



There is only one place to start this week which is by sharing our immense pride in the recent Oliver JR production that we staged at The Victory Academy on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May. Over two amazing evenings our cast, mostly made up of students in Year 7 and 8, performed this show with incredible enthusiasm. We knew it would be good but we were extremely impressed with just how good it was. I know many of you attended and we are very grateful for your support. Congratulations to all those involved and especially Miss Stocker who co-ordinated the whole production. Thank you all.

Also this week we have seen the GCSE and A Level examinations get underway. It has been incredibly pleasing thus far, despite all that COVID has thrown at us in recent months, that we have had 100% attendance at every single examination and how seriously the students have taken it. After this week there are 4 weeks of examinations left and we wish all of our Year 11s and Year 13s every success.

For the rest of the school, we continue to work hard as we approach May Half Term. In lessons we are working hard on a 'no hands-up' system to improve student engagement. The rationale for this is explained in this blog and I urge you to discuss this with your child. Additionally, following our experiences during COVID lockdowns, we continue to develop our online learning provision and I would like to share the good news about SENECA that you can read in this blog.

We are also continuing to remind students of our uniform expectations. In the last blog we clarified our expectations over 'hoodies' and this week we clarify our expectations over footwear. Please take time to review this information with your child so that they attend school with the correct footwear. Thank you for your support.

Over Half Term the country will come together to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee and so we wanted to provide an experience for our students to commemorate the event; something which none of us is likely to ever experience again in our lifetimes. You will see in this blog that we are hosting parties for each House on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May to commemorate the event. We are also planting a tree on site and will share images of both events in our next blog.

Good luck to our 11s and 13s next week and my best wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy Half Term break.

Mr L. Preston

Principal

### **Key Dates 2022 -**

- Friday 27th May - Last Day of Term 5
- Week Commencing 6th June - Year 10 Work Experience
- Thursday 9th June - Year 12 UCAS Fair
- Thursday 16th June - Year 8 Parents Evening
- Week Commencing 20th June - Year 10 Prelims
- Week Commencing 27th June - Year 12 Prelims
- Week Commencing 27th June - Year 11/13 Exams Finish
- Thursday 30th June - Year 7 Parents Evening
- Week Commencing 11th July - Year 12 Work Experience
- Thursday 21st July - Last Day of Term 6

### **Water Bottles**

With the weather getting warmer, please ensure that you send your child to school with a filled water bottle each day.



## Uniform/Trainers

Further to the recent letter sent home and the notice in the previous blog about hoodies, we are continuing to reinforce basic uniform standards over the coming weeks. To support us in this, please reinforce to your children that trainers are not a part of the standard school uniform. As stated in student planners, shoes should be plain black school shoes. No boots, canvas shoes or trainer style shoes are allowed as part of uniform. Students will be asked to change into appropriate school shoes when they arrive onsite by duty staff.

Trainers may be worn as part of PE lessons, or whilst on the 3G pitch or field at lunchtime. They should not be worn elsewhere or at other times on site. Students do not have access to the 3G or field before or after school, or at break time, so there is no other need to wear trainers.

Should students be wearing inappropriate footwear, they will be sanctioned on their reward/sanction card for failing to meet standards on uniform. It would be useful for you to check your child's reward/sanction card as well as their planner, as this is a good indication of whether they are meeting and exceeding our expectations in school. If this becomes a repeated issue, the sanction may be escalated.

Some companies have begun marketing black leather trainers as school shoes, which has put families in a difficult position. Simply, we accept black, smart, leather or leather effect shoes, with no visible logos. As smartness is a subjective matter, I have attached some guidance to help in determining purchases of school shoes. However, a determination in any instance will come down to the school's judgement, so it is best for students to be on the safe side.

If your child currently does not have appropriate school shoes, please use the upcoming holiday to purchase appropriate footwear for them. If this is an issue, please contact your child's head of year to discuss.



These are all trainers, sports styles, canvas or other fabrics and other colours than black.



These are all appropriate school shoes, they are plain black, leather or leather effect. They are all suitably smart for school.

**HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

# CELEBRATE THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE AT HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL TEA PARTY

**Scones with Jam & Cream  
Hot & Cold Drinks  
(All free of charge)**

**To be held on the  
Main School Field**

**THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY**  
Ardent, 12.1 and 12.2 - 9:00 -10:00  
Barfleur, 12.3 and 12.4 - 11:20 - 12:20  
Conquest and 12.5 - 2:00 - 3:00









**FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MAY**  
Guardian and 12.6 - 9:00 -10:00  
Shannon and 12.7 - 11:20 - 12:20

**A tree will also be planted in  
the grounds to commemorate  
The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

**THINKING SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST**

## Seneca

### Holcombe Grammar tops the local league table for use of Seneca!

School name	XP
  Holcombe Grammar School Chatham, Medway <span>School synced</span>	182,985
  Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School Rochester, Medway	103,160
  Fort Pitt Grammar School Chatham, Medway	79,168
  Rainham Mark Grammar School Gillingham, Medway	73,742

Seneca is an online learning platform that has high-quality courses for all subjects at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, GCSE and A Level. This will add to the comprehensive resources that your child can already access through Microsoft Teams.

