

Waddesdon C of E School | Parent Newsletter – November, 2026

Two-way communication



Welcome to November's newsletter! As a school which aims to serve its community the best we can, maintaining open communication matters to us. In part, that is why I started this monthly newsletter – to reach out to you and to respond to your questions or suggestions.

When you have a moment, please click on the link here which will take you to our annual parent/carer connectedness survey. You will be able to complete the form in English, Ukrainian or Urdu (اردو). If you, or someone you know, needs to see the link in another language, please just let me know.

This month's newsletter is a mixture of information and reminders, as well as some articles about recent student experiences which I hope you find interesting.

Mr Abbott

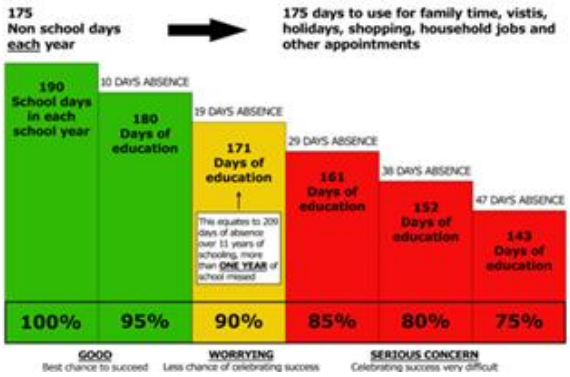
Contents

p. 2 Attendance matters; S.T.O.P. Bullying; AI and 'life in its fullness'
p. 3 Standing with Giants; Year 11 Mock Revision advice
p. 4 Sixth Form news and information
p. 5 Sixth Form news and information (cont.)
p. 6 Sixth Form news and information (cont.); Understanding diabetes
p. 7 Understanding diabetes (cont.)
p. 8 Spiritual Retreat
p. 9 Charitable donations
p. 10 Charitable donations (cont.); Christmas raffle
p. 11 Christmas raffle (cont.)
p. 11 Travel information
p. 12 Key dates for the future; Complaints

Attendance Matters

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring the highest attendance at school possible.

Year 7 – 97.45%
Year 8 – 96.17%
Year 9 – 94.86%
Year 10 – 94.07%
Year 11 – 93.58%
Year 12 – 95.17%
Year 13 – 92.97%



Our attendance officer, Mrs Ackerlay, is on hand to help you if you would like support so that we can overcome whatever issues you might be facing.

S.T.O.P. Bullying



Dignity, kindness and respect underpin our school's values. We are about creating a safe and happy environment, part of which means that all bullying is unacceptable, and should not be tolerated.

Our bullying policy uses the acronym S.T.O.P. (SEVERAL TIMES ON PURPOSE). Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can be: emotional, physical, verbal, written, cyber, sexual, prejudice-based and discriminatory.
For more information please look at our policy.



Artificial Intelligence and 'Life in all its Fullness'.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers significant potential for improving educational experiences and outcomes. Yet, preparing our students for the modern world comes with risks and challenges.

For that reason, our AI Policy establishes guidelines for the ethical, secure and responsible use of AI technologies across our whole school community. We have designed this policy alongside other schools, leaders, teachers, and academics.

Please note that JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) has very strict rules for the use, or suspected use of AI in **GCSE or A Level Coursework**. The full guidance is here, but your son or daughter should check with their subject teacher, the exams team or Mr Cahill, if they, or you, have any specific questions. The penalties for using AI are severe.

Standing (and Reciting Poems) with Giants



On Thursday 22 October we trekked up to Waddesdon Manor, to see the 'Standing with Giants' installation, to commemorate the fallen heroes of the D-Day landing in 1944.

Our chosen war poems from the 'Power and Conflict' GCSE Anthology, were recorded beside the giants, with Waddesdon Manor in the background. We nervously approached the cameras, but as soon as the words left our mouth, fear left with it. As we saw the standing giants, the connection instantly formed, as we learned to respect the past and look to the future.

Shortly after, we embarked on a tour of the Manor to soak in the gorgeous architecture and surroundings. We saw the 'House Interrupted' exhibition, which offered a glimpse into the Manor during the Second World War. The soundtrack to this exhibition was composed by a student at Waddesdon School.

The family took in over 100 children, all under 5 years old. There were photos of the adorable children, posing casually near the treasures. We also enjoyed seeing the astounding interiors and art in the Manor and had our questions answered by an expert.

Overall, we loved the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom.

