journeyed to Paris. Languages are a fundamental aspect of our curriculum right from the start of year 7. We are lucky to be able to offer both Spanish and French throughout the school. This is a rare curriculum for a school to be able to offer. Over 80% of our students go on to study a language at GCSE. So why do we think modern foreign language education is so important?

#### Languages give young people a competitive edge

"Having language skills under your belt will help make you stand out from the crowd, whether you're applying for an entry level position, a management role or an internal transfer."

Steve Cassidy, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Hilton

The Russell Group has named languages as subjects that open doors to more degrees at universities. (The Russell Group is a group of 24 universities with a shared focus on research and a reputation for academic achievement)

"Young people skilled in the languages of Europe, China and other key markets around the world, can look forward to exciting and rewarding careers."

Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce

Studying a foreign language can be extremely rewarding and exciting. They provide an insight into other cultures and can open the door to travel and employment opportunities. They can also broaden pupils' horizons, helping them flourish in new environments.

If your child finds languages difficult, don't forget that they will have been studying them for much less time than their other subjects and, while it can be a challenge, learning a language will greatly enhance their future opportunities.

What's more, we know that employers value languages, as they are increasingly important to make sure we can compete in the global market. Because of this, languages are increasingly becoming a requirement for many graduate schemes, such as those offered by Lidl.



Enhanced communication and adaptability skills



Deeper cultural awareness



The edge in the jobs market



Flexibility to travel, study or work abroad

#### Ramadan



We have several pupils in school currently observing Ramadan. Please be aware that the quiet room is available for prayer and reflection during both lunch times. Ramadan will continue until mid-March.

We will be joining with Greenbank High School to celebrate Ramadan Iftar on the 4th of March. Please see full details in the poster below.



## Attendance Matters

### "A School Where We All Belong"



- **Absence** - If your son is not well enough to attend school, please either leave a message on the absence line 01704 577253 (option 1) or via email at [attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk](mailto:attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk) by 8:30am.
- **Late** - If your son is late arriving, the reason will be obtained on arrival by a member of staff, and relayed to the attendance team. Phone calls are **not** necessary. If the reason for lateness is due to exceptional circumstances, please email [attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk](mailto:attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk).
- **Appointments** - Please ensure evidence is provided for any medical/dental appointments during the school day via email to [attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk](mailto:attendance@birkdalehigh.co.uk). Where possible, please provide 24 hours notice in advance of the appointment.

If your child's attendance during the school year was...

95%

9 days from school

50 lessons

90%

19 days from school

100 lessons

85%

29 days from school

150 lessons

80%

38 days from school

200 lessons

75%

48 days from school

250 lessons

### Did you know that in one school year...

If your child is late every day by...



5 minutes



10 minutes



15 minutes

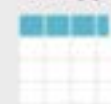


20 minutes



30 minutes

Your child would have lost approximately...



3.5 days from school



7 days from school



10 days from school



14.5 days from school



22 days from school



## Year 9 Immunisation Session - 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

The Sefton School Immunisation team will be attending Birkdale High tomorrow, Thursday 26th February 2026 for the Year 9 Adolescent Booster, Men ACWY and any outstanding HPV vaccinations.

It is important to opt in or opt out via the link <https://econsent.merseyscare.nhs.uk/> if you haven't already done so.

If you would like to discuss anything further, amend a form, or need support completing the consent process, please contact the Immunisation Service on: 0151 247 6130

## Maturity Assessment Questionnaire

The Department for Education (DfE) and National Health Services England (NHSE) have asked all local areas to complete a SEND Maturity Assessment in readiness for the planned SEND reforms.

We would welcome your feedback so this can be utilised in assessing the Sefton Partnership Maturity.

Dependent on the level of feedback you provide the whole questionnaire should take between 5-20 minutes.

You can access the questionnaire through the link below or via the QR code.

[SEND and Alternative Provision Maturity Assessment Questionnaire – Form](#)



Please note the questionnaire closes on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Thank you for taking the time to complete.

