

We are nearly at the end of another term and once again this blog has some fantastic examples of some of the work we have been doing here this term.

Years 11 and 13 have now both finished their first prelim examinations of the year and will either have received or will soon receive feedback on their performance. When we return in January, these students will only have approximately 16 school weeks year until their formal GCSE or A Level examinations start so we hope that the prelims have been useful to show students where they are now and what they need to prioritise in the coming weeks. Years 10 and 12 Classcharts, this term we have been developing our Facebook and are now well underway with their GCSEs and A Level courses that they began in September and Years 7-9 are continuing to study a wide range of subjects which will culminate, for year 9, later this year when they choose their GCSE options.

As Christmas approaches we are entering in to the festive spirit. Our Christmas tree is up, many areas of the school are decorated (the 6<sup>th</sup> form hub in particular looks fantastic) and this week we held 'Christmas Jumper Day' to raise funds for Save The Children. I would like to pay a special mention to those students who supported Mrs Quartey with the Shoebox appeal – we sent over 350 shoeboxes to the Samaritans this year; our highest amount ever. At a time when many families are feeling the pinch, this generosity of spirit is all the more impressive.

Next week our canteen staff will provide Christmas Dinner for students on Tuesday or Wednesday, Heads of Year will be presenting a range of awards in the end of term assemblies and we also hope all students will enjoy spending some time with their form groups on the last day of term. Most significantly of all, next week we will be hosting our carol concert at 6pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December at the nearby St Stephens church. I do hope many of you are able to join us there for what will be our first carol concert in three years.

#### **Classcharts**

We are really pleased to now be able to report that 86% of all parents are now signed up to Classcharts. More information is provided on this later in this blog. If you are one of the few who still • do not have an account, please do sign up as we will continue to move more and more of our systems over to Classcharts in the new

#### Communication

We continue to refine our communication methods. In addition to Instagram sites. In the new year we will be looking to improve our email communications to make it simpler for parents to receive updates and messages from us. Look out for more information on this in January.

#### Punctuality / gates and Tutor Rooms

Students should be in their form rooms for registration by 8:40AM each day. When we return in January, to further encourage a punctual start to the school day, the gates will be locked from 8:35AM and anyone arriving after this time will need to buzz through to Reception in order to gain admission to the site. Punctuality is a life skill which students need to learn so please do support us by doing what you can to ensure your son or daughter is on site and in form rooms ready to register by 8:40AM. Also in January, we will be reallocating Tutor Rooms so that Form Tutors will now register their Tutor Groups in what is their main teaching room. Tutors will inform students of their new Tutor Room by the end of this term.

Once the festivities conclude next week, term 2 will end at 12:30pm on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December. Term 3 will begin at 8:40am on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, which will be a normal school day, and we look forward to welcoming our students back with us then.

#### Key Dates 2022 -

- Tuesday 13th December Carol Concert
- Friday 16th December Last Day of Term 2 finishing at 12:30

# Key Dates 2023 -

- Monday 2nd January Bank Holiday
- Tuesday 3rd January First Day of Term 3 ٠
- 3rd-6th January Year 12 Prelims •
- 9th-13th January Year 11 Language Orals ٠
- Thursday 12th January Year 9 Parents . Evening
- Thursday 19th January Year 13 Parents Evening
- WC 23rd January Year 11 Prelims •
- WC 30th January Year 11 Prelims
- WC 30th January Year 10 Work Experience
- Friday 10th February Last Day of Term 3

In the meantime, my very best wishes to you all for a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and prosperous new year.

Thank you and see you in 2023. **Mr Lee Preston** Principal

### Classcharts

We have now been running our Classcharts system for two terms and are seeing a significant increase in positive comments received by students (over 82,000 at the time of writing). 86% of parents have already signed up to the system, enabling some very useful conversations to occur around students' experiences in school. We would strongly advise all parents to sign in to the system if you have not already, so that you can gain access to all comments about your child's 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 – year 7 for example have accrued over 25,000 positive incidents so far this year!

As the vast majority of families are now signed up to Classcharts, we will be fully moving to notifying you of any detentions or incidents via Classcharts, so will not continue to send separate emails confirming this. Detentions continue to be set for the following day at the earliest, to enable you to make alternative travel arrangements if needed.

Students also have access to their student app for Classcharts, so please do encourage them to check this to ensure they do not miss any points issued or detentions set.

