



Dear parents and carers,

As we arrive at the end of Term 5 I think everyone here is ready for the break that May Half Term brings.

First thoughts are with our Year 11 and Year 13 students who are now 2 weeks into their summer examinations. By and large the examinations have gone well up to this point and the vast majority of students are seeing their hard work paying off as they leave the examination hall with a degree of confidence that they have been able to demonstrate their knowledge in that particular subject. I would urge all our Year 11 and Year 13 students to make sure they take a bit of a break next week and recharge their batteries ready for the last 2-3 weeks of examinations which will begin when we return. I wish continued good luck to all of you. For Year 13 students I am pleased to be able to announce that the Hive will be able to reopen after Half Term with the emergency building works now completed. I can only apologise that it has not been open for the past few weeks as the urgent work was carried out, but it is now fully open again and available for use by Year 13 students as they continue their preparations for their examinations.

Last week we were delighted to be awarded the Silver Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) from UNICEF. This award is in recognition of all the hard work that has been going on at Holcombe for over a year now including the development of our Personal Development curriculum, assemblies and particularly our improvements in engaging better with our student community through avenues such as our School Council, Year Councils and groups such as our Captains Team and our Diversity Forum. Many students who were interviewed as part of that assessment spoke very well about how much more understanding our community is becoming and how students feel more and more at the very heart of all we are doing here.

Our ambition now is to achieve the Gold Award in summer 2023.

This week saw the culmination of the school chess tournament which really captured the interest of our school community with very many students from across the school competing for the title. We will announce the winners after half term.

When we return we will be having a big push on uniform standards at the start of the new term. Students arriving at any lesson or AM/PM reg with incorrect uniform should expect to be challenged by their teacher to correct their uniform. If students do not bring the correct uniform to school (blazer, school shoes etc) then they should expect to be sanctioned accordingly. In the exceptional circumstances if your child cannot attend school in full uniform please provide a note with them so we know what the issue is; alternatively please contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. Furthermore, I would like to remind all parents that Earpods/headphones should never be used in lessons unless directed by staff, nor should these should be worn around site. Thank you for your support here.

Finally, I wanted to thank those of you who voted in the ballot for our new Parent Governors. We had over 350 votes cast which we were delighted to see. Our new Parent Governors will be introduced to you in this Blog in Term 6.

Next term is always a great term as public examinations come to an end and we can all start enjoying summer activities and looking forward to the new opportunities that a fresh academic year brings. Term 6 will also see the return of our Founders Day which for a range of reasons we have not been able to hold since the pandemic and we are very much looking forward to

Key Dates -

- **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**
- **Friday 21st July - Staff Development Day**

seeing this return. We will also look forward to Induction Days for our new Year 7s and new Year 12s and the opportunities that Work Experience will bring for our Year 12 students.

My very best wishes to you all for a relaxing, happy and healthy half-term break and I look forward to updating you further when we return for Term 6.

Mr L. Preston
Principal
Holcombe Grammar School

Holcombe students find their way to the medals!

A team of students from Year 7 & 8, selected for their consistently positive attitudes and commitment to extra-curricular sport, represented Holcombe at the inaugural Medway School Games orienteering competition on Thursday 11th May. Despite this being a new activity to the majority of the students they quickly got to grips with the skills required and showed tremendous teamwork to navigate their way around two tough courses through Capstone Park. Once the times for completing both courses were combined the Year 8 team finished in 6th place overall whilst the Year 7 team received a well-deserved medal for finishing runners up. Throughout the day the students represented Holcombe with distinction and they should be very proud of their achievements.



Pictured above is Zach Johnson, Jude Simmons, Camron Harding and Dylan Drabble - our Year 7 team.

Below is an account from Dylan:

On Thursday 11th May I went to an orienteering competition with my friends. Not only did I get a day out of school but it was a fun educational day and a great life lesson. I think everyone enjoyed it and orienteering is a great outdoor activity to complete. The reason it was so fun and enjoyable was because it is an activity where you run around in the open finding things, similar to a treasure hunt. Overall I think that orienteering is a great activity for team building as well as being fun and enjoyable. I think that if you get the chance you should definitely give it a go! It was a great experience and I would love to do it again some time.

South East Regional Swimming Championship

Following on from their successes at the Kents and after a lot of hard work, training and much dedication both Noah Dodd (8 Barfleur) and Billy Larter (7 Guardian) have done really well at the South East Regionals.

The boys competed in Winchester over two weekends in April and May against some really tough competition and both went home with medals.

Noah

- 50m breaststroke (was seeded 7th) finished 2nd getting silver medal and is now currently ranked 8th in England for his age group. He also broke the Black Lion Club record during his final
- 100m breaststroke came 3rd bronze medal
- 200m breaststroke reached the final, placed 5th
- He also competed in 100m and 200m freestyle where he moved further up the rankings

Billy

- 50m backstroke (was seeded 7th) finished 3rd getting a bronze medal
- 100m backstroke reached the final finishing 5th
- 200m backstroke reached the final finishing 6th
- He also competed in 200m individual medley, 50m & 100m Freestyle and 50m butterfly where he moved further up the rankings.