## Birkdale High Book Swap - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March

For the first time ever, Birkdale High School is holding a whole-school Book Swap on World Book Day - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March - to celebrate reading for pleasure.

We're requesting good quality books, graphic novels and/or comics that you've finished with and are happy to swap.

- Students can drop donations at The Hub before school, or during registration (once they have had their mark!) between now and Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> March.
- For every book a student donates, they'll receive a raffle ticket for the World Book Day prize draw
- On World Book Day, students will have the opportunity to visit the Media Hall and choose a book to take home.

Let's make our first whole-school Book Swap a huge success.

## PE Sport X Timetable

Please see below for the current PE Sport X Timetable.

Please note, students should **not** enter the sports hall unless attending a club and a staff member present.



## WHAT'S COMING UP



### Monday Mile

Monday Mile is a great way to start the week - staff and pupils are invited to complete 4 laps of the track... run, walk or jog, rain or shine, every Monday.

We meet on the track at 8am. All fitness levels welcome!

All boys who take part will receive a raffle ticket each Monday, with the chance to win a prize.



### Year 7 Wellbeing Challenge

A big well done to all Year 7 students who have completed the 20 Day Wellbeing Challenge.

Students still have until Friday to complete their Challenges and hand their sheets in to Ms Tranter: Wellbeing Mentor

The Prize Draw will take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March. Winners will be awarded gift vouchers, dinner passes and, as Spring and Easter are almost upon us, some Easter related goodies.

So let us encourage the boys to get "doing" and remember small acts of kindness really can make a big difference.



### #WAKEUPWEDNESDAY

This week's [#WakeUpWednesday](#) guide explains how features like group chats, disappearing messages, 'Channels' and location sharing can expose young users to pressure, unwanted contact and inappropriate content.

### REMINDER - Ms Humphreys Half Marathon

Ms Humphreys, is currently in training to run a half marathon on March 15th in Liverpool, to raise money for Merseyside charity, Open Door.

Open Door is committed to providing free, fast, and effective mental health support. Open Door exists to shape meaningful change in mental health by creating inclusive communities, joyful places and evidence-based programmes that empower people to be mentally well.

If any parents / carers would like to donate, please do so via below link:

[Ms Humphreys - Open Door Half Marathon](#)



# WEEKLY ROUNDUP

## Legoland Discovery Centre

On the 12th February, a group of 28 enthusiastic Lego builders from Years 7-9 visited the Legoland Discovery Centre in Manchester, supported by staff from the SEND team.

Throughout the day, the boys took part in hands-on challenges that encouraged teamwork and problem-solving. They built mini bobsleighs, explored concepts such as friction and gravity, and enjoyed some high-energy fun in the soft-play area.

The boys represented the school brilliantly from start to finish -  
*"Everything... was... Awesome!!!"*



## Year 8 Paris Trip

Earlier this week, a group of our Year 8 students set off for Paris.

So far, they have explored the Somme Museum and taken in iconic sights including the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Cœur.

We hope they all have a fantastic time and look forward to hearing about their adventures in full when they return.

In the meantime, follow Birkdale High on X to receive updates, photos, and news





## Ski Trip to LaThuile 2026



During the half-term break, a group of our students enjoyed an unforgettable skiing adventure in La Thuile, Italy.

Days were spent building skiing skills in the fresh snow and taking in the stunning Alpine scenery.

Evenings were just as lively, with games in the local sports hall, ice skating, and bowling, giving students plenty of opportunities to unwind, bond, and create brilliant memories off the slopes too.

A special congratulations to Frankie in Year 11, who was awarded 2026 Skier of the Year - Well Done!