# University of Cambridge KS4 Trip

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022, we took 30 of our year 10 and 11 to visit Queen's College at the University of Cambridge, for an aspirational pathways programme. This is the first of two trips this academic year, to allow our hardworking Key Stage Four an opportunity to engage with life at a prestigious

world class university. The students demonstrated excellent questioning skills to the undergraduates who were their guides. The students demonstrated a genuine curiosity to develop their understanding of the process and benefits of a degree at Oxbridge. The Holcombe students were a credit to the school and impressed the staff at Queen's College with their positive attitude and behaviour, throughout the day. Thank you to the accompanying staff, Mrs Bridges and Ms Maher-McDonagh, Thank you, Mrs Jhaj



# Attendance

We would like to remind parents that is their responsibility for their child to attend school every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

It is equally as important for their child to be punctual and attend school on time. We are strengthening our systems over Christmas to meet our high expectations for our students. Registration opens at 08:40am, if a child is late before 08:50am, a 30 minute detention will be given. If a child is late after 08:50am, a 1 hour detention will be given. This is ten minutes earlier than it has been in the past and we hope that this will encourage more students to be punctual to school.

We have always expected students to be in their form room, ready to engage with their tutor period, at 08:40am. We will therefore be shutting the Maidstone Road gate at 08:35am, as we are expecting all students to already be on site, making their way to their forms. We are constantly reviewing this system in order to find ways to encourage greater punctuality.

We understand that lateness can sometimes be due to unforeseen circumstances, and those will be taken into consideration. However, prewarned train/bus strikes and ongoing road works are not an unforeseen circumstance, and adjustments to travel plans should be made prior to the journey to allow for expected delays.

By attending school consistently and punctually, we are setting our students up to be their best selves, thank you so much for your ongoing support in achieving this with them.

# Flu Vaccination/ HPV Vaccination

Could we please remind parents/carers of Years 7, 8 and 9 to complete the consent form for the Flu vaccination that was sent out earlier this week which will be happening on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2023. Parents/carers of Years 8 and 9 could you please also complete the consent form for the HPV vaccination that was also sent out last week.

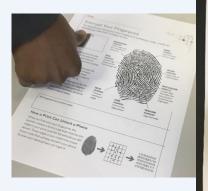
If you have any questions about the vaccines then please contact the School Immunisation team at <u>kchft.cyp-immunisationteam@nhs.net</u> or call them on 0300 123 5205.

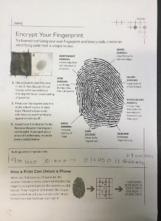
# **Fingerprint Encryption**

Year 10 Computer Scientists have been learning about the processes of binary conversion, encryption and manipulation of data. During their lesson on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the students were challenged to apply this learning to the physical action of taking and cataloguing fingerprints.



Students in 10C/CS carried out the process of taking, analysing and converting their fingerprint signatures into Binary. The students were able to explain and justify the encryptions of their fingerprints as well as relate this to the technology seen on a variety of popular telephones in the UK. Alongside this, students were able to discuss with Miss Lee the applications of such technology within the criminal justice system and other similar fields.







#### Careers

Year 13 - Deadline for submitting your UCAS application for checking and amendments is 11th January as we are aware the UCAS deadline is 25th January at 6pm. Please ensure your UCAS application is complete and on the UCAS application system then email <u>sixthform@holcombegrammar.org.uk</u> letting us know so that we can then review, approve and send to UCAS on your behalf. But note before it can be submitted you must have paid for it online. https://www.ucas.com/

<u>Year 12</u> - Using UNIFROG to start to plan your future career path and look at possible university, college courses and apprenticeships.

Year 11 - Mid-Kent College lots of opportunities if continuing at school is not for you. <u>https://www.midkent.ac.uk/news/open-days/</u> if you are continuing at Holcombe please don't forget to complete your application form.

Year 10 - Work experience week 30th January - 3rd February 2023, an ideal opportunity to develop those soft skills that are essential in all work places.

# **Career of The week**

# Barrister

Barristers give advice to solicitors and represent people in disagreements, investigations and in court.

Average salary (a year) £17,152 to £200,000

### How to become

- Explore the different ways to get into this role.
- You can get into this job through a university course or by working towards this role.

