

ISSUE 2

29th September 2023



HOLCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to be able to share with you our 2nd blog of this term.

It has been another very busy two weeks here. We have held start-of-year parent information evenings for parents of students in Years 7,11, 12 and 13 and it has been great to see how well these events have been attended. Thank you for coming and for showing your willingness to work with us in the year ahead.

Work is continuing in our DT department to secure the very last areas that are affected by the RAAC concrete that we spoke about at the beginning of the year and I am pleased to be able to confirm that all the remedial works will be completed by October Half Term.

I'm sure you all know that the school is very proud to be recognised by the University of Exeter as an Advanced Thinking School in recognition of all the great work we do to developing thinking skills amongst our students. Next week our Year 7s will be having thinking skills workshops in place of their period 1 lessons each day to support them in learning how best to use these skills in their day to day studies.

We are working very hard to return to pre-COVID ways of working as a school, and as a part of that we are looking to increase the range and number of school trips this year. Students learn so much from a good trip (I'm sure as parents and carers you can all remember trips you went on) and inside the blog you will find details of recent trips and also of trips that we are currently planning.

Next Saturday (7th October) sees our annual Open Day when we open up the whole school to those students in Year 6 who are contemplating coming here in September 2024. Huge thanks in advance to all those students who will be supporting us with that. This is a good time to remind all parents that, in lieu of this day, school will be closed on Friday 17th November.

I hope you are all well and look forward to providing further updates in two weeks time.

Mr L. Preston
Headteacher

CONTENTS

Our students have been involved in a number of brilliant activities over the couple of weeks. Please take a moment to read through these fantastic opportunities.

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KEY DATES

Term 1

- **Saturday 7th October**
 - Year 6 into 7 Open Morning
- **Thursday 19th October**
 - Last Day of Term 1
- **Friday 20th October**
 - Staff Development Day
- **Monday 30th October**
 - First Day of Term 2
- **Thursday 16th November**
 - Year 11 into 12 Open Evening
- **Friday 17th November**
 - Day off in Lieu for Open Morning

STAY CONNECTED

Follow Us on Social Media

See all of the enjoyable and engaging activities we get involved in throughout the year.

Follow us on our social media channels.



[@TSAT - Holcombe Grammar School](#)



[@TSATHolcombe](#)



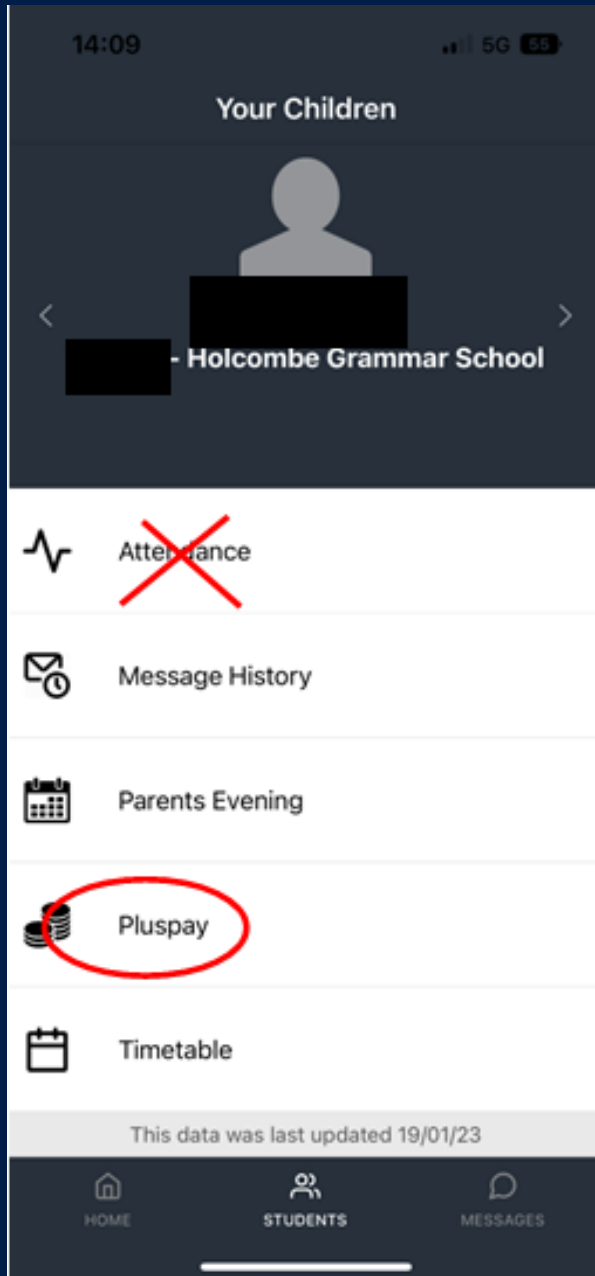
[@tsat_holcombegrammarschool](#)



