



### Principals update – End of Term 1

These seven weeks have gone at quite a pace and we find ourselves at the end of term 1. Our highlight over the last two weeks was undoubtedly our Open Day where we welcomed well over 200 families of Year 6 students to see our school. Since then we have welcomed over 80 more families to come and tour the school and many were extremely complimentary about what they saw.

Year 11s have also completed their first set of GCSE prelims and I greatly enjoyed having lunch with 10 of our Year 11 students this week to ask them about the experience and what we can learn from their experiences to hopefully prepare them even better for the 2<sup>nd</sup> prelims in January 2023.

**Classcharts** – I wrote in the last blog about our new Classcharts system and you will find more information in this blog. Nearly 60% of parents have now signed up which is great, but that means 40% have not so if you are yet to sign up to this then please do so. Details can be found on the next page. This will be the main way that we communicate with you about your child's progress so please do create an account if you have not already.

**Uniform** – in the current economic climate we wanted to do our bit to support parents with uniform costs so you will see in this blog some information about our new 2<sup>nd</sup> hand uniform scheme. If you would like to take advantage of this scheme please familiarise yourself with the information.

**Personal Development** – in addition to our new PD curriculum (lessons take place every Tuesday afternoon) you will find in this blog an update about our Shoebox appeal, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and child-friendly event coming up at City Hall. You will also see that we are aiming to bring back our Christmas Carol concert for the first time since the pandemic. This will be held again at St Stephens church on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December and we hope many of you will be able to join us.

**Holcombe Association looking for new members** – the Holcombe Association is our Parent Teacher Association and is a fantastic group of parents who meet once a month (usually Mondays at 6pm) to plan fund raising activities which will benefit students at the school. During the pandemic, many of the Associations activities had to be curtailed and so we are now trying to resume a range of activities and need your support. If any parent is willing to give up some free time and support this association please contact [chair@holcombe.org.uk](mailto:chair@holcombe.org.uk) and speak with David Edser. We look forward to you joining us.

**Coaches** - may I remind all parents of students who travel to school by coach that they must abide by the usual laws of the road when on the coaches; students should be sat down with their seat belt on at all times. A reminder too to all parents that from Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November the coaches will no longer be picking up and dropping off from Maidstone Road/ Walderslade Road but instead this will happen on nearby Palmerston Road.

### **Key Dates 2022 -**

- **Thursday 20th October - Last Day of Term 1**
- **Friday 21st October - Staff Development Day**
- **Monday 31st October - Staff Development Day**
- **Tuesday 1st November - First Day of Term 2**
- **Thursday 17th November - Sixth Form Open Evening 6pm-9pm**
- **Friday 18th November - Day off in lieu of Open Morning**
- **Friday 17th December - Last Day of Term 2**

Finally, can I remind you all that Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October and Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October are staff training days and that all students should return on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November.

My very best wishes to you all for a happy and healthy break.

Mr L.Preston

Principal

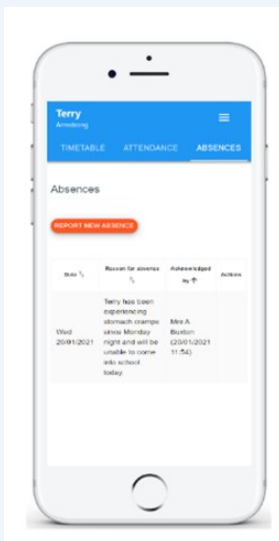
## Classcharts

### [Absence Reporting from 1<sup>st</sup> November](#)

Many thanks to all parents who are able to let us know in detail why students are late or absent from school, please continue to do so by 8am on each day of absence. We are making some changes to our absence reporting procedure after the October Half Term break which we wish to draw your attention to. We will expect all lateness and absence to now be reported through our classcharts software, this is to enable swift and accurate processing of this information, as well as removing the need for you to confirm voice messages with written evidence. Through classcharts, written reasons can be sent directly to our attendance office, and medical evidence can be attached directly where appropriate. We will therefore cease to use other systems, such as our voicemail system and PS Connect, for receipt of lateness or absence information from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

If you access your child's profile on classcharts, you will see the Absences. Selecting this tab will display a list of absences that you have reported, once you have reported them. This includes when the absence took place, the reason for the absence and who acknowledged your absence report.

To report an absence, click on the Report new absence button. Next, enter the details of the reported absence into the form provided. You can also include up to 5 files in your absence report as supporting evidence. To do this, click on the Attach supporting evidence button and select the files of your choice. Click on the Submit button to send your pupil's absence report to their school. The absence can be edited and deleted until it has been acknowledged by a member of school staff.