# University

- You could do a degree in law to become a barrister. You also have the option to do a degree in any subject and complete a Graduate Diploma in Law afterwards.
- Once you've graduated, you need to complete:
- The Bar Professional Training Course which takes one year
- A year of practical training called a pupillage

To get into some universities you'll need to pass the <u>Law National Aptitude Test</u> (LNAT). **Entry requirements** 

You'll usually need: 2 to 3 A levels, or equivalent, for a degree (English Literature, History, Philosophy and Ethics are some of the best options to study)

## **Shoebox Appeal**

A team of student volunteers have been helping to pack and wrap shoebox gifts for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child in their lunch times this term. This group and other schools and churches managed to collect over 350 shoeboxes ready for delivery to the charity's centre in Tonbridge. We went with two minibuses full of presents and spent time chatting to the charity workers and volunteers to find out about their experiences delivering these shoeboxes to needy children around the world. Our students then spent an afternoon helping to sort and prepare the thousands of shoeboxes for transport. In addition to the gifts, £211 was raised to support the campaign and in our eighth year of being involved with Operation Christmas Child, students continue to learn about the wider world through charitable giving and service to the community. We are very privileged to be involved and would like to thank all our staff, students and families for your donations this year.



## **One Big Family Helping the Homeless charity**

One Big Family Helping the Homeless charity, based in Medway, came to speak to the sixth form this week in their PD lesson to explain what opportunities for giving and volunteering we have in our local community. In support of this charity, we are asking for donations for food bank items, toiletries and clothing for the homeless work this winter. Our students and staff have also been writing well wishes on Christmas cards to distribute to those who use the One Big Family Soup Kitchen, Winter Shelter and receive food parcels over the coming weeks. Please can all donations and cards be brough to the school office by the end of this term, and we thank you again for your generosity to this cause.



#### **Exchange with a Spanish School**

Holcombe Grammar Students had their first Spanish conversation with students from our exchange Spanish School 'Colegio Diocesano Padre Jacobo' in Málaga. Our students introduced themselves in Spanish, answered questions about the school and had a very interesting conversation about football. Bien hecho!

#### **Games Guide for Parents**

As we head towards the Christmas holidays and your children will be asking for new games, this can be a confusing minefield for you.

Internet Matters have put together a guide which will help you to make a decision, including age specific games that families can play together. You can find a copy of the guide here <u>Internet-Matters-Amazing-Games-Guide-2021-1.pdf</u> (internetmatters.org)

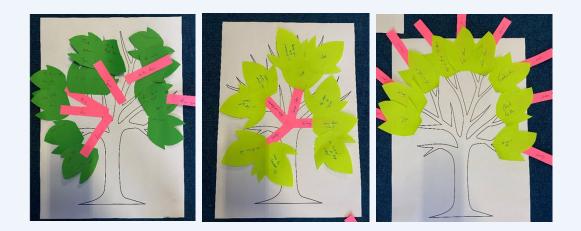
Have a happy and safe Christmas.



### **Tree Traversal**

Year 12 students have been learning about a variety of data structures and their real-world use during their CS lesson with Miss Lee this term.

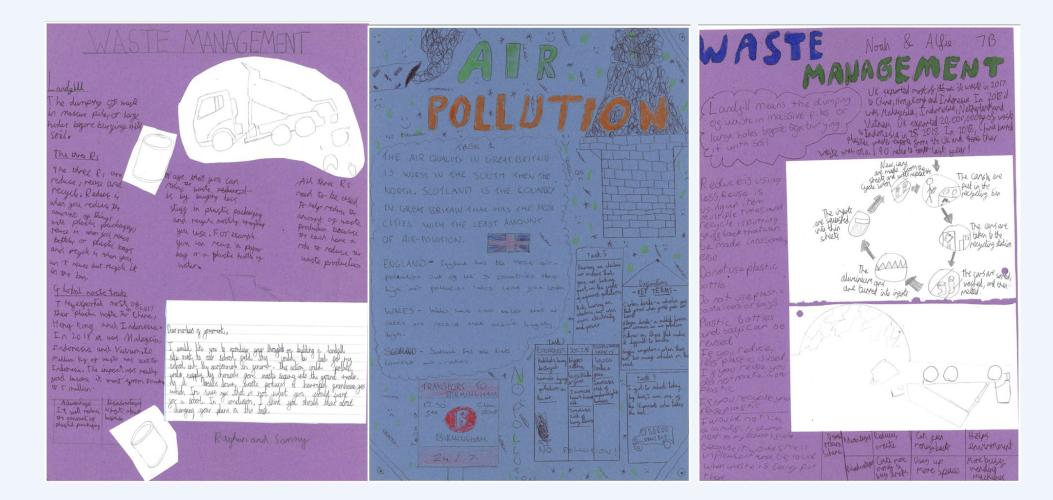
In the final lesson on data structures, students in 12A/CS were challenged to classify and document data on a variety of films and books to begin to get them to unpick and break down data. As you can see, the students rose to this challenge creating intricate and well classified trees.



