



Dear Parents and Carers

As April comes to an end I hope you are all well and hopefully we can all look forward to some good Spring weather soon.

In just over two weeks from now the summer GCSE and A Level examinations will begin in earnest. Our staff have been working incredibly hard with our Year 11 and Year 13 students, who too have been working hard to make those final, crucial preparations before examinations begin. We have prepared a revision timetable for the 6 week examination period which students will be receiving very soon. This will set out where every exam is and also where we will be laying on extra revision sessions for them to provide some last minute support and advice. All the staff remain ready and willing to support our Year 11 and 13 students however we can in the weeks that remain so if any student or parent has any query please do not hesitate to ask. May I wish the very best of luck to all our Year 11 and 13 students for what lies ahead in the next few weeks.

I am very conscious that the closure of the Year 13 study space, The Hive, has not been helpful to them and I can only apologise for this. However a survey of the building flagged some concerns which led to its immediate closure. Work has already begun to address those concerns and we are hopefully that The Hive will be able to reopen in approximately 2-3 weeks time. I know this is far from ideal but was unavoidable. I know that the 6<sup>th</sup> form team have been working really hard to provide options for our Year 13 students for the next few weeks. I will keep parents and students in Year 13 updated.

Aside from Year 11 and 13, lots more is happening across the school. This blog is again jam-packed with updates about trips, health presentations and sporting successes. We are also already turning our attention to the next academic year with Year 11 and Year 9 all choosing their options for 6<sup>th</sup> form and GCSE subjects and planning for next years timetable is underway. We are also planning our Founders Day for this year which is provisionally booked for Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Due to COVID and other reasons we have not been able to hold a Founders Day at the school for 3 years and we are very much looking forward to its return. Mrs Sommerville is planning this as we speak and details will be coming out soon.

We aim to communicate effectively with all parents and carers and I know that the Classcharts App has dramatically improved communication this year. We also welcome communication from parents via email and telephone. However may I please remind parents that:

- Upon receipt of an email, we aim to respond within 48 hours (2 working days). Please do not email and expect instant replies as staff have other commitments and will respond when they can. Where your email is regarding an incident that may have happened, please do allow our staff time to investigate that properly so they can address any concerns in full
- Whilst parents and carers are able to email staff in evenings and at weekends, please do not expect replies at that time. All staff are entitled to enjoy evenings and weekends with family and friends and are not expected to reply to work emails at those times.

### Key Dates -

- **Monday 1st May - Early May Bank Holiday**
- **Wednesday 3rd May - Year 12 Geography Trip to Whitstable**
- **Monday 8th May - Bank Holiday for the King's Coronation**
- **Wednesday 10th May - Year 12 Geography Trip to Bluewater**
- **Thursday 25th May - Year 12 Media Trip to Sky Studios**
- **Friday 26th May - Last Day of Term 5**
- **Monday 5th June - First Day of Term 6**
- **Monday 5th June - Year 12 UCAS Fair**
- **Tuesday 6th June - Royal Albert Hall - Gaming Music**
- **Thursday 20th July - Last Day of Term 6**

Finally, may I direct all parents and carers to the back page of the Blog where the Holcombe Association (our PTA) invites you to come and take part in a fun quiz night on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May. Details are in the blog and we hope many of you will join us.

May I wish you all a very happy Bank Holiday weekend. I will update you further in two weeks time

Mr L. Preston  
Principal

## Attendance

1. Please report any absences via the Class Charts app by 08:30am on the first day of your child's absence
  2. Book routine medical/ dental/ optician appointments for after school or during school holidays
  3. Notify the school in advance of any medical appointments and provide appointment cards/ letters
  4. Respond promptly to school enquiries about unexplained absence
  5. Keep us well informed of any ongoing medical conditions that may affect your child's attendance
  6. Avoid taking holidays during school time
  7. Ensure you have alternative arrangements for a friend or relative to bring or collect your child in an emergency
  8. Plan alternative travel arrangements in the event of bus or train strikes
  9. Always make sure we have an up to date telephone number for you.
  10. Familiarise yourself with the school term dates as they may slightly differ to other schools that siblings may attend
- Arriving 5 minutes late every day equates to 3 days lost over the year. 10 minutes late every day equates to 6.5 days lost!
  - Out of 365 days in a year, 175 are spent not in school- plenty of time available to go on holiday
  - 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE and around one in third achieve no GCSE's at all

## Personal Development

April is Testicular Cancer Awareness month, which is the most common cancer to affect males aged 15-49. Our Personal Development lessons this week helped to raise awareness of Testicular Cancer and educate student on testicular cancer. KS4 and KS5 had a visit from the charity 'OddBalls' to explain self-examination and to encourage GP check-ups to avoid undiagnosed problems.