YOU ARE INVITED

*Ramadan*

IFTAR

WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

5:30PM

GREENBANK HIGH SCHOOL,  
HASTINGS ROAD, SOUTHPORT

please complete this link to let us know you are coming



EMAIL: [enquiries@greenbankhigh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@greenbankhigh.co.uk) for questions



## SPORT X TIMETABLE - 2025-2026 - Term 2, Week A

Day	BEFORE SCHOOL	LUNCH TIME - Years 7, 9 & 11	LUNCH TIME - Years 8-10	AFTER SCHOOL
MON		<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JQ, JF, PC &amp; JD – FOOTBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs7, 8 & 9) <small>Nb, this will not take place if a fixture has had to be arranged for a specific year group!</small>
TUE	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (All years)	<b>MB – INDOOR ACTIVITIES CLUB</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB (All Years)</b> <b>MB, BB &amp; SK – RUGBY CLUB (Yrs 7-11)</b>
WED		<b>MC – FITNESS SUITE CLUB</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>BB &amp; SK - Rugby Fixtures (Y7-11)</b> <b>Potential Football Fixtures (All Yrs)</b> <b>JQ &amp; MB - PICKLEBALL CLUB (Yrs 7 &amp; 8)</b>
THURS	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (All years)	<b>SK – INDOOR ACTIVITIES</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>STAFF MEETINGS</b>
FRI		NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs 8 & 10)	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (Team Practice)

## SPORT X TIMETABLE - 2025-2026 - Term 2, Week B

Day	BEFORE SCHOOL	LUNCH TIME - Years 7, 9 & 11	LUNCH TIME - Years 8 & 10	AFTER SCHOOL
MON		<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JQ, JF, PC &amp; JD – FOOTBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs7, 8 & 9) <small>Nb, this will not take place if a fixture has had to be arranged for a specific year group!</small>
TUE	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (All years)	<b>MB – INDOOR ACTIVITIES CLUB</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	<b>JQ – FITNESS SUITE CLUB</b> (Yrs 8 & 10)	<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB (All Years)</b> <b>MB, BB &amp; SK – RUGBY CLUB (Y7-11)</b>
WED		NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>BB &amp; SK - Rugby Fixtures (Yrs7-11)</b> <b>MC – Football Club (Yrs 10 &amp; 11)</b> <b>JQ &amp; MB - PICKLEBALL CLUB (Yrs 7 &amp; 8)</b>
THURS	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (All years)	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>SK – INDOOR ACTIVITIES</b> (Yrs 8 & 10)	<b>STAFF MEETINGS</b>
FRI		<b>SK – INDOOR ACTIVITIES</b> (Yrs 7, 9 & 11)	<b>JQ – BASKETBALL CLUB</b> (Yrs 8 & 10)	<b>SK – BADMINTON CLUB</b> (Team Practice)

## SPORT X TIMETABLE - 2024-2025 - Term 3, Week 1

Day	BEFORE SCHOOL	LUNCH TIME - Years 7, 9 & 11	LUNCH TIME - Years 8-10	AFTER SCHOOL
MON			NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JD &amp; MC - Football Club (9 &amp; 10)</b> <b>MB - Cricket Club (Yrs 7 &amp; 8)</b>
TUE	<b>SK - Badminton Club</b> (All years)	<b>MC - Indoor Activities (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b> <b>SK - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b>	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>MB, BB &amp; SK - Rugby Club (Y7-11)</b>
WED		<b>JQ - GCSE Practical Intervention</b> <b>Table Tennis &amp; Badminton</b>	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>MB, BB &amp; SK - Rugby Fixtures (Y7-11)</b> <b>JF, JD, JQ &amp; MC Football Fixtures</b> <b>JQ - GCSE Handball Club (Yrs 10/11)</b>
THURS	<b>SK - Badminton Club</b> (All years)	<b>SK - Badminton Club (Yrs 7,9 &amp; 11)</b> <b>JF - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b>	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>STAFF MEETINGS</b>
FRI		NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE <b>JQ - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b>	NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>SK - Badminton Team Practice</b>

