

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

The Spring Term has started in a notably positive and productive manner. Classrooms are purposeful and focused, and it is encouraging to see so many students engaging with the extensive range of opportunities we offer at WHS. The numerous positive interactions we have with students each day continue to bring a sense of light and optimism, even amidst the darker mornings and limited daylight of the term.

In recent weeks, we have received a considerable number of positive emails recognising the dedication and professionalism of our staff. Such messages are greatly appreciated; they really do make a difference to staff, especially at a time when colleagues are working hard to provide a high-quality educational experience both within the classroom and beyond it.

Please take the time to review this bulletin in full. We are facing an ever changing and challenging landscape in the world of education. Despite this, there is a substantial amount taking place across the school and much to celebrate. As ever, these achievements reflect the collective efforts of our entire school community, and I remain grateful for the continued commitment and hard work shown by staff, students and our families.

Best wishes,



Kath Pigdon, Headteacher

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Year 8 Outdoor Learning class enjoyed a visit to Ullswater Outward Bound Centre

UPDATE ON OUR SCHOOL PRIORITIES

● PRIORITY 1: Excellent Outcomes for All

We are working hard to ensure outcomes for all students improve as staff remain focused on ensuring every student achieves the best possible results. Across subjects, teaching is sharply focused on delivering high-quality lessons, targeted support, and effective use of assessment, helping students make gains that keep us on track to ensure excellent outcomes for all.

● PRIORITY 2: Curriculum Excellence

At Key Stage 3, departments are using this year to develop their KS3 curriculum and ensure it systematically revisits key learning, so pupils develop fluency and confidence. Curriculum planning remains rigorous and closely quality-assured, ensuring all subjects deliver coherent, challenging, and well-sequenced learning to the highest standard. This consistency will continue to strengthen pupils' understanding and long-term retention.

● PRIORITY 3: Learning Behaviours

Students are increasingly demonstrating positive learning behaviours in lessons according to our external and internal behaviour data. Clear routines, consistent expectations and strong relationships are supporting pupils to be ready to learn and to engage productively in every learning experience. These improvements are contributing to purposeful classrooms and better progress over time.

● PRIORITY 4: Reading and Literacy

Our work to accelerate reading for those who find it most challenging is well underway, with targeted support and whole-school strategies beginning to have impact. Alongside this, oracy is becoming more deeply embedded across the curriculum, helping to raise literacy outcomes for all students and strengthen their confidence in speaking and communicating effectively. This year we have extended our reading support into KS4 which is having a positive impact. There is a strong culture for reading at WHS and we are proud of what has been achieved so far.



Being Prepared to Learn

Everything we strive for each day is underpinned by *The William Howard Way* – the way in which we expect our students to approach school life. This starts as they walk through the door each morning, wearing their uniform with pride and how they then engage in each part of their day. We expect students to be prepared to learn through bringing the right equipment and a resilient mindset which allows them to rise to the challenges they face. Your support in ensuring the correct uniform and equipment for your child is always appreciated.



Pupil Admission Change

Following our consultation, it has been decided William Howard will change its pupil admission number from 240 to 210 from September 2027. As explained in our consultation this change reflects wider falling school rolls both locally and regionally. A reduced PAN will enable William Howard School to structure its curriculum in a way that ensures balanced class sizes, protect the breadth and quality of subject provision, and support a stable staffing level.

LAB Member Vacancies

Longtown Primary School is currently seeking a new Chair for its Local Advisory Board—an important role in supporting the school's continued development and strategic direction.

In addition, William Howard School is looking to appoint two new members to join its own Local Advisory Board.

These positions offer a valuable opportunity for individuals with a passion for education, community engagement, and school improvement to make a meaningful contribution to our schools. Anyone interested in finding out more or putting themselves forward is warmly encouraged to contact [Anna Carroll, Headteacher Longtown Primary School](#) or [Kath Pigdon, Headteacher William Howard School](#).

Change to the Catering Payment System

Due to a variety of circumstances, onwards from February half term we will no longer be able to continue using the *Vericool* cash machine in school. This means that **all payments for food must be made via ParentPay from this point onwards.**

There will be **no cash facility available in school after the February half term break**, so please ensure that your child's ParentPay account has sufficient funds if they wish to purchase food on site.

