



Handbook

Witton Middle School

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A warm welcome from the Witton Middle Team

Witton Middle School is a Worcestershire Local Authority School for boys and girls aged 9 - 12. We currently have 6 forms of entry in Years 5 and 6 and 4 in Year 7. The numbers of pupils coming to the school are rising as it becomes a popular choice for pupils in the area. Many pupils now join us from outside the catchment area.

With a new leadership team in 2012, the school has gone from strength to strength and the school's leadership has been recognised as outstanding by Ofsted (2016). We pride ourselves on developing confident and assertive individuals who will make a difference in the world. Inside impressive grounds and specialist facilities we pride ourselves on nurturing well rounded individuals with very strong values. Our values promote excellence in academic performance, as well as the arts and sport. Underpinning all of this is the understanding that none of this can happen without the development of emotional maturity and resilience.

Although we are a middle school we are deemed primary and our teaching model is based upon class teachers teaching the majority of lessons, so that pupils are secure and it ensures that both the teacher and teaching assistant know pupils well. We also provide an effective bridge between primary and secondary because of our range of specialisms which enable an increasingly independent approach. Our children transform from being primary pupils to secondary students. The vast majority of parents and carers who attended Witton Middle School when they were children, or those who have had children with us before send their children to our school because of the level of care and attention given to their child.

We warmly welcome you on your journey with us and we look forward to working with you to be successful.

Cath Crossley and all of the Witton team.

Our values



Developing PRIDE and preparing our children to go out into the world to make it a better place

Perseverance - Responsibility - Independence - Determination - Empathy



PRIDE

Developing PRIDE and preparing to go out into the world to make it a better place.

At Witton:

We always **P**ersevere to be the best we can be:
we never give up!

We act **R**esponsibly for ourselves, our school, our community and the world!

We strive to be **I**ndependent by being organised, creative and taking risks to solve a problem!

We are **D**etermined to succeed by facing our challenges and working together to achieve our ambitions!

We show **E**mpathy and care for others, and the world around us by being honest, considerate and kind!



What are our school's rules for good behaviour?

The importance of high standards of behaviour cannot be overstated. It is essential to both learning and teaching. We want our children to regulate their own behaviour based upon a genuine understanding of the rewards of doing so. Through the sanctions, rewards and genuine reflection we aim to see a change in pupils future behaviour.

Some simple rules all children should follow:

- Come equipped to lessons
- Keep their planner with them and get it signed
- Observe the 'Non-contact' rule (including play fighting and jumping on people)
- Be gentle (do not hurt anybody)
- Be kind and helpful (do not hurt people's feelings)
- Work hard (do not waste your own or other people's time)
- Look after property (do not waste or damage things)
- Listen to others (do not interrupt or ignore people)
- Be honest (do not cover up the truth)
- Follow playground and trim trail rules
- Follow all reasonable instructions given by adults
- Present themselves with pride, observing uniform rules
- Respect belongings and environment
- Use polite language and kind speech to others
- Move around school sensibly
- Respect quiet times, such as in class and assembly.

Where (albeit rarely) behaviour impacts negatively upon others, we seek to prioritise the safeguarding of individuals who are harmed by any negative behaviour. We invite parents and carers into school and work very closely with you to understand the causes of poor behaviour and how to minimise the impact on others.

Please see our schools website for a detailed overview of our policy and practice.





How do I make contact?

We welcome parents and carers into school and are always willing to work in partnership with you and listen to your comments about our school. Your first point of contact should be with the school's office team on 01905 773362. The office is open between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

We pride ourselves on being a warm and welcoming school with many parents and carers preferring to drop into the office in person.

What if I need to see my child's teacher?

A member of the office team will find out when he or she is not teaching and make an appointment for you, or they will ask the teacher to contact you when they are free.

What if my child is late/absent?

Please contact the office team.

What if I need to urgently speak to my child?

The office team will be able to get a message to your child.

What if I need to speak to a senior member of staff?

We have a team of people who can help such as Year Team Leaders, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy and Headteacher. The office staff will decide where to most appropriately direct your enquiry.

What if I have an urgent concern?

Once again the office staff will decide where to direct your enquiry.



Where do I find school policies?

