



Happy New Year to you all.

Whatever you did or wherever you travelled over the Christmas break, I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable festive season. January is always the time for New Years Resolutions and in my assemblies last week I gave the students time to silently reflect and consider what had gone well for them in 2022. I then gave them time to make a note in their planners of 3 things they are going to try to do differently or better in school this year. Can I suggest as parents/carers that you take a look at this with your child – what did they write down and how, perhaps, can you support them to achieve this?

As a school we have returned refreshed and determined as ever to provide the very best educational experience that we can for your child. Lessons have started well on the whole and the vast majority of students have settled well into 2023. As a school we are making a real effort this year to increase the amount of school trips available for students as know students gain so much from such experiences.

One area we want to improve on this term is punctuality. Not just in terms of punctuality to school in the morning but also to lessons throughout the day. Too often we have to pick up students who are dawdling between lessons and losing valuable learning time. We will be clamping down on lateness this term and I would urge you to discuss this with your child so they are aware. You can monitor your child's punctuality along with a wide range of other aspects of their school performance through our Classcharts App. We know that nearly 90% of you now have this and use this and early feedback has been very positive. If you are one of the few parents who is yet to sign up, please do so as this is now our main method of communication with you. If you need support to do this, please contact our main school office and we will happily talk you through it.

We were heartened to hear just before the end of term that over 600 parents of children in Year 6 currently have selected Holcombe as a school that they wish their son to attend, with nearly 300 putting us as their first or second choice. We know we are a good school but it was good to see that, after our Open Day and Taster Evening last term, that so many new parents have realised this and wish to join us.

Later this year we will know for certain if we are to become a co-educational school from September 2024. The public consultation about this has now closed and we are working with officials from Medway council and the Department of Education on our application. We expect a decision in February / March and I will update you all once this final decision is made. To remind you all, should this go ahead then we will be able to admit girls into our Year 7 from September 2024.

This blog is again full of news of great sporting, music and quizzing (!) success and I hope you enjoy reading the updates. Thank you for your continued support and I will look forward to providing further updates later this term.

Mr Lee Preston
Principal
Holcombe Grammar School

Key Dates -

- 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
- Monday 20th February - First Day of Term 4
- WC 20th February - Year 13 Language Orals
- Thursday 23rd February - Year 9 Options Evening
- WC 27th February - WC 6th March - Year 13 Prelims

Shrek Jr

The cast of Shrek JR were working hard at their evening rehearsal last night. Not long now until the show. Tickets will be on sale soon. Good luck to everyone involved.



Autism Advice Clinics

The Kent Community Foundation are now able to offer **Autism Advice Clinics** and Virtual Carers Groups to **families living in Medway**. Appointments last approximately 30 minutes and take place via Zoom.

Support and advice can include any related areas. This could include questions regarding (for example) securing a diagnosis for autism, emotional support for parents and food/diet difficulties. All advisors have lived experience and can help with most processes, offer strategies and help understanding.



Advice Clinic Appointments & Virtual Carer Groups

now available for families in

MEDWAY

please email: admin@autismapprentice.co.uk
or call 03000110300 to book



Year 11 Sports Success

Ethan has been selected by the Kent Hockey Association to represent the County over the coming months in representative matches against fellow County teams. He will be training & playing various County teams over the coming months with an eye on being selected for the South East Squad.

He's worked incredibly hard to be selected after some pre trial training sessions before the Christmas break and got the letter of selection just before Christmas.

He's been playing locally for Anchorians Hockey Club in Gillingham for many seasons and is currently representing them at various levels, playing for the U16's, U18's and the Senior 3rd and 2nd Team Squads. Well done!



London Southbank University Law Taster Day – 15th December 2022

As part of raising aspirations for our sixth form students, Year 13 Law students were invited to a Law Taster Day at London Southbank University. LSBU has the second-highest ranked law degree in London for Overall Satisfaction of our students and ranked 12th overall in the UK for Teaching Quality in Law.

The day included:

- A taster Law lecture from the resident lecturers
- A visit to the drop in Legal clinic run by current LSBU students to help citizens with their legal issues
- A tour of the new Law Library facilities with state of the art technology which was just refurbished in summer 2022.

The visit was useful for the students who gained a better insight into life as a Law student and opportunities available to students who choose to study at London Southbank University.

Mrs Mohammed took the following students: Georgia Brierley, Evie Lamb, Harrison Merrett, Amrita Thind, Preity Lar and Amy Ugjaba.