Mock Revision Support

The Year 11 Mock Exams take place from Monday **30th November** to Wednesday **16th December**. To support your son/daughter with their revision and preparation, please remember the following pieces of advice:

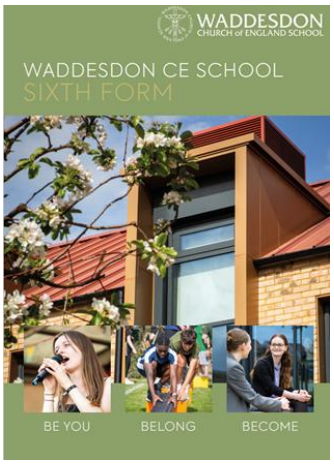
- Give them a calm, quiet space to work at home. It is better that this not their bedroom so that they can separate a space for them to work and relax.
- Make sure that they have the correct exam equipment and use it for their revision. **Black, ballpoint pens** are essential. Remember that very cheap pens can be scratchy and hard to write with, so are best avoided.
- Nutrition and sleep make a big difference - healthy foods and consistent sleep patterns allow the brain to process the learning and revision more effectively. Energy drinks definitely do not!
- As a rule of thumb, **1-2hrs** on a school day and **3-5hrs** on a weekend is a good amount of revision. But this will depend on your child, so adapt to their needs, stresses and current work ethic.
- Use the report and exam timetable to balance the revision needs. Focusing on the 'red' subjects is always a good start.
- A copy of the Mock Timetable and the Mock Revision Checklist is available on Classcharts.

Please remember that is normal and natural for students to experience an increased sense of stress and anxiety in the run up to the mock exams. The best approach is to acknowledge this and to support them with balancing their revision work with time and space to relax, socialise and enjoy hobbies.



Sixth Form News

For our Year 11 families: An Invitation to Sixth Form Open Evening



We look forward to welcoming Year 11 students to our Sixth Form Open Opening on **Thursday 26th November.** You can attend one of two presentations to hear from our student leaders, the Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form about the exciting opportunities on offer and how to apply. You can also take part in the subject fair to talk to current students and teachers for an insight into our curriculum. You do not need to book.

Either: arrive for 5.30pm for the first presentation in the school hall, with an opportunity to then explore the subject fair until 7pm.
Or: attend the subject fair first from 6pm and then attend the second presentation in the school hall at 7pm.

Please park in Waddesdon Manor Overspill Car Park (accessible through the Manor main gates on Silk Street) and then take the short walk to school along the Green Way. Students will point you in the right direction. Please allow an additional 10 minutes for your journey time. What3Words: helped.ideal.town.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Year 12 Extension Studies: enriching the curriculum for our young adults

As part of our commitment to providing a well-rounded education, our Year 12 students are engaged in an exciting Extension Studies Programme. This initiative enriches their academic curriculum by offering learning opportunities which go beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Through a variety of thought-provoking sessions, students hear from external speakers on a range of important and sensitive topics, including personal experiences with the justice system, navigating consent, living with HIV, and more.

So far this term, students have heard talks from:

Shaun Attwood - from millionaire to drug dealer to life in one of the most notorious US prisons and what he learned.

Emma Cole - the realities of living with HIV, including relationship and sex education advice.

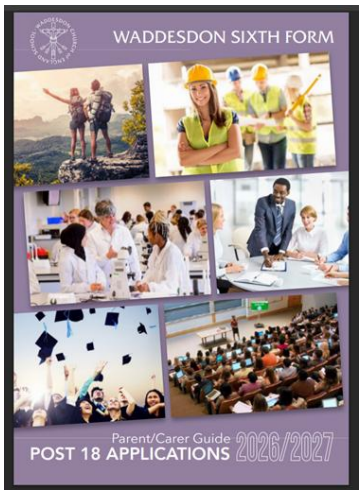
Amy Winehouse Foundation - resilience, with healthy and unhealthy coping strategies when life presents challenges.

Next term, we are looking forward to interactive workshops from Talk Consent, N Truth on pornography addiction, and the House of Lords, as well as a student-led mock General Election.

These talks are designed to encourage critical thinking, foster empathy, and broaden students' understanding of complex social issues as they prepare for life beyond Sixth Form. We've been very impressed by students' engagement and their intelligent, respectful questions so far.

Thank you to parents/carers who have felt able to make voluntary contributions to help us provide a more extensive range of speakers. There is still an opportunity to do this via ParentPay.