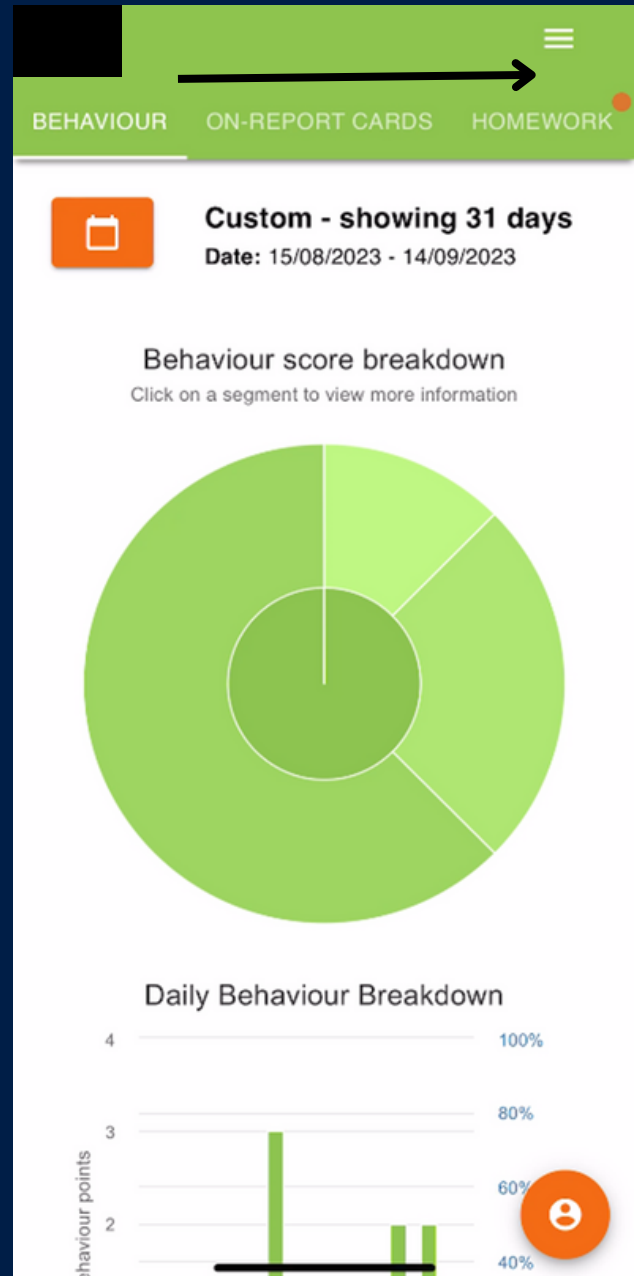
REPORTING ABSENCES



A gentle reminder that absences and appointments are reported on the Classcharts app.



Although attendance is shown on the MyEd app (seen above), MyEd is mainly used for payments through +Pay. This includes dinner top-up and trips.