### [Sign up to classcharts](#)

We have now been running our classcharts system for a term and are seeing a significant increase in positive comments received by students (over 37,000 at the time of writing compared to approximately 10,000 in term 1 2021). 55% of students have already had parents sign up to the system, enabling some excellent conversations to occur around students' experiences in school. We would strongly advise all parents to sign in to the system if they have not already, gaining access to all comments about their time in school. Classcharts enables you access to timetables, detentions set and absence informing. Students are valuing the conversations they are able to have about their success in school – with students receiving 10 or more positive comments in a day on 74 occasions last week alone! We will continue to expand our use of this system throughout the year, so it is an expectation of all families that they will sign up to this system.

### [Pupil access to classcharts](#)

We have this week issued logins to students via their school emails. This will enable students to access the same information parents are receiving on their time in school, allowing them to reflect more fully on their time in school, as well as supporting them with remembering their timetable and any set detentions. Again, we will be extending the use of this system throughout the year and expect all students to log in to their accounts going forwards.

## Personal Development

Our students' personal development lessons each week are supported by our wider, extra-curricular activities and links with local and international organisations. As we progress through 'Being Your Best Self' topics taught this term, we encourage students to make the most of these opportunities:

**Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal:** Donations of toys, games, toiletries and accessories as well as any shoeboxes, wrapping paper and sticky tape are being gratefully received. Each tutor group as well as a lunch time club of volunteers are getting these gifts wrapped and prepared for children of all ages over the coming weeks. The OCC charity appeal gives students the chance to learn valuable characteristics such as kindness, generosity and selfless giving. Further information about the charity can be found at [samaritanspurse.org.uk](http://samaritanspurse.org.uk).

**Child-Friendly Medway City Hall:** Coming up on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at the Corn Exchange in Rochester from 4:30-7pm. The event will include Free Fun Fair Games including Tin Can Alley, Splat the Rat and Hoopla as well as free meal for the whole family. These events provide an opportunity for the children and young people of Medway to share their views on growing up in Medway and how we can make it even more child friendly. To reserve your free spot email: [childfriendly@medway.gov.uk](mailto:childfriendly@medway.gov.uk).

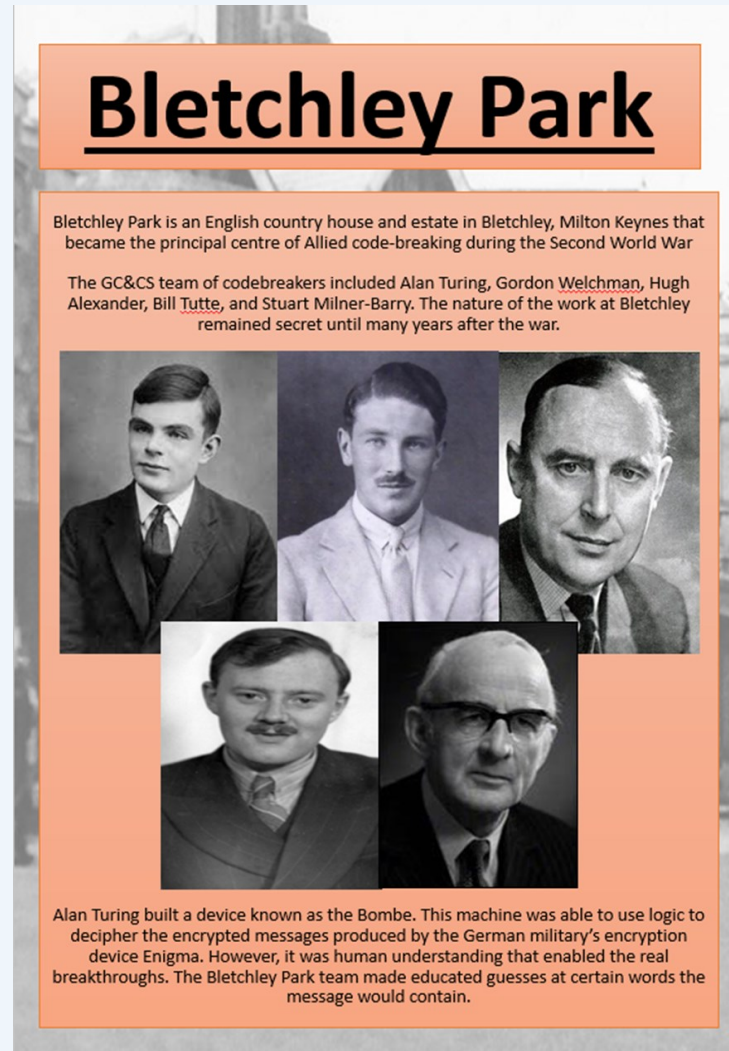
**Duke Of Edinburgh Award:** Year 9 students will be learning the skills and abilities necessary to complete this challenge during their PD lessons next term, and Year 10, 11 and 12 students have been offered the opportunity to take part in the award up to Gold Level in after school sessions. The programme includes volunteering, physical, skills, and expedition, with Gold participants also completing a residential section. Students will gain essential skills and attributes such as resilience, problem-solving, team-working, communication and drive, and this programme is very valuable to enhancing CVs and university/job applications. Further information can be found at [DofE.org](http://DofE.org).