For families seeking further information or support on these topics, please refer to The Mix website below, including free online counselling: https://www.themix.org.uk/



Year 13 Application Support: supporting students with their ambitious aspirations

We're delighted with how Year 13 are stepping up to the challenge of preparing for their applications for their post 18 pathways.

To build on work in Year 12, there have been a number of presentations in assemblies this year to support students with their university (UCAS), apprenticeship, employment and/or gap year applications as well as plenty of one-to-one support with drafting Personal Statements. There is a hub of resources on ClassCharts for further help and Unifrog remains a brilliant resource which parents/carers can also access.

For more information, please click on this link for the booklet which was sent home at the Life after Waddesdon evening, including how to support your young person with their Personal Statement:

https://www.waddesdonschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Waddesdon-Parent-Carer-Guide-to-Post-18-Applications-2026-2027.pdf

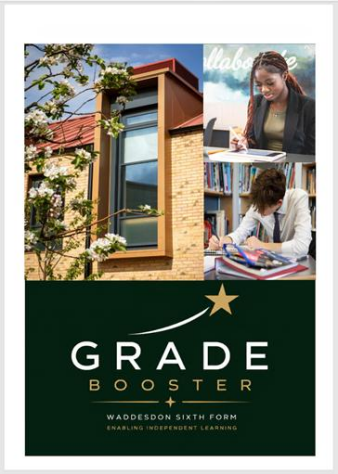
Important deadlines:

University applications: we recommend sending these off as soon as possible now, especially for universities which then require portfolios, interviews or auditions, so these are set up well before Christmas and January mocks. Students know that teachers will continue to give them feedback on their Personal Statements until early December. **All UCAS applications must be sent off by 14th December.**

Student Finance applications are submitted from March to May, and we'll send details home once the portal opens in the Spring.

Apprenticeship, gap year and employment applications are submitted by the company/organisation deadlines. The Personal Statement can be easily turned into a cover letter/email or answers in an application.

There is plenty of support available in school from the Sixth Form Team and Mrs Bridges is available for careers advice in her office in the Sixth Form Building.



Grade Booster: supporting students prepare for exams in Sixth Form and beyond

As part of Year 12 Induction, we have delivered assemblies and form times on what makes strong independent learning and key organisation skills, with more to come on revision next term. When we launch Year 13 Mocks in November, we'll remind students of the study and revision skills which will enable them to achieve their best.

Our 'Grade Booster' guide will be available on ClassCharts for students to access to remind them of key principles and skills. It is based on our experience supporting top achieving students, the latest educational research, and expert bestselling books.

Sixth Form Drivers: Car Parking

Once students pass their driving test and if they are then driving to school, they should park in Waddesdon Manor Overspill Car Park. School is then a short walk along the Green Way. They should see Mrs Long for the weblink to complete an e-agreement with you at home, and we provide the Manor with their number plate, so they can access the car park via the barrier. Several families have reported that this secure parking during the day **reduces car insurance costs.** The Manor also has CCTV, so students know their cars are safe. We do not recommend students park in the village.



November is Diabetes Awareness Month

Some members of our school community have kindly agreed to share their personal experiences of diabetes:

"I was diagnosed in August 2017 with Type one diabetes and for nine years have been finding my way through this overwhelming condition. As a condition it is lonely and fraught with complications for those who care and those who do not. Dealing with diabetes in school is a daily Sisyphean challenge that teaches invaluable resilience for each person. From discreetly looking at your phone under a table to check your blood sugar in the hopes a teacher won't spot you, to students looking at your insulin pen and thinking it is an epipen, then proceeding to ask you everything about your allergic reaction that you are clearly not having. It is a condition that breeds bravery and resilience like a rabbit farm and harks after independence as the way to manage it.

Every diabetic must face the reality that it is not going away, after all the injections, blood tests, blood glucose tests, faulty machinery, breaking test strips, congealing blood, and the constant worry that someone will bump into you when doing an injection. Diabetes does not take kindly to a school environment as with any environment. It is the whole nine yards and takes true courage and mental fortitude to get through it, but even when you think you are done, in true horror movie fashion, something always comes back."

Tom, Year 13

"I was diagnosed when I was 15 months old, so I haven't known any different. Here at Waddesdon I have a lot more freedom. When I was at primary school it felt like someone was constantly following me around checking my bloods. It is better for me now - in the higher years of primary I was taking on more responsibility for my own care, so know I do the same without being checked up on all the time!