Absences, including appointments, are reported on the Classcharts app (seen above), please scroll along the green bar at the top of the screen to find 'report absence'.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD



Written by Mr Phillips

Well done to the 62 students from Year 10 who competed the Bronze Qualifying Expedition over the weekend 22 – 24 September 2023. This is the largest cohort of students that we have had completing the venture in recent years. All 11 groups on the venture performed well and took the challenges it caused in their stride. All the groups were strong, showing good navigation skills and teamwork over the course of the weekend. The students' performance on the expedition is encouraging for the future with hopefully many of these students deciding to take on the challenge of the Silver Award this year. The Year 10 now must ensure that the other sections of their Award are now complete so that their Bronze Awards may be signed off and finished. Can I also say a big thank you to the staff that helped over the weekend as the expedition could not run without them, Mr Onumah, Mrs Thompson, Miss Wilson and Miss Panayiotou for being on call if needed.

I also need to congratulate our Year 12 Silver Award participants who successfully completed their practice walk over the weekend and are now ready for their Qualifying venture in October when hopefully the 8 students will complete this and with it their Silver Award. A first at Holcombe for a few years. Also, a first at Holcombe in recent time is the Gold Award and I am pleased to announce that both James Hann and Angus Bean in Year 13 over the summer completed their Qualifying Expedition on Dartmoor which is no small feat. Well done to you both and good luck as you work towards completing the other sections.

DofE enrolments for this year's cohorts will be taking place at end of this term after I have talked to the students in the different year groups about the Award.



HELPFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION



Livestreaming: connecting in real time

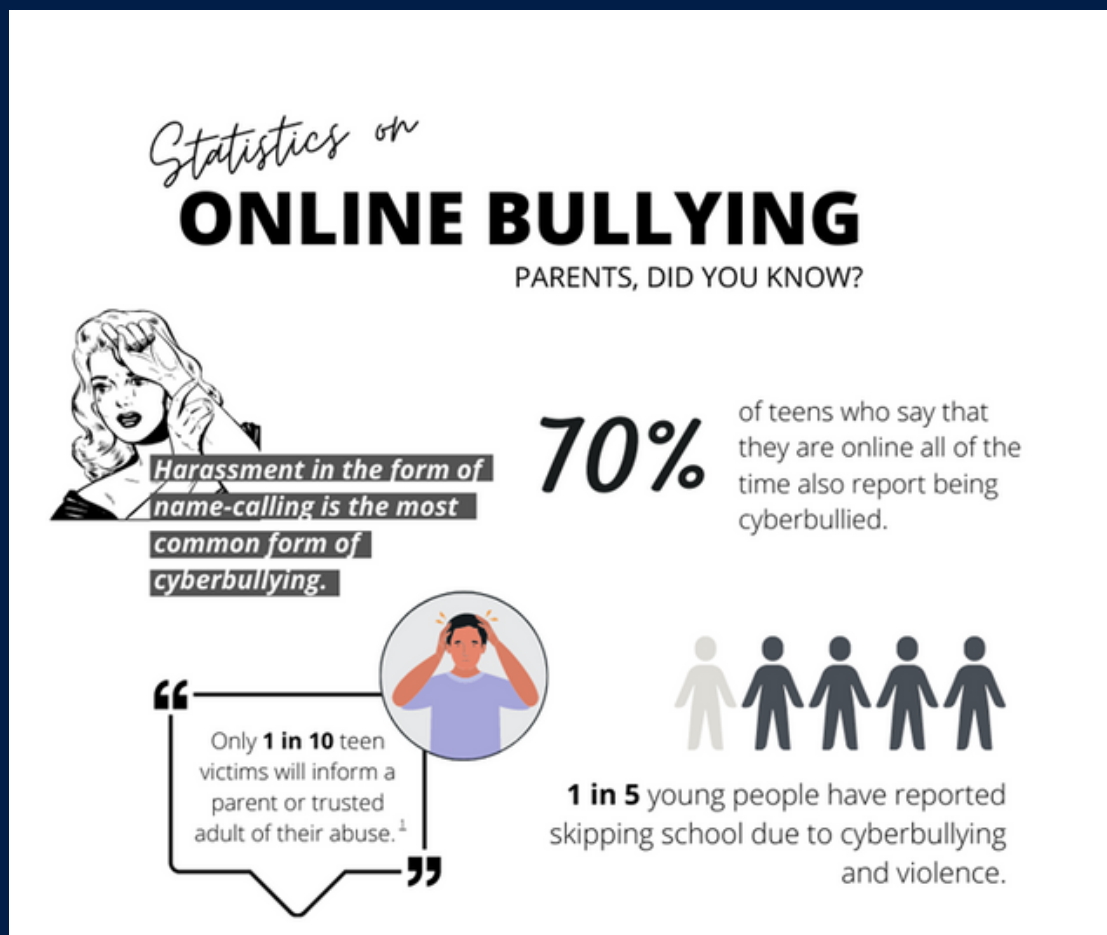
Livestreaming is a feature within familiar platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Young people might be sharing their lives with friends, but it is important for us to know that this can also mean interaction with people they don't know as well. It is important to discuss the risks and guide your child to be able to handle inappropriate content or comments. NSPCC have advice for parents here:

[Livestreaming and online video apps | NSPCC](#)

Chat apps: modern communication tools

Children can share messages, photos and videos on popular chat apps, like WhatsApp and Messenger, with individuals or large groups. They may also receive messages from friends that upset them or even from people that they do not know. Use this opportunity to discuss what they might need to report or block someone, and how to do so. NSPCC have advice for parents here:

[Chat apps | NSPCC](#)



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has produced a parent/carer resource on keeping children safe online and the risks of grooming and sexual abuse. It can be found here [Parent-Resource.pdf \(iwf.org.uk\)](#).

They also have some information for parents/carers of children with SEND Children with SEND | [TALK Checklist by Internet Watch Foundation \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)

HELPFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION



Parent Talk

Down-to-earth parenting advice you can trust.

We're here for you, when you need us. Find answers to parenting questions in our advice articles. Or talk to a parenting coach about anything that's worrying you. It's all free, and no topic is too big, small, or embarrassing.



[Parent Talk - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Big Mental Health Conversation 2023



Please scan this QR code using the camera on your phone to complete this short survey.

Alternatively, please click on the link below to direct to the website.

https://www.haveyoursayinkentandmedway.co.uk/for-young-people-14-18-years/survey_tools/some-question-for-you-to-answer-please

HELPFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION



Samsung Kids Parental Controls:

Samsung Kids is a parental feature which you can set up on your child's device which can be used to apply restrictions such as app access, downloading, screen time, privacy and more. It's really easy to set up and use and will help you to manage your child's online activity.

To learn more, including a setup guide, see [HERE](#)

Supporting Young Girls' Wellbeing: From managing screen time, the fear of missing out and body image. All these and more can affect the wellbeing of children. Internet Matters have put together a great series of articles for parents and although aimed at 9-10 year old girls I would say it is worthwhile for all older and younger children, boys and girls.

You can see the advice page [HERE](#).

The Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has launched The Big Ambition to hear directly from children, young people, and parents from across the country.

They want to hear from children and young people about their schools, communities, family life, and the wider world. They will also be asked what they want for their future, their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

[The Big Ambition survey](#) is for all children and young people aged 6, up to 18. Alongside this, parents and other adults can complete the survey on behalf of children and young people aged 0, up to 5, to ensure we also hear from early years settings.

It is critical that the voice of children from all backgrounds, all settings, and every part of the country is heard by policy makers. They are particularly committed to hearing from children who may be more vulnerable, including those in care.

HELPFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION



The Medway Youth Council (MYC) started in 1998, as the Medway Youth Parliament, with our official launch in 1999. In September 2017, we changed our name to the Medway Youth Council, under the leadership of George Perfect.

It is a forum for young people – run by young people. We are solely independent but are supported by the Medway Council. MYC has two key roles: to address issues raised by young people, and to act as a consultative group for decision-makers.

Members represent their peers within this organisation, and we welcome all young people aged 11-18 to join our organisation. We have a very good feedback framework which allows all young people to get their voices heard through their school councils, then their MYC representative, and if appropriate on to the UK Youth Parliament to be heard nationally.

The whole Youth Council meets once a month, and our Cabinet team also meet monthly to set the agenda for meetings from issues raised by members or the young people of Medway. Smaller meetings are also organised and operate much more frequently.

The Organisation Chair chairs both Full Youth Council and Cabinet, thus is responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation.

If your child is interested in joining the Medway Youth Council, please ask them to speak to Miss Gould or a member of Student Services. It is a wonderful opportunity to be part of a group that is for young people and run by young people. There are 10 places available.

YEAR 7 THINKING AT HOLCOMBE



Year 7 Thinking Week 9th-13th October

During the week commencing 9th October, year 7 will be involved in their Thinking Week, delivered by the school's Thinking Drive Team; Mr Claessens, Miss Cook, Miss Ortega, Mr Wells and Mrs Banks. Supporting these sessions will be the Thinking Ambassadors, our student-led Drive Team. As an Advanced Thinking School, accredited by the University of Exeter, embracing 'Thinking Tools' is one of our key teaching and learning strategies.

Year 7 students will attend each of the following four sessions, in four out of five period one lessons that week:

- Be Your Best Self and Growth Mindset
- Holcombe Habits and De Bono's Thinking Hats
- The Science of Learning
- Thinking Maps in Action

We look forward to sharing photographs of the sessions with you on our next blog – and hope that your year 7 child shares their learning with you at home.

SIXTH FORM TRIP TO PARLIAMENT



Students embarked on an education adventure learning/revising how does UK Parliament turn an idea into a law? The trip let students experience the law-making process and partake in a highly interactive workshop which took our students through the five stages of a bill, encouraging diverse points of view in an active debate through role play, focusing on a topic of their choice.

Students took their bill through the House of Commons and The House of Lords. They explored the role of Government and Parliament in the law-making process. Examining types of bills, policy creation, public consultation and various methods of scrutiny of legislation by Parliament.

Students felt empowered to influence those decisions that affect their lives to be active citizens in our thriving democracy. The students were lucky enough to have a visit from our local MP Tracy Crouch and a Q and A was opened on the floor which students engaged in well and took much value from the session.



EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES



Year 9 and 10 have been celebrating the European Day of Languages this week.

On Tuesday 26th September, on the European Day of Languages, we joined a webinar during lesson time, organised by Routes into Languages in collaboration with The University of Manchester.

We found out how many languages are spoken in the world, what jobs language graduates go into after university, and we also heard from Language Ambassadors at university, who are currently studying languages.

We heard all about their experiences of living abroad, how languages can help us understand the world around us, and even what sound a bee makes in other languages! Students had these comments to say about what we have learnt.

"It was very informative and nice to see what jobs languages can get you into"

"This was awe-inspiring and it shifted my thoughts on languages. It shows that languages are more useful than you think"

"You can use languages all around the world in jobs and it opens up more doors for the future"

"It shows how languages are useful in business"



SIXTH FORM SPORTING SUCCESS



Written by Edward Little

I have been competing in Athletic events for Medway and Maidstone club for two years. I have recently completed my second octathlon event. The event spanned two days. On day one I completed long jump, discus, high jump and 400m. On day two, I competed in 100m hurdles, shot-put, javelin and 1500m. I was really pleased to obtain personal bests in 4 out of the 8 events. My total points score was also a personal best. I was placed first, and am now Kent champion for the second year in a row. I enjoy looking at my progress on the 'Power of 10' website, where I can see I now rank 192nd in the UK for shot-put and my 400m hurdles is now 63rd in the UK.