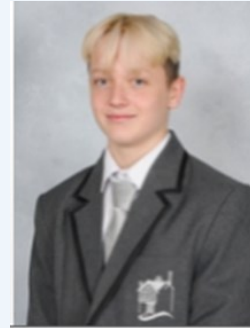
Holcombe Trio Become Big Quiz Finalists

Alex Novetschi of Year 9, Cameron Abbott and Barayturk Aydin, both of Year 11, have flown the flag for Holcombe in recent months, exercising their memory skills, winning the Holcombe round and going on to fly through the semi-finals of the Trust's Big Quiz 2022 in December. Next week they go head-to-head with Rochester Grammar School, as the only remaining secondary schools from across the entire trust.



Sixth Form Successes

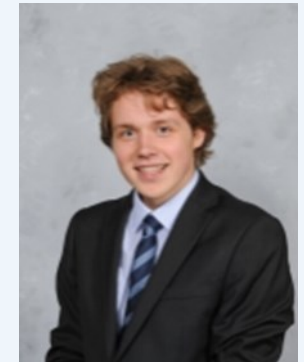
England U19s



Mickey Hawney was invited to a closed trial with the U19 England volleyball team after the coach watched him play in a finals game. On the 8th January, Mickey spend the day training with the current England volleyball squad where the coach later informed Mickey that he had been accepted into the programme and was now a part of the team. He now attends training camps each month with the team.

National Youth Orchestra

Because we were not permitted to announce this before Christmas, due to strict rules laid down by the National Youth Orchestra. Holcombe Grammar School would like to offer belated congratulations to Markus Sadler who has been offered a place in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for 2023. This will be his second year, and he is really looking forward to playing in prestigious venues such as the Royal Festival hall in the Southbank centre and the Royal Albert Hall at the BBC proms.



Personal Development Update

Personal Development (**PSHE**) plays a key role in the life of students and as such here at Holcombe we have devised a curriculum which is tailored to our school community. Here is a reminder of some of the content and activities which your child will undertake in PD lessons for this school year.

Term 1: Be Your Best Self (Years 7-12) and Employability (Year 13) - Year 11 Preliminary Exams

Term 2: Life Skills (Years 7-10, Year 12) and Employability (Year 11) - Year 13 Preliminary Exams

Term 3: Employability (Years 7-10) and Life Skills (Year 13) – Year 11 and Year 12 Preliminary Exams

Term 4: Safety (Years 7-13)

Term 5: Relationships (Years 7-10, Year 12)

Term 6: Sex Education (Years 7-10, Year 12)

Thinking at Holcombe - Learning Journeys

Students across Holcombe are being given access to Learning Journeys for all their subjects. Some subjects organise the Learning Journey by year, some by key stage. A Learning Journey details the topics that a student will study over that period, in the order it will be delivered in lessons.

So how does this help students and support their thinking development? Students who can make cross-links between topics and knowledge have a reduced cognitive load. The synergy experienced through seeing the link between concepts mean that there is less memory space used when storing the knowledge. Students will also have a deeper understanding of a subject if they can see their learning as a network of interlinked facts and skills, rather than a disconnected sequence of disjointed lessons.

Students may have these Learning Journeys as physical copies in their books or folders or may have access to them digitally on teams. They are displayed in classrooms and within departments and are increasingly being referred to during the lesson by the teacher and students themselves, to contextualise the current learning, link it to what has been studied before, and to make predictions of, or reference to, what is still to be explored.

Online Safety

Talk to your children about inappropriate conduct, contact and content— without inducing fear.

When socialising and communicating online, make sure you're explaining to your children the three "Cs:" conduct, contact and content:

Inappropriate conduct. Spell out clear "do" and "don'ts" for what inappropriate means to you. Explain how cyberbullying works and what it looks like with real examples, encouraging your family to take ownership of their actions online.

Inappropriate contact. Break down how social engineers, catfishers, scammers and online predators operate. Be sure to explain it in simplistic terms, detailing a few clear red flags.

Inappropriate content. Talk to your children about the way they communicate both online and off— and to avoid pornography, violence or hate speech at all costs.

It's important to create a supportive, open environment where your children feel safe coming to you with questions or concerns about their online behaviour, without fear of negative consequences. Instead, focus on educating and encouraging them to think before they interact and conducting themselves in a way they'd be proud of.



Ethics ID: 23711/001



Participants wanted for a study exploring long term impacts on parental mental health following COVID-19 School Closures for parents/carers of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

What is involved?

The initial study involves an opportunity to complete a short online survey which explores your experience of the school closures, supporting your child with remote learning, the impact on your wellbeing and your family relationships.

You will then be asked if you'd be happy to be contacted for an additional semi-structured interview to explore your views further. This is voluntary and there is no requirement to participate. This interview can be completed either via a telephone call or video call and would last approximately 45 minutes and would allow you to share your stories and experience of lockdown.

You may be eligible if:

- You are the parent/carer to a child(ren) who has a Special Educational Need or Disability but did not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) during the COVID-19 school closures.
- You supported your child(ren) to participate in remote learning throughout this period.
- You live in the UK.
- You are aged eighteen or older.