We appreciate your support in helping us ensure a smooth transition and continued efficient service for our students. If you have any questions or need assistance accessing ParentPay, please contact the school office on 016977 45700 or **email.**



Maintaining a Mobile Device Free Zone

We would like to thank parents and students for their continued support in helping us maintain a mobile device-free zone in school. This strategy has been implemented with real success and is making a noticeably positive difference to our school community. Students are spending breaktimes talking with one another, playing games, and engaging more actively with their peers, with many telling us they enjoy the opportunity to step away from the pressure of constant digital connection. As a school, we have also seen a significant reduction in social media-related issues, allowing us to focus more fully on teaching, learning, and supporting students' wellbeing.

We ask parents to continue supporting this approach by avoiding contacting students during the school day or expecting students to contact them. **Should you need to reach your child, please use the main school system, and our team will ensure messages are passed on.**

Recently, our Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, wrote to all headteachers urging schools to implement a mobile phone ban. It comes after the government issued "tougher" guidance on mobile phone use in schools, announcing that Ofsted will examine phone policies and how effectively they are applied during inspections from April.

The government will also launch a consultation on children's use of technology, just as an amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill that would force ministers to ban social media for under-16s has been passed in the House of Lords.

We shall update our parents should anything change regarding mobile devices in schools.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students

We kindly ask all members of our school community to be considerate of local residents and traffic when dropping off and picking up students. We are receiving weekly concerns from members of the public about cars blocking pavements and causing safety issues on the main Longtown Road. We fully appreciate that the school pick-up period can be challenging given the nature of our site; however, we ask for everyone's cooperation in helping us keep the area safe, accessible, and respectful for all. Your continued support makes a real difference to our whole community.

Attendance

The national picture on attendance is stark, with a national average of 92%. Pleasingly our attendance is sitting just above this figure, however attendance is not yet where we strive for it to be, with our school target being an average of 96%. To do this, all of our school community – staff, parents, students and external partners – need to work closely together. To that end, should you have any concerns around your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Student Manager so that we can work together to identify barriers and collectively find solutions to improve attendance.

Some simple ways in which you can support us to achieve positive attendance are below:

- ★ Ensure children get regular sleep of between 8-10 hours which will help establish positive morning routines.
- ★ Contact school early with any issues or barriers to attendance so we can work together to find solutions.
- ★ Encourage children to come to school when experiencing minor illness (e.g. sore throat, headaches).
- ★ Avoid booking term-time absences (a reminder that these should be requested via the form accessible through the attendance section on our website)

Finally, we would like to give a mention to the 646 students who are meeting our school target of 96% attendance. As always, we understand that, at times, illness and unavoidable circumstances may mean that attendance is impacted, however we look forward to even more of our pupils achieving this target within the remaining half-terms of this academic year.

Outward Bound Partnership

We are excited to see our partnership with Outward Bound continue to grow from strength to strength. This year alone, we are offering an exceptional range of residential experiences: Year 7 and 8 will take part in courses at Howtown in the Lake District, Year 8 and 9 will visit Loch Eil in the Scottish Highlands, Year 10–12 will challenge themselves at Ogwen Cottage in North Wales, and a select group of students will complete a short course at Ullswater. Each programme is designed around our core values and plays a powerful role in developing character.

Last week, around 90 students took part in an Outward Bound adventure-learning day, using virtual-reality headsets to explore the centres before engaging in team-building activities that deepened their understanding of collaboration and their impact on others. We were fortunate to secure funding from the Ernest Cook Trust, who are also supporting an outdoor learning week later this year.



In addition, we were also fortunate to secure six *Golden Tickets*, enabling our students to access summer Outward Bound courses at a fraction of the usual cost. As a result, students will be taking part in courses across the country this summer, and we look forward to hearing all about their adventures. As both a school and a trust, we remain committed to working closely with Outward Bound, as their high-quality adventure learning experiences truly transform students' character, confidence and aspirations.



Find *your* element
at  WILLIAM
HOWARD
SCHOOL

At William Howard School, we are passionate about helping every young person *find their element*—that unique activity, talent or interest that brings them joy, purpose and a sense of belonging.