Away from school I do have to go for regular tests - blood tests, eye checks where they put drops in my eyes which make my pupils go bigger so they are easier to scan. For a couple of hours it is hard being outside because of the brightness. Annoyingly, it always seems to be around my birthday. This year it was meant to be on my birthday, but I made them change it - I didn't want to be blind on my birthday!

At some stages I run low on insulin supplies and people get stressed about getting replacements, but I try not to panic, because it always works out."

Harry, Year 11

"I was 8 when I got diagnosed. I was tested because I had been acting differently, and had been feeling generally unwell, and was more tired often. It was good to get a reason for why I had been like this. I have a device which sets of an alarm when my blood sugar levels get too high or too low. At primary school people kept thinking the fire alarm was going off when I first started using it! Luckily my friends were more on top of it then me when I told them, they were organised than me. They still are.

I like it at secondary school because I feel I have more freedom. At primary school someone was always checking me doing my testing and inputting information into my device. I am now trusted to do it by myself, but know there are people nearby to help if there is an issue."

Anonymous

"My daughter got diagnosed at the age of 8. We noticed she was getting up in the night for the toilet and started to lose a lot of weight. But it wasn't until we went away to Cornwall on a family holiday when we really noticed something wasn't right. She couldn't cope on the journey without stopping for toilet breaks and needed to drink a lot! But then she had no energy to play at a park, which was even more unusual. We took her to the doctors and they tested her urine where they immediately sent her to be admitted to hospital. They carried out more tests and they were able to confirm she had Type 1 Diabetes.

It was a complete life style change for her and an extra worry for me as a parent. Routines had to change, we had to be organised; it was a daily battle at first. We had to learn a lot and educate ourselves about diabetes, as there can be many misconceptions over the condition.

But as she has grown up and technology has got even better along the years, it has become easier. Even though I worry (and that will never stop whatever her age), I am very proud of how she has dealt with her diabetes. Unfortunately, it's not something she can ever turn off but something that she has had learn to live with. It is part of her, she shows courage every day and she will not let it define her or control her life."

Julie, parent

https://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-awareness-month.html



Spiritual Retreat – A Time to Pause, Reflect and Connect

This year, we were delighted to see our Spiritual Retreat grow from two days to three, enabling even more of our students to take part in what has become an incredibly meaningful experience within our school community.

Working in partnership with BeSpace, the retreat offered students something that can be increasingly difficult to find in the fast-paced world in which we live: time to simply stop, breathe and reflect.

Across the three days, students stepped away from the usual routines and pressures of school life and were given the space to think deeply about themselves, their relationships, the world around them and their hopes for the future. Through a range of thoughtful and carefully facilitated activities, they explored their past, considered where they are in the present, and reflected upon the people they hope to become.

As Head of Religious Studies, one of the greatest privileges for me was simply listening to our students. Their honesty, maturity and willingness to engage in meaningful conversations were incredibly moving. We heard students speak openly about the busyness of modern life, the pressures young people can experience and how rarely we give ourselves permission to slow down. Many commented on how much they valued having time away from distractions to breathe, think and appreciate the present moment through a range of organised activities.



One student beautifully captured the spirit of the retreat by sharing the words:

"The past is history, the future is a mystery and today is a gift, which is why it is called the present."

That sentiment seemed to carry through all three days. There was a genuine sense that students were not simply completing activities, but were allowing themselves to engage with some of life's bigger questions: *What matters to me? What am I grateful for? What can I learn from my past? Who do I want to become? How can I better understand and support the people around me?*

Perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of the retreat was seeing students connect with one another in ways that the ordinary school day does not always allow. Students listened to each other, shared experiences and recognised that many of the thoughts, worries and emotions they experience are also felt by those around them. As one student reflected during our retreat work, having the opportunity to speak more meaningfully helped them to understand other students more deeply and recognise that others may be going through similar experiences too. It is moments such as these that remind us of the importance of creating spaces in school for reflection, empathy and genuine human connection.

The retreat would not have been possible without the wonderful support of BeSpace, particularly Vicky and Catherine, whose care and commitment helped to create such a calm, welcoming and purposeful environment. We were also extremely grateful to Reverend Caroline and Pastor Kane, who generously gave their time to support our students during the retreat, and to Mrs Chapman, Mrs Richards and Mrs Fowler, whose encouragement and support throughout the experience were invaluable.