General policies

Policies relating to bullying, safeguarding, child protection, health and safety and the promotion of good conduct and relationships are available from the Witton Middle School website. If you prefer a printed copy please request this from the school office.

Behaviour policy

The core business of our school is learning. We seek to dedicate our resources to ensuring that all of our pupils achieve. Our behaviour policy is designed to ensure that we remove any disruptions to our core purpose of learning.

Compliments and complaints policy

We do listen carefully to the views of pupils, parents and carers. Whilst complaints are very rare, details of our complaints policy are also available from the school office and the school website.

Admissions policy

When applying for a place at our school please follow the Local Authority admissions policy and procedures. This can be found at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions. The closing date is 15th January 2017. Decisions are made by 16th April 2017. If you would like assistance with your application please contact our school office team.

When is my child required to attend?



The school day

School starts at 8:25 am prompt. We expect our pupils to arrive at school no later than this unless there is a very good reason, it is advisable to aim to be at school by 8:15. Lunch is at 12:45, which being later on in the day, it is advisable to provide your child with a snack for the 10:40 break, alternatively Shire Services sell breakfast items during the break time.

8.25 am	Pupils enter school
8.30 - 8.50 am	Registration and Guided Reading
8.50 - 9.45 am	Lesson 1
9.45 - 10.40 am	Lesson 2
10.40 - 10.55 am	BREAK
10.55 - 11.50 am	Lesson 3
11.50 am - 12.45 pm	Lesson 4
12.45 - 1.35 pm	LUNCH
1.35 - 1.45 pm	Registration
1.45 - 2.40 pm	Lesson 5 (extended until 3.00 pm on some days)
2.40 - 3.00 pm	Assembly (whole school or year group)
3.00 pm	END OF SCHOOL DAY



When is my child required to attend?



Attendance

At Witton Middle School our expectations for attendance is high because we know that this leads to excellent progress. We have a strong belief, which is supported by research, that attendance and success go hand. We adhere to the strict guidelines laid down by government policy regarding authorised and unauthorised absence. If your child is unavoidably absent please contact the school office on the first day of absence.

It is against the law to take your child out of school unnecessarily and all absences need to be properly explained.

The Headteacher can only sanction a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to be considered for a leave of absence you should complete the form at least three weeks before the planned absence. A letter will be sent which may authorise the absence. This is to ensure that we safeguard every child in our care.

Parents and carers need to understand that holidays in term time, which do not fall into exceptional circumstances, will be marked as unauthorised absence.



What is the uniform policy?

School Uniform

All pupils are expected to wear school uniform whilst on the school premises or when representing the school during visits or in inter-school competitions. Our uniform has been planned to be functional, look smart and be cost-effective. All uniform and any valuable items must be marked with your child's name.

We consider that wearing the correct school uniform is a way of pupils showing that they wish to belong to our school. Pupils not wearing the correct uniform will receive one polite reminder before they are expected to return home and change into the correct uniform. Please contact us regarding any genuine circumstances which mean that the correct uniform is unavailable to your child.

Uniform

White formal shirt (short or long sleeved)

Burgundy tie (clip-on)

Burgundy V-neck sweatshirt or cardigan with school badge

Plain black formal trousers or plain black knee-length formal skirt

Red/white gingham dress (optional)

Black formal shorts (optional)

Plain black or white socks or black tights

Plain black shoes (*not trainers or boots*)

P.E. Kit

White PE shirt

Black shorts

Red football/hockey socks

Red rugby shirt

White ankle socks (summer)

Trainers (not canvas shoes)

Football boots (optional for girls)

Shin pads ([FA ruling on safety](#))

Gum shield (advisable for rugby in years 5 & 6, but essential for year 7)

We discourage pupils from bringing valuable items into school such as jewellery. Studs and a signet ring are allowed (these must be removed for P.E.). However, extreme hair styles, make-up and nail varnish are not. Should your child choose not to follow any of these rules, they will be asked to comply, but failure to do so will result in parents and carers being asked to take their child home.



What does my child need to bring to school?

P.E Kit

Your child's individual timetable which will be recorded in your child's planner, will inform you of when to bring their P.E. kit into school.