We are proud to have rising stars across so many fields: from badminton, swimming, motorcycle racing, football, rugby and martial arts to our performers who shine in dance, drama and music. We also celebrate the achievements of our chess players, mathematicians, Minecraft team, and our dedicated farming community who demonstrate their passion every single day.



With such a breadth of opportunity available, so many of our students flourish by following their interests and discovering what really inspires them. We ask all parents to encourage their children to take part in the myriad of activities on offer—there really is something for everyone.

Finding your element at WHS strengthens that sense of connection, belonging and character that we wholeheartedly believe is essential to a young person's development. As Year 7 and 8 students prepare to choose their Character Curriculum options, we hope that for many, this will be the spark that ignites a lifelong passion.

School Production

We are excited to be approaching this year's *High School Musical* production, which once again showcases the incredible talent, dedication and creativity within our school community.

Our exceptionally skilled staff have invested countless hours of their own time to ensure the performance reaches the outstanding, near-West End standard our audiences have come to expect.

Our students have also risen to the challenge with an exceptional work ethic—rehearsing tirelessly, supporting one another, and demonstrating real star quality throughout the process. We look forward to what promises to be another outstanding performance.

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!

£8 Adults / £6 Concessions

Tickets can be reserved via:

drama.contact@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk



WILLIAM HOWARD SCHOOL
proudly presents
Disney
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL
11-13 FEBRUARY 2026
WHS Performance Hall
Doors open 6.45pm - Curtain-up 7pm

©Disney

The poster features a red curtain background. At the top left is the William Howard School logo, which includes a stylized head with gears. Below it, the text 'WILLIAM HOWARD SCHOOL' is written in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by 'proudly presents' in a cursive script. The Disney logo is prominently displayed in its signature yellow font. The title 'HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL' is written in large, yellow, marquee-style letters with glowing lights. Below the title, the dates '11-13 FEBRUARY 2026' are enclosed in a yellow marquee border. At the bottom, the venue 'WHS Performance Hall' and showtimes 'Doors open 6.45pm - Curtain-up 7pm' are listed. A small '©Disney' watermark is visible on the right side.



The Friends of William Howard School



Thank you to the Friends of William Howard School (FoWHS) for their fundraising endeavours - through the Colour Run event and their delicious monthly bake sales. Following a request from the House Council, funds have recently been used to install new picnic tables for students to enjoy during break times.

The FoWHS have been selected for the Co-op Local Community Fund, so Co-op Members can choose FoWHS, and help to raise further funds.

Please contact [Mrs Hill](#) for more information about the FoWHS, and to find out how you can be part of the team.

A Timeless Representation

A new piece of artwork is in the process of being installed in the school foyer. The image of William Howard School and landmarks within Brampton was designed by local artist Josephine Scales with contributions from former WHS student Ruby Penkeyman. The artwork will be officially unveiled on Friday 13th February by Julie Minns MP, ready to welcome students back into school after the half term holidays.



Tour de France

We are incredibly excited that the Tour de France will be passing William Howard School in 2027, bringing a memorable historic sporting moment right to our doorstep. This is a brilliant opportunity for our students and wider community to experience a world-class event up close, and we will be commemorating the occasion with a range of special activities and celebrations throughout the year. Planning is already underway, and we look forward to sharing further updates as we build towards what promises to be an unforgettable moment in the life of our school.



Trips and Visits Commitment

We are very proud of the wide range of trips and visit opportunities we offer at William Howard School—something that makes us truly unique and provides unforgettable experiences that enrich our students' learning.



These opportunities rely entirely on staff who are willing to go the extra mile, giving up significant time alongside their teaching commitments to plan, organise, and run high-quality visits. However, we are increasingly finding that students sign up for trips and later withdraw. Unfortunately, the school cannot absorb the financial burden of unfilled and unpaid trip places, and when a place cannot be filled, the cost must still be met by the original family. This not only places the school in a vulnerable financial position but also adds pressure and additional workload to the member of staff organising the visit. We therefore ask that students and families consider carefully what is expected before committing to a trip, ensuring that these valuable opportunities remain sustainable for everyone.

Year 11 Support

As we move through this key point in the year, I want to highlight and celebrate the huge amount of support currently in place for our Year 11 students. Staff across school are working relentlessly to ensure every pupil feels confident, prepared, and well-guided as we build towards the summer exams.