I love athletics because it's an outlet for my energy and stress and I have made some great friends through the sport.



YEAR 8 AND 9 SUCCESSES



We are very pleased to have appointed a number of Year 8 students to student leadership positions for the next academic year. Successful applicants were asked to submit letters of interest and several were interviewed by our School Captains' Team to ensure a robust selection process. Thank you to all who applied - including unsuccessful candidates - as the standard of application was very high and bodes well for the future engagement of our young people in shaping our school community.

	Conquest	Guardian	Shannon	Barfleur	Ardent
Form Captain	Stan Roscow	Ezra Hatega Obinna Anusi	Idris Gbede	Thomas Edison	Markuss Spolans
Sports Captain	Ryan Barber	Orin Adesan	Daniel Ehigie Idunnumi Awolowo (Deputy)	Dylan Drabble	Tate Fitzgerald
School Council	Nasri Adebawo	Chandranshu Mannava Juwonlo Asoto	Aran Bhamra Camron Harding	Hasan Deringol Tomi Akanbi	Nicholas Pali

The year 9 football team began their season with a well-deserved 3-1 victory against Thomas Aveling on Tuesday 19th September. Despite challenging conditions, the team were superb at keeping the ball on the floor and passing their way through the opposition, creating various goal scoring opportunities. Students battled well and were able to overcome the physical approach the opposition implemented on the day. A special mention must be given to Hugo Lett for scoring two outstanding goals, all as a result of wonderful whole team build up play.

Many congratulations. Keep going and we look forward to more wins this year.

The year 8 football team began their season with a hard fought draw against Thomas Aveling on Wednesday 20th September. Despite being short of the services of a number of key players, as well as conceding an early goal, the team battled through the biblical conditions to secure a well deserved draw, courtesy of a clinical finish from striker Joshua Iyoha. Among a number of solid performers, special mention must be given to towering centre backs Noah Whitelaw and Folu Fadan as well as goalkeeper Ryan Barber for their outstanding performances.

RS TRIP TO THE GURDWARA



Last week many of our year 7 and 8 students had the opportunity to build on their learning in Religious Studies when they visited the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara in Gravesend. Students were given a guided tour of the worship and meditation rooms, tasted prasad (a sweet food given as a sign of equality and respect after worship), and listened attentively to a talk where their teachers were impressed by the many excellent questions which they asked. They also had the chance to visit the langar, a community kitchen where they experienced how Sikhs and visitors to the Gurdwara sit and share vegetarian food together in the spirit of equality. Many students were amazed at the size and beauty of the impressive building, and there was a huge gasp of surprise as the bus turned into the entrance! They also commented on how much they enjoyed learning about the history of the religion, and of course tasting the food! For those students who were unable to visit this time, we hope to visit the Gurdwara again later this school year.