Students and families should refer to [Oddballs - Check Yourself Guide \(myoddballs.com\)](http://myoddballs.com) for more information. As we continue through the 'Relationships' topic of Personal Development, please continue to ask students what they have discussed in PD lessons and continue conversations at home to support their learning.

Donations to the 'OddBalls' Testicular Awareness charity would be gratefully received using +Pay. The option to donate will be available for the remainder of the month.

## Lateness

All pupils must be onsite by 8.35am. School gates will be closed at 8.40am as registration begins. Any child arriving after gates have closed will be marked as *late* using an *L* code. Any child arriving after their registration period will be marked as an *unauthorised late* using a *U* code. The *U* code marks your child's morning session as unauthorised and this subsequently affects your child's attendance and accumulates your child's unauthorised absences.

## Did you know...

- The Government's minimum attendance target is 96%
- 90% attendance mean absences from lessons for the equivalent of one half day every week!
- Pupil's whose attendance falls below 90% are considered 'Persistently Absent'





## Year 12 Thorpe Park Trip

Year 12 students enjoyed a well-earned trip to Thorpe Park on the last day of last term. The trip was organised by the Year 12 team, as a reward for students with good attendance, behaviour and are on target for their Prelims. The students, although getting on the coach home absolutely sodden from relentless rain, did not let the British weather dampen their intention to get as much out of the trip with smiles showing all day long.

Due to the weather, the queuing times were kind with some students managing the bigger rides over 15 times! Students won an abundance of soft toys with two four-foot large huskie teddies in the mix.

The student's behaviour on the coach, at check in times, and throughout the day was exemplary, and a real joy for all involved.

A massive thank you from the students to the staff who took the time to make the day possible, even working after paid hours to make sure the trip was a success.



## Year 11 Sporting Success

Ethan Beard, in year 11, made his debut for the Kent Hockey Team last week. He played against Sussex and Surrey and will be playing against Hampshire and Oxfordshire in a few weeks. Congratulations and good luck!



## Sixth Form Attainment Group

After interviewing students from the attainment support group, it is clear to see that sessions are really helping the students excel in their learning. The students explained that the sessions were helping with their organisation skills, allowing them to keep up with homework deadlines and print out any work they may need. The students also said that they planned their school days, allowing them to be more efficient. Furthermore, the sessions help them to revise for upcoming assessments which is vital for their overall learning. Along with attainment support sessions, the students expressed that they also utilised the other clubs that are on during school time and after school, such as the homework club, allowing them to further meet homework deadlines in an efficient, stress-free way. Contribution by Hayden Durling - Holcombe's e-ambassador.

## Sixth Form Sporting Success

At Holcombe we strive to support and shout about our students' achievements outside of school. Our Student Along with excelling in his school life, Peace Okunrunkoya, Year 12, excels in his life on the Basketball court. Peace plays for the Kent Panthers U18 team, training three times a week, where varying drills and techniques are practised along with at least one game played in the sessions.

Peace has just arrived back home from a two-week tour of LA with his team, which has offered him so many opportunities, not just in his sport, but also in experiencing different cultures and training in the Sunshine! Peace states the being committed to a sport, has helped him with many life skills, including teamwork, communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and quick thinking, which give him that competitive edge on and off the court.

Peace hopes for a future in the sport, hoping to play Basketball at University. Without a doubt the talent that he is displaying already, shows that he is a contender for playing the sport professionally when he is older.

Interview taken and written up by Hayden Durling - Holcombe's e-ambassador.



## Year 12 Law Trip - Witness for the Prosecution

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 17 Year 12 Law students were invited to go on a theatre trip to the show, 'Witness for the Prosecution Service'. Students spent the day travelling up to London where they were able to watch the process of a murder trial of a rich widow. The stage was laid out like a courtroom which enabled the audience and the students to fully immerse themselves within the trial process. Some members of the audience were able to become members of the jury and were able to give their verdict of whether the defendant was guilty or not. This helped the student apply their law knowledge of the roles within the courtroom, the role of the jury and judges within the trial.

While reflecting on the day on the way home, our students shared that they had enjoyed the performance, recognised the court procedures from their learning and debated where they agreed with the verdict.

This was an amazing trip where we all completely immersed ourselves in the experience and were challenged by the plot twists of the play.





## Sixth Form Sporting Success

One of our aspiring Sixth Form student's, Caleb, has made the school proud by securing a soccer scholarship to play for the New Jersey soccer team at Drew University. Caleb, who has been a star player for not just the Sixth Form's APD team, Ebbsfleet United but also for Kent School's; has now impressed the coaches at Drew University with his skills and dedication to the sport.