Targeted Intervention: Tutoring and Small Group Support

Across subjects, teachers are providing focused support through small group tutoring for identified pupils. These sessions tackle misconceptions, revisit key content, and sharpen exam technique so students know exactly how to improve.

Weekly Masterclasses Open to All

We are also running subject based masterclass sessions that any Year 11 student can attend. These are designed to strengthen understanding of key topics, practise exam-style questions, and build confidence.



Revision Planners and Prescribed Homework

In lessons, students are being supported to plan and structure independent learning through revision planners. Subject teachers are setting prescribed homework and revision tasks, so pupils know what to revise, when to do it, and where to find the right resources.

Form Time and Break-Time Support

Students are receiving additional support through our form-time programme, along with break-time subject support.

Exam Wrappers, PLCs and Improving Through Reflection

Students are being guided through exam wrappers and post-assessment reflection to understand what went well, what needs work, and—most importantly—what to do next. Departments are also producing Personalised Learning Checklists (PLCs) so pupils can identify strengths and gaps and revise with real purpose.

Destination Support Beyond Year 11

We are continuing to support pupils with their next steps through destination guidance, ensuring students and families feel informed and supported whether they are considering sixth form, college, or apprenticeships.

Thank You!

Thank you to our staff for the care, energy and commitment behind this support, and to families for the encouragement at home. When school and home work together, pupils do better—and Year 11 are being backed every step of the way.

Year 11 Sixth Form Applications

The Sixth Form application process for Year 11 students is well underway, with 1-1 guidance appointments running throughout this half-term to support students as they consider their post-16 pathways and subject choices.

Information on option columns and provisional option choices will be shared shortly after February half-term, helping students make informed decisions about their study programmes. Further guidance will take place during the Step Up to Sixth Form Induction Days from 30th June to 2nd July, supporting a confident and successful transition into Sixth Form.

Careers (CEIAG)

A careers morning for Year 9 took place on Monday 2nd February to support students as they choose their GCSE options and future career pathways. Careers Lead, Mrs Hill, will be available at the Year 9 Progress and Options Evening on Wednesday 25th February to support with any careers related questions.



Parents who can support future careers events by talking about their industry, offering mentoring, work experience opportunities or be a mock interviewer, please contact [Mrs Hill](#).

Dream Placements Success

We are incredibly proud of our Sixth Form students who have secured highly sought-after 'Dream Placements' following a rigorous and competitive selection process involving employers from across the region. With over 300 applications received, only 133 students progressed to the final interview stage - including 17 students from our school. Reaching this stage alone was a significant achievement.

The Dream Placement programme, organised by the **Centre for Leadership Performance**, is a collaboration between educators, businesses, and young people, providing leadership development opportunities for 16-18-year-olds. The week-long placements take place during February half term and help students make informed decisions about their future pathways.

Students completed detailed application forms reviewed by industry judges before attending a formal selection event at **Energus, Lillyhall**. This event mirrored a real recruitment day, with interviews led by local employers, giving students invaluable experience of professional selection processes. Students demonstrated not only their academic strengths but also their confidence, communication skills, and motivation for their chosen career paths.

Throughout the process, students also took part in online employability sessions, refining their CVs, developing interview techniques, and gaining a deeper understanding of the workplace. All applicants received feedback to support their ongoing development.



Successful students:

- ✦ Ivan Sparke - Carlisle College (IT)
- ✦ Arven Hill - Art Gene
- ✦ Lydia Sabuda - Art Gene
- ✦ James McLean - Futureproof Cumbria
- ✦ Catriona Smith - Bendalls Engineering
- ✦ Charlie Roberts - Cumbria Archives
- ✦ Elora Oates - Together We
- ✦ Shaun Petry - Carlisle College (Finance)
- ✦ Elizabeth Burns - Carlisle College (Leadership)

Following the CFLP Leading Change Celebration, Zac Kirby was also offered a half-term placement with Re-build and an additional day with Bendalls Engineering. This is a wonderful example of employers recognising student potential and creating further opportunities.

Year 12 Next Steps

Year 12 students will be exploring their future pathways over the coming half-term through a series of planned events designed to guide them through the process.