What does this research aim to do?

This research aims to share the stories of parents and carers of children who have SEND, but did not have an EHCP during the COVID-19 school closures and therefore were unable to attend school.

This research hopes to consider the positives that occurred as a result of this time, as well as consider the difficulties faced and the potential longer term impacts on parental mental health. This will also include considerations over the changes to family dynamics and the ways this continues to play a role in family life.

How to participate:

Follow this link to the survey:

<https://redcap.slms.ucl.ac.uk/surveys/?s=T3NF3XKCXN4DE7AF>

**or alternatively contact
Tori Gunstone (Trainee
Educational
Psychologist) at
victoria.gunstone.21@ucl.ac.uk**



Participation is entirely voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw at anytime.

MSG Futsal

Congratulations to the Holcombe U13 and U15 Futsal teams who both accomplished impressive third placed finishes at the recent Medway Futsal games. Both sides fought superbly against 12 Medway based schools, in what proved to be an impressive outcome considering the high quality of opposition our students faced throughout the day.

Both teams adopted a hard-to-beat 1-2-1 defensive diamond shape whilst choosing to counter attack quickly, using quick dribbles and direct passing in order to exploit the spaces opposing teams left for Holcombe. Positively, a number of opposing schools praised both the U13 and U15 Holcombe sides for their resilience, team work and determination off the ball and their creativity on the ball. Subsequently both Holcombe sides were renowned for not conceding many whilst scoring a range of high-quality goals in every fixture they played as future opponent feared playing against the Holcombe sides.

At the end of the competition, the U13 Holcombe side comfortably gained third position after stringing together a number of impressive victories whilst the U15 side unfortunately missed out on second and first spot by goal difference only.

Well done to all involved.

Captains Entry: Charlie Bovis U13 Futsal Team

After a very successful day that everyone enjoyed at the Futsal competition, Holcombe Grammar School was proud to have come away with a valiant bronze medal. The competition was brilliant and our team: Charlie Bovis, Tomas Chaves, Hugo Lett, Noah Horvath and Ellis Arrowsmith (Year 8), Caleb Foote, Oscar Simpson and Josh Lee (Year 7) all worked hard for each other to bring back 3rd place out of 10 schools.

When we first got there we had a difficult first game against Hundred of Hoo in which Ellis Arrowsmith scored a wonder goal in the first minute to make us 1-0 up. However we unfortunately drew the game 1-1. We then played Brompton Academy in which we won 2-0 with Charlie Bovis and Noah Horvath scoring. After this, we played Howard in which we sadly lost 3-0. Subsequently, we played Victory Academy and we won 1-0 with Noah Horvath scoring the only goal that game. Next, we played Strood Academy and we came away victorious 3-1 with Ellis Arrowsmith scoring a brace and Noah Horvath also scoring one. Finally, we played Rainham Mark Grammar School where we fell agonisingly short as we lost in the very last second! Overall, we were very happy with our result of 3rd and hope to keep getting medals and representing Holcombe Grammar!

It was a pleasure to be captain of this fantastic team throughout such an enjoyable day.

Term 2 Inter-House Results

Year 7

Form	Football A	Football B	Badminton	Total Points	Overall Position
Ardent	4th	4th	1st	9	4th
Barfleur	1st	2nd	5th	10	3rd
Conquest	3rd	1st	3rd	11	1st
Guardian	2nd	3rd	2nd	11	1st
Shannon	5th	5th	4th	4	5th

Year 8

Form	Football A	Football B	Badminton	Total Points	Overall Position
Ardent	2nd	4th	5th	7	5th
Barfleur	4th	3rd	3rd	8	3rd
Conquest	5th	2nd	3rd	8	3rd
Guardian	3rd	1st	2nd	12	1st
Shannon	1st	5th	1st	11	2nd

Year 9

Form	Football A	Football B	Badminton	Total Points	Overall Position
Ardent	2nd	4th	4th	8	3rd
Barfleur	4th	3rd	1st	10	2nd
Conquest	3rd	2nd	5th	8	3rd
Guardian	1st	1st	3rd	13	1st
Shannon			1st	5	5th

Year 10

Form	Football A	Football B	Badminton	Total Points	Overall Position
Ardent	1st	5th	5th	7	4th
Barfleur	4th	4th	4th	6	5th
Conquest	5th	2nd	1st	10	3rd
Guardian	2nd	3rd	2nd	11	1st
Shannon	3rd	1st	3rd	11	1st

Year 11

Form	Football A	Football B	Badminton	Total Points	Overall Position
Ardent	3rd	1st	3rd	11	3rd
Barfleur	2nd	3rd	1st	12	2nd
Conquest					
Guardian	1st	2nd	1st	14	1st
Shannon	4th	4th	4th	6	4th