Your child will be able to log into Seneca on phone, tablet or computer and study any of their school subjects. Seneca's Premium pass offers them access to:

- Over 800 online courses such as Hardest Questions, Predicted Papers, and Hyper-Learning.
- Smart Learning Mode which uses data & neuroscience to tell your child exactly what to learn and when to learn it.
- Wrong Answer Mode helps students learn as quickly as possible.

For your child to make the most of this fantastic resource, we recommend:

- Students should complete the homework set by their teachers on Seneca.
- Students should use all the different course types available on Seneca.
- Students should use Seneca little and often throughout the year rather than using it to cram in the weeks before their exams.

**All student accounts have been set up with their school email addresses.**

Seneca also provides free parent accounts. This allows you to track your child's learning or learn alongside your child. This can help make conversations about school and learning easier.

You can sign up for a free Seneca parent account here: [app.senecalearning.com/parent](http://app.senecalearning.com/parent)

Seneca have made this handy [2 minute video](#) to help you get started, or you can [read how to get your free account](#).

## Oliver Jr Production

After having to reschedule the performance, our Oliver Jr Production took place on Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th May at The Victory Academy. The students involved really brought the story alive with their enthusiasm. It was a great performance, one which everyone who watched congratulated them on their performance. On the 17th May they performed to the students at New Horizons. Thank you to everyone involved and to Miss Stocker for organising and directing it.



## Duke of Edinburgh Award

The second of 7 expedition training sessions has taken place for Year 10 students enrolled in the Award in preparation for their practice expedition on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. These sessions are taking place in the Hall on Thursdays from 3:15pm-4:15pm. The programme for the session is as below and are compulsory for all students who wish to attend the planned practise and qualifying expeditions.

Date	Topic
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	Introduction to DofE Expeditions (The 20 Conditions)
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	Navigating using a Map
26 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	Route Planning
9 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Expedition Equipment and Rucksack Packing
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Menu Planning
23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2022	Emergency Procedures and First Aid
30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Countryside Code

eDofE Drop-in sessions are taking place every Thursday lunchtime from 1:25pm-1:45pm in H15 for any students in Years 9 or 10 to attend if they need any support with setting up their eDofE account. All accounts need to be set up on eDofE by the end of Term 6.

## Thinking at Holcombe

The focus this edition is “no hands up” (except to ask questions) - cold calling.

You will find that increasingly students will be questioned in lessons with a ‘no hands up’ policy. This week, years 7-10 have had assemblies explaining the rationale behind this – and it is important to also share it with you, as parents and carers.

Inspired by the research undertaken by educational experts such as Doug Lemov, Dylan Wiliam and Tom Sherrington, our teachers are moving towards no hands up questioning, using a technique known as cold calling.

Consider the following scenarios:

### Scenario A:

- The class is dominated by questioning where the teacher engages primarily with students who volunteer with hands up or by simply calling out.
- It can seem lively on the surface but nearly always it’s just a few students who dominate while others are marginal; passive; silent. They might be thinking; they might not be.
- It’s possible to think nothing and say nothing and nobody will notice.
- Some students usually have answers – so others just don’t have to.
- Thinking is optional.
- Some students’ default is just to wait for someone else to answer – because they always do.

### Scenario B:

- The class where the teacher nearly always selects who should respond next by name.
- No hands up; no calling out – it could be anyone.
- Students all anticipate being asked to respond, sharing their thoughts; everyone mentally prepares an answer to every question in readiness for being selected.
- They are all involved. Nobody dominates. Over time, everyone contributes.
- Questions are addressed to the whole class followed by a pause and then....  
“Michael, what were you thinking?” “Safia, what answer did you get?”  
“Shafiq, how did you explain it?”
- Thinking is required from everyone; everyone is included.

The benefits of scenario B versus A are clear. The dialogue might run like this:

- **Teacher asks the question:** “Ok, everyone let’s see. What’s a good way to work out  $12 \times 17$ ?”
- **Given thinking time:** (No hands up, no calling out; teacher scans the room as students think, keeping the focus)
- **Teacher selects someone to respond:** “Right, so Femi, what were you thinking?” (warm, invitational). “I think it’s 204.”
- **Teacher responds to the answers.** “Yes, that’s the right answer. What was your method?” “I did  $10 \times 17$  and then  $2 \times 17$  and added them up”
- **Teacher selects and another student:** “Great. And William, what about you? What method did you use?” “I did  $10 \times 12$  makes 120  $7 \times 12$  is 84 and then add them for 204”. “Well done – how does that compare to Femi’s answer?”

The method of cold calling can be broken into 5 simple steps:



The rationale is simple too:

**Everyone’s contributions matter in our classrooms. I need to know what you are thinking if I am going to help you the best I can.**

If you would like to read more about this classroom practice, please follow the recommended links below, to articles which have influenced this blog entry:  
<https://teacherhead.com/2021/02/07/cold-calling-the-1-strategy-for-inclusive-classrooms-remote-and-in-person/amp/>

<https://teachlikeachampion.com/blog/cold-call-inclusive/>