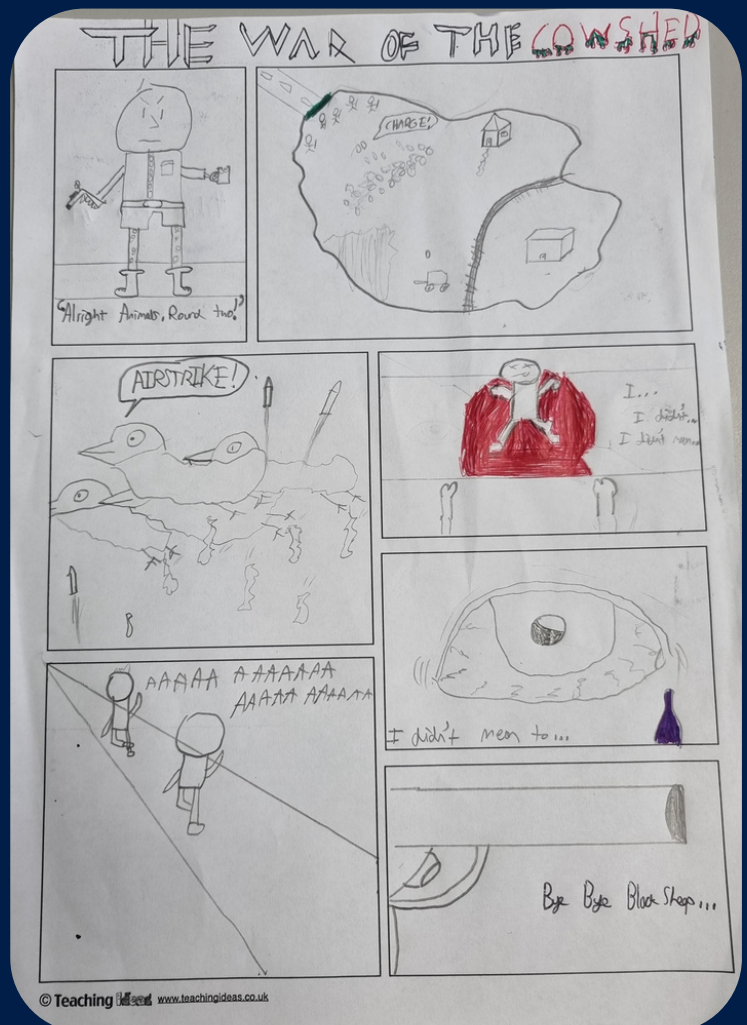


YEAR 8 ENGLISH LESSONS



Ms Geldart

8Ar have created graphic novel versions of George Orwell's classic allegorical tale 'Animal Farm'. They were tasked with recreating The Battle of the Cowshed from Chapter 4. These excellent examples were by Nicholas Pali and DJ Osibeluwo.



SIXTH FORM



SIXTH FORM SAVE THE DATES

Our Year 13's have returned from the summer as our now senior year. With this comes the stresses and challenges that come with the count down towards A-Level exams. They are now faced with deadlines, and target dates, extra work and study. UCAS applications, personal statements, apprenticeship information and University visits. What it also comes with is a huge amount of support and understanding. Subject interventions, student to teacher meetings, support groups, peer mediation, study advice, career path information, Information evening for parents, pastoral support, UCAS help and advice and much more.

The students have taken to using their study time wisely, the majority keeping their heads down and staying focussed, giving themselves the best opportunity that they can, as they need to buy into it, as much as we are here to support. Keep up the good work Year 13, we are here with you.



Year 12

- **Tuesday 3rd October**
 - New York Trip Deadline (MyEd deposit)
- **Saturday 7th October**
 - Year 6 Open Morning (Sixth Form support)
- **Thursday 16th November**
 - Year 11 into 12 Open Evening (Sixth Form support)
- **Wednesday 3rd January**
 - Year 12 Prelim (mock) Week Commences
- **Thursday 1st February**
 - Year 12 Parents Evening (Online)
- **Monday 24th June**
 - Year 12 Final Prelim (mock) Week Commences
- **Monday 1st July**
 - Work Experience Week
- **Thursday 11th July - Monday 14th July**
 - New York Trip
 - Reward Trip - TBC

Year 13

- **Saturday 7th October**
 - Year 6 Open Morning (Sixth Form support)
- **Thursday 2nd November**
 - Year 13 Parents Evening (Online)
- **Thursday 16th November**
 - Year 11 into 12 Open Evening (Sixth Form support)
- **Monday 20th November**
 - Year 13 Prelim (mock) Week Commences
- **Friday 15th December**
 - Holcombe UCAS Deadline
 - Request for University Open Day Visits Ends
- **Monday 4th March**
 - Final Prelim (mock) Exams Start
- **June (TBC)**
 - Summer Ball
 - Reward Trip 1 - TBC Before Christmas
 - Reward Trip 2 - TBC After Christmas