For me personally, these three days reinforced why opportunities for spiritual development matter so much within education. Academic success is enormously important, but education is also about helping young people develop compassion, self-awareness, resilience, gratitude and a deeper understanding of themselves

and others. Giving students permission to pause and reflect can sometimes lead to the conversations and moments that stay with them long after their school days have ended.

I came away from the retreat incredibly proud of our students. Their openness, thoughtfulness and willingness to participate wholeheartedly made the experience special for everyone involved.

In a world that so often encourages young people to rush towards whatever comes next, perhaps one of the most valuable things we can occasionally give them is the opportunity to pause, breathe, connect and appreciate the present.

Mrs M Khan
Head of Religious Studies



Waddesdon Charity Week: Collecting until 11th December

Students and staff will be collecting for a range of charities and raising awareness of the importance of charities within our community. The charity project will be launched at school throughout the week.

Although we will be looking at the role of charities in society, we would like to support a small number of them. We understand that a financial commitment to a charity is sometimes difficult, so we would like to collect items instead.

This year we would like to collect items for:

- **Link to Hope** - Family & Elderly Shoe Box Appeal
- **Bernie Bus 1000 can appeal** - local food bank scheme
- **Pet food bank/local animal shelter** - food collection
- **The Hygiene Bank -** (personal hygiene collection)
- **Bucks Inspires** - Xmas Toy Appeal

If you would like to contribute to any of these charity collections, please see the lists of items below. We will be taking donations in the library each day and will continue to collect items up until Friday 4th December 2026. Donations will be delivered by the school to the various charities in time for the festive season.

Hope Shoe Box Appeal
https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal-2026/
Toys/small games
School supplies/stationery Hygiene items
Hats, gloves, scarves
Sweets or chocolates (Best before June 2027) Select items from family or elderly list
Shoe boxes/wrapping paper/transportation fees



Bernie Bus 10,000 can appeal (collection for local food banks)
https://www.facebook.com/BernwodeBus/?locale=en_GB

Packets of cereal
Long life fruit juice
Sponge puddings
Tinned vegetables
Tinned fruit/meat
Biscuits/chocolate
Pasta sauces/instant mash
Dried milk
Toiletries/baby wipes
Bags for life







RSPCA / Local pet food bank
https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/costofliving/foodbank
Dog food/biscuits/treats
Cat food/biscuits/treats
Small animal food/treats
Pet toys



The Hygiene Bank
https://www.thehygienebank.com
New, unused, in-date personal care and household cleaning essentials including:
Deodorant
Shower gel/Shampoo
Make-up
Sanitary items
Nappies
Toilet roll
Laundry detergent/Surface cleaner





Bucks Inspires Xmas Toy Appeal
https://www.inspirebucks.charity/our-projects1/christmas-appeal
Children's toys (all ages) - new only

WSA CHRISTMAS RAFFLE



The WSA will be holding their annual Christmas raffle again this year. For the raffle to be a success and to enable the WSA to raise vital funds for the school, we are asking for donations.

Items required include:

- **Food items/festive drinks for Christmas hampers**
- **New toys**

- **Gifts**
- **Leisure tickets**
- **Toiletries**
- **Chocolates/sweets**
- **Tombola items**

Items should be dropped off in the school library marked 'WSA Raffle' any time until Friday, 27 November 2026

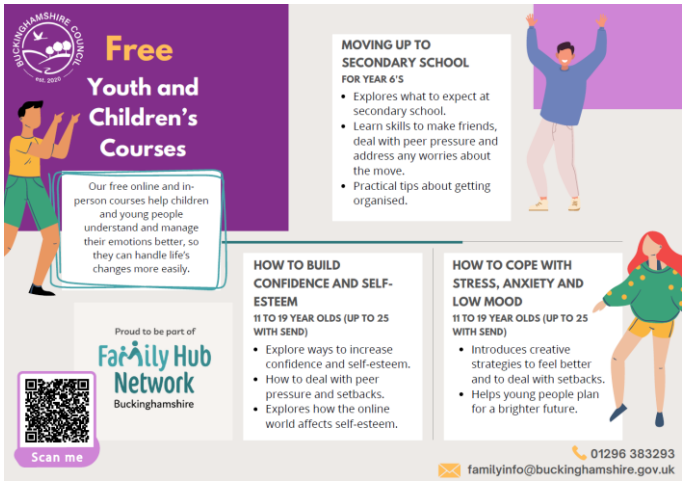
Raffle tickets will be available to purchase on Parent Pay until Wednesday, 2nd December, with the draw taking place on Friday 4th December.