The Chess Tournament

The whole school Chess Tournament took off with passion on Monday 15th May. Competitors across all three Key stages competed against each other with the first leg holding an astonishing 20 games after school. Those that could not attend were offered a reschedule and were sat at lunchtime on Tuesday. Day two saw another whopping 20 games to get them through to round 3, with some big named contenders being knocked out in surprise wins. There is a complete buzz about the school, with coach drivers reporting that it is being discussed with delight on the commute to school. The tournament was the idea of Year 12 SCT student, Adam Magni, who along with Miss Bloomfield from Sixth form has created quite the event. Adam and Miss Bloomfield have worked tirelessly to make sure everyone got to play their games so far, with the Key Stage finals coming up, the winners of those will all get their own trophy and voucher, but will then go on to play in the Grand Masters Tournament against each other to find the Grand Master of the School and take home the Magni Shield with their name added alongside, to go down in history as being the first Grand Master winner. The finals, and the Grand master tournament, along with the Teacher final will be reported in the next issue of the blog.



The Chess Tournament - Teaching Staff

The whole school Chess tournament has also hit the teaching staff. With games being played between Mr Claessens and Mr Coleman, a slow starting game that quickly took off and was, at the start, evenly matched. Mr Claessens moves were just that much slicker and took the win to put him through to the final. Mr Hayes played Mr Clynshaw in a much-anticipated game. Once both gentlemen remembered they had to use a timer, the game quickly took hold, with pieces being taken on both sides. Mr Hayes then dealt some outstanding moves, leaving Mr Clynshaw unable to stage a comeback and ultimately lost to the better player on the day. Mr Hayes and Mr Claessens will now face each other in the final.



Year 7 Mentoring by Year 12's

The following has been written by Hayden Durling from our Captain's Team:

Students from year 12 have volunteered to help the year 7s with their literacy skills. Every Thursday, the students sit down with the year 7s and have a talk about what they are reading, asking them questions about characters and situations they find in the books. Furthermore, the year 12s using their extended knowledge of reading will recommend other books to the students based around their interests and passions. The year 7s after finishing the sessions will have a more introspective look on their reading, asking themselves questions to open their mind on the book that they're reading, making them more creative and creating a well-rounded student.

Sensory Workshop - Tuesday 6th June

Medway Small Steps/SEN Connect will be running a Sensory Processing Workshop for parents/carers on Tuesday 6th June (10am-12pm) at The Academy of Woodlands.

In this interactive workshop we will look at how sensory differences can impact people on the autistic spectrum. We will also look at possible support strategies and will bring along with us some examples of things you might be able to use at home to support your children. There will also be an opportunity to view the Sensory Room at the Academy.

You will have the chance to ask questions and talk about your child's unique sensory profile. It's also a great opportunity to meet other parents on a similar journey; teas and coffees will be provided on the day.

Please note due to limited space we can only allow one person per family to attend.

Please book using the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/638717159217>

Classcharts Reminder

A quick reminder that all absences are to be reported on Classcharts, whether this is a full day absence for sickness or an appointment for part of the day.

Medway Schools District Football Association 2023-2024 Trials



Register your child's interest by scanning the QR code below or by following this link:
<https://forms.gle/8AFHnGBMUxVYmoZJ6>

Dates and times will be confirmed by email.
Please ensure your email address is entered correctly.

 Medway District FA  @MedwayDistrict  medwaydistrictfa



Scan the QR code to register



Ultimate
HOME IMPROVEMENTS
Windows - Doors - Conservatories

DofE Update

Well done to the 35 students that have successfully completed their Award so far this year! Hopefully you have received all your certificates through the Celebration Assemblies but remember to see me for your badges! There are more students that have completed the expedition element but have not submitted their evidence for the other sections yet. Let's use half term and Term 6 to get this evidence submitted and your Awards finished and awarded.

Next term will see the current Year 9s begin their preparations for their expedition that will be taking place in September 2023. The students have got themselves into their expedition groups in readiness for starting the afterschool expedition training sessions that will be running next term. These sessions will be taking place in B26 on either a Tuesday or Thursdays from 1515 – 1615. The programme for the sessions is as below and are compulsory for all students who wish to attend the expedition. A letter will be emailed to the parents of the current Year 9 cohort involved in these sessions soon with more information.

Date	Topic
Week 2	Introduction to DofE Expeditions (The 20 Conditions) and The Countryside Code
Week 3	Navigating using a Map and Route Planning
Week 4	Emergency Procedures and First Aid
Week 5	Menu Planning

eDofE Drop-in sessions are taking place every Thursday lunchtime from 1325 – 1345 in B15 for any students in Years 9 or 10 to come along to if they need any help with their eDofE online account.

Mr Giles Phillips
DofE Awards Coordinator

Year 12 Media Trip to Sky Studios

Year 12 Media students had the opportunity to visit Sky Studios yesterday. They used their media literacy skills to plan, produce and record a broadcasting news report on 'Influencer Culture'.