## SPORT X TIMETABLE - 2024-2025 - Term 3, Week 2

Day	BEFORE SCHOOL	LUNCH TIME - Years 7, 9 & 11	LUNCH TIME - Years 8 & 10	AFTER SCHOOL
MON		NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>JQ - Year 10 GCSE PE</b> <b>Badminton, T.Tennis &amp; Basketball</b>	<b>JD &amp; MC - Football Club (9 &amp; 10)</b> <b>MB - Cricket Club (Yrs 7 &amp; 8)</b>
TUE	<b>SK - Badminton Club</b> (All years)	<b>SK - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7,9 &amp; 11)</b>	<b>SK - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b> <b>MB - Badminton Club (Yrs 8 &amp; 10)</b>	<b>MB, BB &amp; SK - Rugby Club (Y7-11)</b>
WED		NO SPORTS HALL AVAILABLE	<b>MB - Cricket Club (Yrs 8 &amp; 10)</b> <b>JQ - Fitness Suite (Yrs 8 &amp; 10)</b>	<b>MB, BB &amp; SK - Rugby Fixtures (Y7-11)</b> <b>JF, JD, JQ &amp; MC Football Fixtures</b> <b>JQ - GCSE Handball Club (Yrs 10/11)</b>
THURS	<b>SK - Badminton Club</b> (All years)	<b>SK - Badminton Club (Yrs 7,9 &amp; 11)</b> <b>JQ - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b>	<b>MB - Indoor Activities (Yrs 8&amp;10)</b> <b>MC - Fitness Suite (Yrs 8 &amp; 10)</b>	<b>STAFF MEETINGS</b>
FRI		<b>JQ - Fitness Suite (Yrs 7, 9 &amp; 11)</b>		<b>SK - Badminton Team Practice</b>

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION  
13+

WhatsApp is a free messaging app owned by Meta, allowing users to send text and voice messages, share multimedia, make video calls, and chat in groups. With end-to-end encryption, only the sender and receiver can view messages. This may offer privacy, but it also comes with risks that parents and educators need to be aware of.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### GROUP CHAT PRESSURES

Group chats enable multiple users to message in the same space, but this can also make it easier for young people to feel excluded or overwhelmed. Negative comments can escalate quickly, and young people may feel pressure to respond or stay engaged even when the conversation is uncomfortable or upsetting.

### SCAMS TARGETING YOUNG USERS

Scammers are increasingly using WhatsApp to trick users into sharing personal information. Common scams include fraudsters posing as family members in an emergency or tricking users into revealing security codes. These can lead to identity theft or access to private conversations.

### DISAPPEARING AND HIDDEN MESSAGES

WhatsApp offers features like disappearing messages and 'Chat lock', which can give users a false sense of security. While intended to protect privacy, they can be used by young users to hide inappropriate conversations or content, making it harder for adults to spot potential issues.

### EXPOSURE THROUGH CHANNELS

'Channels' are an optional feature that allows users to follow updates from public figures or organisations; however, there is no way to block this feature or filter its content by age. Young users may encounter adult or distressing content, including misinformation and harmful ideologies.

### UNWANTED CONTACT AND LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp users can share their live location, and if not managed carefully, this can allow others – even those in mutual groups – to track someone's whereabouts. Also, without the right privacy settings, young users may be contacted by strangers.

### COMMERCIAL AND AI CONTENT

WhatsApp now includes ads in the 'updates' feed and has introduced an AI assistant – Meta AI – across the app, which cannot be removed. These additions raise concerns about targeting, privacy, AI use, and the type of content children and young people might interact with.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Help young users check who can see their profile photo, status, and location. Activate the 'Silence Unknown Callers' setting and set group chat invitations to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...' for added safety.

### BE OPEN ABOUT HIDDEN CHATS

Discuss why children and young people might use features like disappearing messages or 'Chat lock'. Encourage them to share if something made them uncomfortable, even if the messages are gone. Let them know that privacy should not mean secrecy.

### TEACH HOW TO SPOT SCAMS

Encourage caution around unusual and unexpected messages, especially if they involve money or codes. Help young users understand the signs of scams and what to do if they receive a suspicious message. Enable two-step verification to add an extra layer of protection.

### TALK ABOUT ADVERTISING AND AI

Explain that WhatsApp now includes ads and AI tools. Discuss the difference between genuine and sponsored content, and the potential for AI to share inaccurate or age-inappropriate responses. Encourage young users to think critically before trusting or interacting with these features.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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See full reference list on our website

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