The Emmbrook School

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Website: www.emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Nick McSweeney

Friday 23rd October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Weekly Update

We have reached the end of the first half-term of 2026/27. This half-term has taken us into an 8th week and so I am confident that everyone will benefit from a break. I want to acknowledge the amazing start we've seen from the new Year 7 students; they have settled brilliantly and can be very proud of their progress so far.

At the other end of the school, it was a real pleasure to attend the Senior Chamber Concert on Wednesday. The standard was very high and the progression the students have made musically over the years was evident. It was a real treat and all involved should be very proud. A special thanks to Mrs Reddaway, Mrs Foyster, Mr Gould and all other colleagues who attended for making the evening possible.

Strong Attendance

As we reach the end of the half-term, I would like to thank students, parents and staff for the collective effort that has contributed to improved attendance across the school. Every day in school matters, and it has been encouraging to see more students attending regularly, arriving on time and making the most of the opportunities available to them.

Whilst we are pleased with the progress made, attendance remains an area where even small improvements can have a significant impact. A student who misses just one day every fortnight loses around 10% of their learning time across the year, and those missed lessons are often difficult to fully replace. As we return after the break, I would encourage all families to make attendance a priority wherever possible, including avoiding unnecessary absences and ensuring students arrive ready to learn each morning.

Good attendance is one of the most important foundations for success at school. We look forward to building on the positive momentum from this half-term and working together to help every student achieve the very best attendance they can.

Uniform Expectations

I would like to thank the vast majority of students who continue to wear their uniform with pride each day. Their smart appearance contributes positively to the calm, purposeful atmosphere we value so highly at The Emmbrook School.

The start of a new half-term provides a useful opportunity to reset our expectations and I would be grateful for parents' support in ensuring that students return in full compliance with

our uniform policy. Whilst occasional reminders are often sufficient, where students repeatedly arrive in incorrect uniform, we will continue to take appropriate action to ensure our standards are maintained.

Uniform expectations are not about unnecessary rules; they help create an inclusive environment where students can focus on their learning, feel part of the school community and represent themselves positively. Thank you for your support in helping us maintain these important standards.

Mobile Phones

One of the most noticeable positives of recent years has been the removal of mobile phone use during the school day. Students are spending more time talking face-to-face, engaging with their peers and focusing on their learning, helping to create a calmer and more positive school environment. This aligns with national expectations, with schools being directed to ensure that students do not have access to a mobile phone during the school day.

For this reason, students are not permitted to use mobile phones to make purchases in the school canteen. Whilst we appreciate that digital payment methods are increasingly common outside school, allowing phones to be used for payments would inevitably create situations where phones are visible and in use, making expectations more difficult to apply consistently and fairly.

Our cashless catering system already provides a quick, secure and convenient way for students to purchase food without needing to carry cash or access a personal device. By continuing to use this system, we can maintain a clear and consistent approach to mobile phone use whilst ensuring students can access catering services efficiently throughout the day. Students are also permitted to make payments using a physical bank card.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Survey Feedback

Mr Bhambra would like to thank parents and carers for your feedback with the surveys he has sent out. We have received over 250 responses to date. Alongisde this we have surveyed the students separately with a different set of questions.

We will share some general findings and our action thereof after half-term, once more results are in. However, we are pleased to share at this stage that 95% of parents and carers would recommend the school (which is well ahead of the national average for secondary schools). We care about the 5%, hence us reaching out to use the survey to further improve.

Sixth Form Applications Open

A reminder that Sixth Form applications remain open. The students will have been emailed the link to apply. If your child encounters any problems, please reach out to Mr Constable and we will be able to assist (dconstable@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk).

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Lost Property
Please be aware that unnamed lost property from this half term will be emptied on Tuesday 10th November. We currently have several winter coats, a few sets of keys and over 30 water bottles so please encourage your child to go to Student Reception if they have lost anything.

Studybugs – Reporting Student Absence
We recommend using Studybugs is the efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence from school. You can report your child as absent due to illness and inform us of pre-arranged appointments. Please download the Studybugs app from the App Store or Google Play or by scanning the QR code. Ensure that you sign up with the email address you have previously shared with us.

We hope that the students enjoy their half-term break. All students return at 8.25am on Monday 2nd November.

Best wishes,

Nick McSweeney
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