The scholarship is a huge achievement for Caleb, who has been playing soccer since a young age. He has always had a passion for the sport and has worked tirelessly to improve his skills and qualities as a professional. Caleb's hard work has paid off, and they will now have the opportunity to play at a higher level while pursuing an academic pathway in accounting.

*"We are incredibly proud of Caleb and his achievements," said Mr Eacott (Head of Year 13). "To secure a soccer scholarship at a prestigious university such as Drew is a testament to his talent and dedication to the sport. Everyone that knows Caleb would describe him as a great, friendly character and one that would always be looked up to by others, not just on the football pitch. We wish him all the best as he embarks on this exciting new chapter in his life, and we all can't wait to hear about the impact he will have on his new club."*

The scholarship is also a testament to Holcombe's commitment to fostering excellence in sports and academics. The school has a strong tradition of producing talented student-athletes who go on to achieve great things in their chosen fields.

Caleb will begin his studies at Drew University in September and will play for the New Jersey soccer team. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours and look forward to seeing him achieve great things both on and off the field.

## Table Tennis Club

Term 5 sports clubs at Holcombe have started off with a bang. Led by our fantastic PE department, students from all year groups enjoyed playing table tennis together. Many of them played rally's, with some games involving large groups each taking turns to hit the ball at each other in an anticlockwise fashion! You'll never have a dull time when you attend Holcombe's sports clubs. You may even get to bump into Head Boy, Timi Soyinka, as he often attends some of the sports clubs. The attendees urge everyone to get into sports clubs, as it's a good way to keep fit, meet new people, and have fun! I know for sure I'll be attending some!

Written by Hayden Durling - E-Ambassador



## Thinking (and revising!) at Holcombe

As we head into exam season, many of our students will be busy revising. Below is a QR code to take you to some excellent resources to support revision and excellent study.



However, revision isn't only for years 11 and 13. All students should use these techniques to review their work systematically and regularly. Getting into good habits, ahead of a public examination year, is key to students developing mastery of their learning and demonstrating ambition.

Students have access to these techniques in their 'Be Your Best Self' planner, or they can access through this QR code, or find more information on the displays around school.

## Vaccinations

TD/IPV & MEN ACWY Vaccinations are taking place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May for students in Year 9 and any student in Year 10 or 11 who have missed out having this vaccination.

HPV Vaccinations for Year 8 and Year 9 are also taking place on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May.

## Celebration Feast

At Holcombe we encourage our students to celebrate all of their cultures, and we were honoured to host a feast for breaking fast for our Muslim community.

Eid ul fitr meaning the "feast of breaking fast" is an important day for many Muslims as they celebrate the end of the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar in which Muslims fast from dawn to sunset to bring themselves closer to God. It was in this period of time when the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the first time 1400 years ago.

"People around the world may not have as much as we do. Doing this festival brings us back to how spiritually connected we should be with Islam and that we should be grateful. The fact we can do this at school just makes it even better" Says a year 12 student.

Eid is important for Muslims as they come together as a community to be grateful for what they have and to celebrate the end of the holy month. It is custom to be celebrated with many people and to make lots of food to eat with friends, family and neighbours.







# Spring Quiz Night



FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ANYONE CAN ATTEND - PARENTS, FAMILY, FRIENDS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS



MAXIMUM 6 PER TABLE - £5 PER PERSON

**FRIDAY 5TH MAY, 7:00 - 9:00PM, IN SCHOOL HALL**



BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS AND NIBBLES

THE HOLCOMBE ASSOCIATION WILL PROVIDE COFFEE, TEA, HOT CHOCOLATE, SQUASH, FOR A DONATION - WE ONLY ACCEPT CASH



RAFFLE TICKETS

£1 EACH



# Spring Quiz Night



Name of Team: .....

## Main Contact

Name: .....

Address: .....

Landline and/or Mobile number: .....

Email address: .....

**Please note that we do not accept debit or credit card**

**£5.00 per person**

You can pay by:

- +Pay
- Cheque or
- Cash

**Paying by cheque: Please make payable to "The Holcombe Association"**

Please place completed form and cheque or cash payment in an envelope and put in the red box in the Holcombe Office/Reception, or by post to:

Amanda Bradshaw - Treasurer  
 School Office  
 The Holcombe Association  
 Holcombe Grammar School  
 Letchworth Avenue  
 Chatham  
 Kent  
 ME4 6JB



[thetreasurer@holcombe.org.uk](mailto:thetreasurer@holcombe.org.uk)