Pencil Case

Classes run all the more smoothly if the children are prepared by having with them, at all times, a named pencil case containing:-

- At least 2 Blue Berol Handwriting pens (no black pens, biros or gel pens please)
- At least 2 Red pens for editing work
- A pink highlighter (for peer marking)
- At least 2 HB pencils (plus 2B and 4B for artwork)
- A rubber
- A pack of colouring pencils (not felt tips)
- A 30cm ruler (non folding)
- A pencil sharpener
- A dry-wipe marker pen
- A glue stick

It would be helpful if all these items could also be named, wherever possible.

Planner

Planners are a key learning and communication tool for both parents and carers and staff. Messages to your child's class teacher can be recorded and brought to the attention of the teacher by your child. All homework and important dates are recorded here. A planner is provided for each pupil by our school, but should a replacement be required because of loss or damage we ask that pupils pay the £2.50 replacement cost. We do ask parents and carers to sign the planner each week and your child's class teacher will monitor the planner on a regular basis.



What makes learning and teaching effective?

Effective learning

All learning and teaching is underpinned by the schools 'PRIDE' values. Effective teaching is that which leads to effective learning and we have established some important principles in order to ensure excellent outcomes for children. Teachers know their pupils well, and ensure that all children are able to move on and extend or deepen their knowledge as soon as they are ready.

The learning process takes place in a climate where achievement, success and learning through mistakes are celebrated. A range of approaches are adopted and blended to ensure variety, engagement, collaborative learning, choice and independence. Teachers deliver effective lessons to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Learning is regularly monitored by evaluating lessons, discussing progress in books and through talking to pupils. This is undertaken together with all staff so that their teaching and therefore learning continues to improve.

For a full explanation of our policy please see our website.



What makes marking, feedback and homework effective?

Effective feedback

Pupils make outstanding progress when they receive support at home. Please take time to look at your child's books to understand what it is they need to do to improve and what their next steps in learning are.

Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally hard to ensure that clear feedback is given to your child. Teachers are asked to mark a third of child's work in depth so that they can give quality feedback on the most important pieces of work. This also gives staff time to provide extra support where the concepts have not been understood. Other pieces of work can be marked by the pupil or a peer which helps pupils to be very clear about what success looks like and further develops independence.

Pupils will be given homework which:

- Enables them to consolidate and reinforce the learning which has been taking place in the classroom
- Helps them to establish habits of successful learners and further develops our school's overall values
- Gives pupils experience which may not be possible in the classroom.

It is an expectation that you support your child with the completion of homework tasks. Please contact us if you have any concerns regarding marking, feedback or homework.





What will my child study? (The Curriculum)

Broad and balanced

At Witton Middle School teaching takes place within a broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon the learning taken place within the first schools and provides an effective foundation for the High school. We follow the National Curriculum (2014).

The curriculum:

- Actively promotes fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, mutual respect, individual liberty and tolerance. This is underpinned by the whole school ethos of providing care and nurture within a warm atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect
- In addition to the core and foundation curriculum there is an extensive array of extra-curricular activities which further develop pupils' sporting, artistic, theatrical, musical confidence and abilities
- Is supplemented by a range of assemblies which are broadly Christian but encompasses all major world faiths
- Provides clear guidance on what is right and wrong through a comprehensive PHSCE programme and the promotion of restorative approaches which enable children to listen to the views of others and understand why their actions might be considered detrimental or helpful to relationships.

Through this extensive provision we enable our pupils to be successful academically and further develop their social, emotional, spiritual and cultural understanding.

What happens at break and lunch times?



Our school operates a health eating policy and we encourage all children to bring 'healthier' snacks. We suggest fruit, vegetables, low-sugar cereal bars and other healthy options. We strongly discourage crisps, chocolate or sugar-based sweets. Our aim is not only to promote healthy eating, but also to reduce litter on the school grounds. All snacks should be brought in re-usable containers and no wrappers will be allowed on the playground. Nuts are not allowed anywhere on the school site. Water is available throughout the school day, please provide your child with a plastic container that they can refill.

Pre-school breakfast club

Shire Services operate a pre-school Breakfast Club from 8.15 – 8.25 each morning.

Breaktime

A variety of hot and cold snacks (including fruit) are available at breaktime.

Lunchtime

Children are not allowed to leave the school premises at lunchtime without written permission. In the event of any special emergency situation, children who have to leave the premises at lunchtime must report to the school office to have their details recorded.