## KS3 Cultural Passport

Students in KS3 have been challenged this term to explore the life of the Bletchley Park Code Breakers of WWII. Students have explored the day to day life, activities and living conditions for these people and after exploring common phrases from ciphers seen during the work of the code breakers, were challenged to create their own poem on the topic area.

The work produced was fantastic with some of the extracts shown also being shared with our English Department who also commended the students on their creativity and descriptive use of period language.


Well done KS3!!



**Bletchley Park**

Bletchley Park is an English country house and estate in Bletchley, Milton Keynes that became the principal centre of Allied code-breaking during the Second World War

The GC&CS team of codebreakers included Alan Turing, Gordon Welchman, Hugh Alexander, Bill Tutte, and Stuart Milner-Barry. The nature of the work at Bletchley remained secret until many years after the war.



Alan Turing built a device known as the Bombe. This machine was able to use logic to decipher the encrypted messages produced by the German military's encryption device Enigma. However, it was human understanding that enabled the real breakthroughs. The Bletchley Park team made educated guesses at certain words the message would contain.

## Fallen, Not Forgotten by Jack Robins (7Co)

Fallen, not forgotten  
Never seen, yet now heard  
No support, yet they continued  
They spread their wings like a bird

Fallen, not forgotten  
Feeling like the dead  
Lonely, sad  
Cracking codes until bed

Fallen, not forgotten  
Cracking codes all day and night  
Sad, Lost, Lonely, Broken  
They are our heroes without might

Fallen, not forgotten  
A great secret they hold  
Cannot even tell their families  
They crack German codes in the cold

They are the true heroes!

## Bletchley Decoders by Noah Horvath (8Sh)

These lonely people are away,  
while those boglins fight all day,  
people sit in rooms decoding,  
trying to help their country before it blows,  
but they are experiencing all the lows.

Their country needs them desperately,  
but the facilities are deadly,  
sitting around all day at a desk,  
really trying their best.

They just want go get back to their families,  
but they are under contract .... and prison,  
their kids are crying for them,  
some of whom are younger than 10.

## Let Me Be Free by Alfie Branton (8Ar)

Everyday I come in early,  
my family questioning why.  
Knowing I can't tell them,  
I hope they do not cry.

Every night I'm scared for them,  
you never know when the bombs will come.  
I hope they are not worried,  
especially my Mum.

I love her very much I don't know what I would od  
without her,  
As she hopes and prays I'm safe.  
It should be the other way around,  
Her working here instead.

Sadness comes over me,  
like a dark cloud appeared.  
I am surprised,  
I love my family – I always will.

Life at Bletchley Park is sad,  
Wish I could see my Dad.  
Just a few days of them not worrying,  
please Bletchley Park, let me be free.

To see more poems, please  
see the attachment to the  
email.

Parents and carers welcome

# CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY CITY HALL

We want to hear from you!

**Help us shape Medway's future and what matters most to children and young people up to 25**

Join us for an indoor fun fair with activities for the whole family

- Ball in a bucket
- Hoopla
- Feed the clown
- Splat the rat
- Higher lower
- Tin can alley



We want to hear your ideas!

We are looking for young people to help lead us in becoming a more child-friendly city. Work alongside Medway Council staff and specialists to address the needs and wants of children, young people and families' in Medway.

## THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER

**Where:**  
The Rochester  
Corn Exchange  
Northgate  
The Precinct  
Rochester  
ME1 1LS

**When:**  
Doors open at 4pm  
Event starts at 4.30pm  
Free meal will be served  
Event finishes at 7pm

To make sure we order enough pizza!  
RSVP by Wednesday, 26 October  
to [childfriendly@medway.gov.uk](mailto:childfriendly@medway.gov.uk)

Please contact [childfriendly@medway.gov.uk](mailto:childfriendly@medway.gov.uk) if you have any questions

[medway.gov.uk/childfriendly](http://medway.gov.uk/childfriendly)



Sign in to  
eDofE.org

- Use the account details that your Leader sends you.