The students later in the lesson explored the three main manners in which data on trees are traversed (searched) exploring how their data could be connected and better documented for easier and more effective recall.

Year 12 have taken each challenging data structure and topic and effectively applied this to the real world. Well done Year 12!

Year 7 students completed posters on waste management and air pollution this term.



# Christmas in the Hub

Our Sixth Form area has been decorated using only items that have been reused, recycled, repurposed and donated. The students in year 12, led by Miss Bloomfield have created a cosy Christmas corner to brighten up the year 12 Hub.

The message behind it was to show that kindness is out there, you just need to look for it and to show that not everything beautiful is expensive, sometimes they are free!



Before

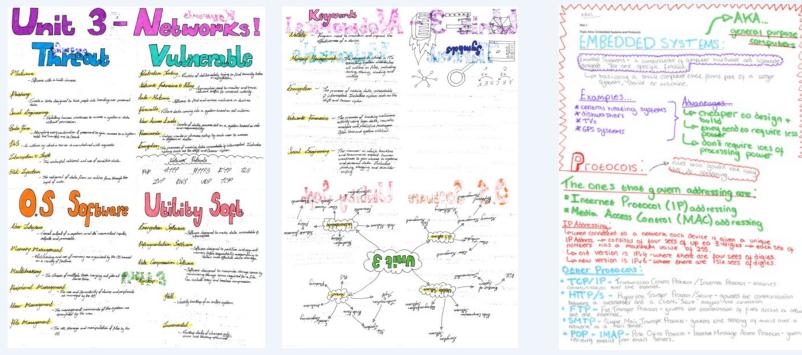
# Folding Frenzy - Year 11

Year 11 Computer Scientists have been challenged to beat the teacher in their folding frenzy revision lesson. Students in 11-A/CS have been carrying out personalised revision using the Folding Frenzy method to target areas that they did not fully explore in the run up to their Prelim examinations.

They were provided with a lesson and a homework to complete this but had to ensure that the standard was the same as or better than their teachers. Miss Lee created hers in the same time period with the same resources as the students to show them just how easy this method is if used to it's fullest potential.

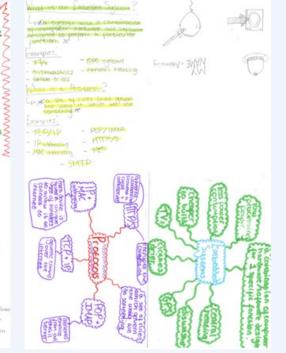
As you can see, the bulk of students actively engaged and rose to the challenge with many commenting that this task made them seriously think about the manner in which they communicate key facts and concepts.

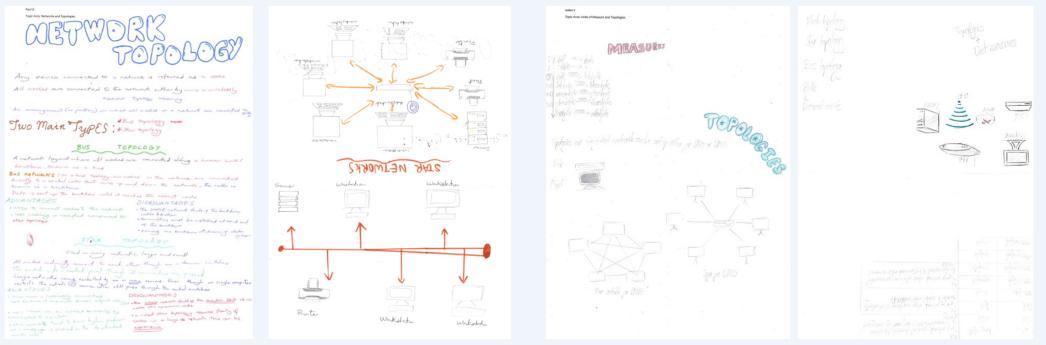
Let's hope that moving forward this is a technique we see more in the run up to exams.



Above: Miss Lee's Exemplar

A great effort from Mac!





After a little more guidance, Paul rose to the challenge

# Although a little faint, a brilliant attempt from Jaden E. Well done!

There were so many fantastic options to pick from, but above are just some of the finished products produced. Keep it up Year 11, this will help support you not just in CS but across your subjects moving forward.

## Year 9 students completed posters looking at the Rock Cycle and importance of geology as part of their Natural resources.