MORE INFORMATION ON MS TEAMS

NEW YORK 2024

YEAR 12 AND 13

APPLY NOW

VIA PLUSPAY

**DEPOSIT AND CONSENT FORM DEADLINE:
TUESDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2023**

ASPIRE & ACHIEVE TOGETHER

www.HolcombeGrammar.org.uk



Get in touch

For any further advice or questions then please contact the Small Steps Team on 01634 913219 or email MedwaySmallSteps@family-action.org.uk

About Family Action

Family Action is a charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives.

We provide innovative and effective services and support to many of the UK's most vulnerable people, helping individuals and communities address the challenges they face through practical, emotional and financial support.

How to contact us

Family Action

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Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cambridge. Chair: Mary Fulton. Chief Executive: David Holmes CBE.

Vice Patrons: Christine Davies CBE. Dr Andrew McCulloch. Dame Denise Platt DBE. Katie Vanneck-Smith.
Professor Harriet Ward CBE.

Family Action Medway Small Steps Service

Supporting families with children
pre and post diagnosis of
Autism and or ADHD



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain "heavy" metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 1.3 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be disposable (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or rechargeable (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term "natural and artificial flavourings". Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Ran by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH

The National College

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55801424>



www.thenationalcollege.co.uk



@thenatcollege



/thenationalcollege

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 27.09.2023

I SEE YOU

A workshop to
raise awareness
around exploitation

There is a common misconception that only boys are criminally exploited but this is not true.

Any child can be groomed and forced to carry weapons or sell drugs.

Stereotypes like these means girls being exploited can often go unseen...

BUT, I SEE YOU

Workshop from **Reach Every Generation**

Market Place from various services

Sessions Thursday 5 October:

- Girls 12.30pm-2.30pm
- Parents/Carers/Professionals 4.30pm-6.00pm

St Georges Centre, Pembroke Road, Chatham
Maritime, Chatham, ME4 4UH



REACH
EVERY
GENERATION

Girls sessions can be booked by emailing VRU.Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service



Kent
Police



kentandmedwayvru.co.uk

FRENCH AND GERMAN CLUBS



Keep calm and come to the French Club!!!



KS3 students are welcome
Room S14
Every Thursday at lunchtime
Enjoy : French games , songs, movies , culture conversations and more ...



German Club is up and running again this year, and it's now on a Thursday lunchtime in S15! This week we looked at phonics and the extra letters and accents used in the German Alphabet. We practised saying the sounds together to help students get used to them as some sounds are quite different to English.

Come along next week to find out more!

October 2023



Newsletter

LET'S FACE SOME ISSUES!

Wednesday
18th Oct
18:30 - 19:30
FREE



FREE SESSION
Family Meetings:
Why and How

Monday
2nd Oct
18:30 - 20:30
£24



Understanding
the Teenage Brain
Why teens think, feel and behave
differently from adults

Monday
23rd Oct
18:30 - 20:30
£24



Understanding Anger
Yours and theirs - what is anger, why
do we feel it and how can we manage
it?

Thursday
26th Oct
18:30 - 20:30
£24



Supporting a Child with ADHD
interactive session explaining what ADHD is
and offering a range of interventions that can
make lasting differences.

ANXIETY EXPLAINED COURSE INFORMATION



Please see the below information for a course with Face Family Advice. Please note, this is not a school event or something we have endorsed; we are just sharing the info.

Anxiety Explained

Do you, or your children (especially your teens) suffer from anxiety?
Would you like to know what anxiety is and gain some
understanding on how to manage it?



A two-hour online talk delivered by
Jane Keyworth, Lead Facilitator at FACE
on 21st September (6:30pm to 8:30pm) £24

Available to book now facefamilyadvice.co.uk