Decide what you're  
going to do

- Use the programme planners in eDofE to decide on your activities before recording them in eDofE.
- Work with your Leader to find Assessors for each section.

Keep a record  
of what you do

- Add photos to help show your Leader what you have done.

Let your Leader  
know you've  
done it.

- When a section is complete add your Assessor's reports for your Leader to read

Move on to  
the next level  
- or be  
a volunteer...

Celebrate!

- You'll get a badge and certificate
- At Gold you can attend a ceremony at a Royal Palace.



The City of Medway is a Registered Charity No. 1075495, and is included in the 1000000+ and a People's Choice Organisation for 2016/17. Registered Office: Culture House, Medway Way, ME16 6AA, Medway SE10 2JF. Tel: 01634 495177

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NATIONAL COLLECTION WEEK  
14-21 NOVEMBER 2022



## Boxing



Joshua Ley (year 13) – victorious in the quarter finals of the National Championships. Well done!

## Second-Hand Uniform at HGS

Further to our consultation with parents we are pleased to announce the launch of Holcombe's second-hand uniform initiative

**DROP** off unwanted uniform,  
**SWAP** for an alternative,  
**SHOP** for a small donation

We will be open for parents/students to drop unwanted, outgrown uniform to the school over the course of 2 weeks.

Please see attached feedback from the consultation, which informed this scheme. We welcomed your feedback and thank you for taking the time to complete our survey.



### Term 1:

**Drop: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> October 22**

**Swap: w/c 17<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> October 22 for students at break/lunch**

**Shop: Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 3.15-6.00 pm**

### Term 2:

**Drop: 9<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January 23**

**Swap: w/c 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> January 23 for students at break/lunch**

**Shop: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 3.15-6.00 pm**

### Term 3:

**Drop: 17<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April 23**

**Swap: w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> May 23 for students at break/lunch**

**Shop: Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 3.15-6.00 pm**

Who is responsible for the scheme?

The scheme will be overseen by the Student Services Department, with assistance from the 6<sup>th</sup> form student leadership team and parent/student and staff volunteers.

Drop request:

Please ensure any clothes being dropped to school are clean and are dropped to the main office/reception in bags within the designated drop dates and not outside of these please. Clothes will then be sorted and groups by type, size, etc. ready for swapping/shopping dates.

Where will swap/shop be available from:

Clothes will be displayed for swap/shop events in the building opposite reception and will be signposted on the dates designated. The area will be manned during the times advertised.

Access to stored second hand uniform may be available on special request at alternative times of year, dependent on need.

Hardship support

Please contact student services if your child is in receipt of free school meals and you require financial support to obtain items of uniform required by the school.

If not in receipt of free school meals, but experiencing difficulties, please do contact Student Services who will do their best to support you.



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Where:

St Stephen's Church, Chatham

When:

Tuesday 13th December

Time:

6pm-7pm

## 217 year anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar

Two Holcombe Grammar year 11 students and Medway Victory Sea Cadet Leading cadets had the honour to take part in the first national Trafalgar Day celebration since 2019 at Trafalgar Square in London on Sunday the 16th of October 2022.

The annual celebration has taken place since 1946 with only the covid pandemic halting proceedings.

The parade was attended by 400 cadets from the Sea Cadets Corps, Combined Cadet Force, Air Cadets, Royal Navy Volunteer Cadet Corps, Army Cadets, Marine Cadets and the Sea Cadet Physical Training team to celebrate Lord Nelson's victory over France and Spain at the battle of Trafalgar on the 21st of October 1805 leading to Napoleon's subsequent defeat in invading Britain.

Physical training instructors Joe and Andrea took part in the Trafalgar Day parade with the Sea Cadet Physical Training display team which included 27 PTIs and joined by 12 Junior cadets. Their training began early on Friday the 14th of October where they spent over 40 hours leading up to the parade practising the three elements of the display. This included the hornpipe traditional royal navy dance to keep the ships company healthy in small spaces showing the tasks used on sailing ships in days gone by. Club swing which involved swinging two 2.5 kg Indian clubs to a musical routine, originally clubs we used for weight training to increase upper body strength and the Skip jump routine involving jumps and arm movements to music traditionally used as a full body warm up.

Both young men had a great experience in being involved in such a historical parade and though exhausted after the 3 days felt it was a successful weekend and hope to be involved in next year's parade.