On Tuesday 24th March, students will visit Lancaster University to attend the **UK University and Apprenticeship Search Fair**, where they can speak directly with universities, training providers, and employers to broaden their understanding of post-18 opportunities.

After February half term, students and parents will be invited to attend a 1-1 careers meeting with Mr Carruthers. These meetings will support students in discussing their interests, strengths, and aspirations as they plan their next steps. This support is reinforced through the Personal Development Programme and Tutor Time, helping students build knowledge of progression routes, application processes, and employability skills.

Year 13 Destinations

All Year 13 UCAS applications were submitted by the start of January, and it has been fantastic to see many already receiving offers, with some hearing back from all five university choices. Students are now being supported through the next stage of the process as they decide on their firm and insurance options.

Those following the apprenticeship pathway recently took part in a mock interview afternoon, receiving excellent feedback from employers. Over the coming months, apprenticeship and work-based pathway students will continue to receive tailored support from Mr Carruthers and Mrs Hill as they secure their next steps.

We are very proud of the maturity, ambition, and commitment shown by our Sixth Form students as they prepare for life beyond school and we will continue to support them along every stage.

We are also excited to be working with ITV Border this term as they follow five of our A-level students on their journey from mock exams to their results day. The first feature will air in mid to late February.

KS3 Get Ahead Tasks and Revision

Our students continue to engage positively with our Get Ahead Tasks, with over 2,500 tasks already completed since September. The majority of students have embraced the opportunity to engage in GATs and we would ask parents to encourage those who may be more reluctant to take part - there really is something for everyone! Indeed, the quality of work produced has been impressive, with many students telling us how much they enjoyed completing their GATs.

Alongside this, we have completed several rounds of prescribed revision, with a clear focus on teaching students how to revise before asking them to practise these techniques at home. This approach is already making a difference, with assessment outcomes showing encouraging improvements. Our aim is not only to support students in the short term, but also to help them develop revision habits that will serve them well throughout their education. The very high completion rate for these revision tasks is strong evidence that students appreciate the importance of mastering these skills. Students have explored a range of strategies, including flashcards, blurting, question practice and cover and check. Feedback from students is very positive and they are gaining a toolkit of techniques and discovering what works best for them.

As always, parental support makes a meaningful difference. We encourage parents and carers to continue supporting their children in completing prescribed revision and Get Ahead Tasks.

Upcoming Events

Wed 11, Thu 12 & Fri 13 February	School Production <i>High School Musical</i>
Wed 11 February	Table Cricket County Competition
Thu 12 - Mon 16 February	History trip to Berlin
Thu 12 February	Brampton litter pick
Fri 12 February	A Level Philosophy Interschool conference at Carlisle Cathedral
Sat 14 – Sat 21 February	Ski Trip, Austria

Mon 16 – Fri 20 February	HALF TERM HOLIDAYS
Mon 23 February – Friday 6 March	Year 11 Mock Exams
Mon 23 February	Y10 GCSE Music Rocket Project performance at The Fraternity
Wed 25 February	Y9 Progress Evening
Thu 26 February	Y9 Vaccinations
Thu 26 February	Y10 Girls PE trip to Talkin Tarn
Mon 2 – Fri 6 March	Book Fair
Mon 2 March	Music trip to Italy parents' meeting
Thurs 5 March	World Book Day – Get Cosy and Read Day
Mon 9 – Fri 13 March	Music Festival Week
Mon 9 March	Psychology Grade Booster Workshop, Gateshead
Mon 9, Tue 10 & Wed 11 March	Y10 Geography Fieldtrips to Silloth
Wed 11 March	Y7 Progress Evening
Mon 16 March	Y7 & 8 Aspirations Morning
Tues 17 & Wed 18 March	DADA Showcase Performance
Fri 20 March	Comic Relief
Tue 24 March	Y12 Lancaster University Visit
Thu 26 March - Wed 1 April	Performing Arts trip to Italy
Sun 29 March – Fri 3 April	Football and Netball Holland Tour
Fri 27 March	End of Spring Term
Mon 13 April - Fri 17 April	Y7 & 8 Outward Bound Trip, Ullswater
Mon 6-9 April	Y13 DoE Practice Expedition
Mon 6-8 April	Y11 DoE Practice Expedition
Mon 13 April	INSET Day
Tues 14 April	Summer Term begins