There will also be an opportunity to buy raffle tickets during the school production of **'Frozen' on Wednesday 18th, Thursday 19th, Friday 20th and Saturday 21st November 2026.**

Thank you for your continued support.

Out and About

We are sometimes sent flyers and information which we think might be of interest to some of our families. These events are not specifically endorsed by the school.



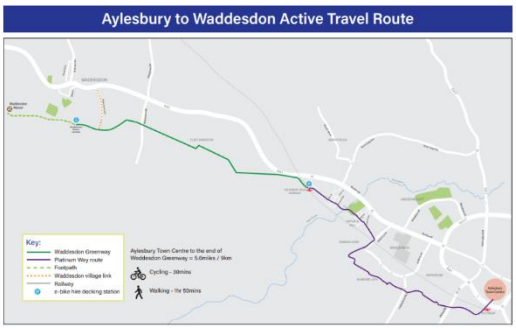


Respect in the Community

There are a number of parents still using the private parking spaces on Golden Mede as waiting areas when dropping off and collecting at the start and end of the school day. Please remember that this is a private residential area.

Our Travel Plan encourages you to commit to doing **one of the three following things** to make the world and our local environment a better place:

- Walk, scoot or bike to school
- Use Waddesdon Manor's overflow car park
- Consider using the five minute walking bubble when dropping off and picking up



The Platinum Way, or Waddesdon Greenway, provides a wonderful approach route to the school from the east. **Join many school staff and Sixth Formers who now use the Manor's overflow car park.**

THINK!'s top tips for making sure children are visible when out on the roads are:

- **Wear brightly coloured or fluorescent clothing which shows up well in daylight and at dusk**. If you're out and about when it's dark, wear reflective gear to make sure you can be seen in car headlights. Reflective vests, sashes or wristbands work well. Remember, fluorescent clothing doesn't work after dark.

- **Use accessories** - even small items such as clip-on reflectors, fluorescent arm bands and stickers on your school bag are a great way to improve your visibility.

- **If you like to cycle**, remember that it's the law to have clean and working lights at night (white at the front and red at the back) as well as a rear reflector.



Wednesday Late Bus

We encourage our students to take advantage of this so that they can take part in extra-curricular activities (see website) and also if they need to catch up on, or complete work. The routes are:

Route 1: Westcott, Ashendon, Upper Winchendon, Quainton (The Green), Pitchcott, Oving (Bowling Alley), North Marston (Pilgrim PH), Whitchurch (on request), Hardwick (on request)

Route 2: Kingswood, Grendon Underwood (all stops if required), Springhill (prison), Edgcott, Calvert (Green), Charndon (on request), Marsh Gibbon The Plough (on request), Ludgershall Village Hall (on request)

The buses will return to their depots in Aylesbury and so the bus company (Motts) has also indicated that they would be happy to drop students to a central point in Aylesbury, if required.

Both buses will leave school at 4.35pm, with the longest journey time taking approximately 45 minutes.



Upcoming Events

11th Nov – **Report** 1 issued (Years 7-10, 12 & 13)

11th Nov – Standing with Giants **Remembrance Event** at Waddesdon Manor – all year groups

12th Nov – **Year 10** Parents' Evening

w.b. 16th Nov – **Show Week**: *Frozen*

26th Nov – Sixth Form **Open Evening**

2nd Dec – Start of **Year 11** Mock Exams

8th Dec – **Carol Service** 7-8pm (Waddesdon Church)

16th/17th Dec – **Christmas lunches**

18th Dec – **School closes** for Christmas break (1pm)





What to do if you're not happy about something

If you're not happy about something, please let us know and we will work with you to resolve the issue. Our Complaints Policy outlines the steps you can take, but the simple message is to **get in touch with us.**

If you send your concern to office@waddesdonschool.com, it will be directed to the right person. You should expect to hear back in 48 hours, so if you have no reply then, please ring the school office to check on the progress of your complaint.

Even in moments of high emotion, we ask that you consider how best to convey your complaint. If the issue cannot be resolved by email or a phone conversation, then it is usually best to arrange a face-to-face meeting as lengthy email exchanges tend to become counter-productive.

John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Website:
www.waddesdonschool.com

Contact:
01296 651382

Email:
office@waddesdonschool.com