During lunchtime children have the option of choosing a tempting school meal or to bring a packed lunch. Meals cost £2.20 for a main course and a dessert. Drinks, other than water, are available at an additional cost. School meals are freshly prepared and offer quality and value for money. Children in receipt of free school meals have the same choice. Vegetarians are also catered for on a daily basis. Parents and carers of children with specific food allergies are requested to contact the school in advance.

How will my child arrive at school?



School transport

Children within the school's prescribed catchment area, but live over three miles away from the school, are entitled to free transport to and from school. Please contact Worcestershire County Council's Transport Section (01905 763763) for more information (including their 'vacant seats scheme' for out of area children).

We encourage children to walk, cycle or use a scooter to get to school as part of making healthier choices on the understanding that their bike or scooter is in good working order and they wear a properly fitted and approved cycle helmet. The security of bicycles and scooters is the responsibility of the individual (a secure bike lock is recommended).

Pupils who repeatedly put others in danger by cycling or scooting on paths in or near school will be asked to leave their bicycle or scooter at home because of concerns for others safety.

We ask drivers to take special care when near school, particularly during the start and finish of the day. Please keep driveways clear and strictly observe the highway code for the safety of all our children.





How can I support my child with social media?

Age restrictions for social media platforms

Age restrictions are placed on social media sites to protect children from using social media before they are emotionally ready. You can help your child by firstly adhering to the age restrictions. Use of social media, particularly if choosing to ignore the age restrictions, should be carefully monitored. Many parents and carers insist that their children share their login information so that they can monitor activity and messages.

Simple communications on social media can often be misinterpreted by children. Unkind comments or messages, which would quickly be forgotten on the playground, can escalate and lead to difficulties for all concerned. In turn, this can affect your child's learning. Therefore, if you choose to allow your child access to social media, we ask that you carefully monitor this and to discontinue access to sites where you know the messages to be harmful.

Witton Middle School takes e-safety seriously and we educate our children regarding the correct use of media sites. However, we ask parents and carers to take responsibility for their overall conduct on social media.

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

(Ages specified in terms as of 2014)

Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Pinterest
Google+
Tumblr
Reddit
Snapchat
Secret



LinkedIn



WhatsApp



Vine
Tinder



Path



YouTube
Keek
Foursquare
WeChat
Kik
Flickr





What can I do about lost or damaged property?

Lost property

Looking after their property is something which we expect to further develop in our pupils as they mature. However, from time to time items are lost.

Please report lost items without delay. We generally locate named items with ease and they are quickly returned to their owners.

Due to the volume of lost property it is only kept for two weeks, after which time it is disposed of in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Parents, carers and pupils can check lost property at the school office.

Sometimes items are inadvertently taken home and we can request support from other parents to locate items via the newsletter.

We appreciate that any lost items represent additional cost for parents and carers. We strongly advise you not to allow your child to bring expensive items such as trainers and electronic devices into school as we simply cannot replace or refund the cost should they go missing or be damaged in any way.

School Property

Pupils are expected to look after our wonderful school environment. Pupils must not interfere with any aspect of school such as lighting, fire protection and heating facilities. Any damage, which could have been avoided, will need to be paid for. Chewing gum is not allowed in school because it can lead to damaged property.



Protection of personal data, photographic images and mobile phones

Data security

Witton Middle School holds information on pupils in order to support their learning, to monitor and report on their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the school as a whole is doing. No personal information provided to Worcestershire County Council will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes. Information however, will be shared within the Council and with other agencies where the legal framework allows and requires it. This will help the Council to improve and develop services.

Use of photographs and videos

The Headteacher and Governors ensure that they send out a form to parents and carers which states that such photography, and associated use of the pupil's name, will be permitted by the school, unless the parents and carers explicitly and specifically object, by returning the form with a negative response.

Mobile phones

If a child decides to bring a mobile 'phone to school, it must be handed in to their class teacher at morning registration and will be kept in the class safe during the school day. We try at all times to keep children's belongings secure, but no system is 100% safe and children bring their 'phones to school at their own risk.

Pupils who use mobile 'phones in school will have them confiscated and left in the school office for collection at the end of the day. For repeated violations, the 'phone will be retained for a longer period of time and the parents and carers will be asked to collect their child's 'phone from the school office.



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