

ISSUE 5

17th November 2023



HOLCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

Life continues to be very busy here at Holcombe!

This week we held our 6th Form Open Evening, welcoming hundreds of prospective students into the school to consider which A Level subjects they would like to study in 24/25. It was a hugely successful and busy evening and I would like to sincerely thank the dozens of 6th form students who stayed late to offer their support to us. If any Year 11 student is in need of further advice, please do speak to a member of the 6th form staff team.

A highlight for us last week was the running of our first overseas residential trip for a long time since the pandemic stopped us running such events. We have had several staff and students in Normandy all week and information about what they have been up to is in this blog. We are working really hard to increase the amount of trips and extra-curricular activities on offer and I was thrilled this week to hear that well over 60 Year 9 students have signed up to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – we look forward to seeing how they all progress.

When we return to school on Monday 20th November, our Year 13 students will be starting their first A Level prelim examinations of the year and we wish them every success. Year 13s have the privilege of being on study leave during these examinations, but the Hive will be open for any individual who prefers to be in school.

Monday 20th will also be the start of the 4-week countdown to Christmas. We will be holding the following festivities here this year:

- Wednesday 13th December – Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day
- Thursday 14th December – Christmas panto with some special guest performers...
- Friday 15th December – last day of term; finish at 12:30pm

As part of our Christmas Celebrations we will also be doing our usual Christmas Parcel collection but this year in support of Medway homeless charities. Look out for more info on that very soon.

Finally this week, a request for your support please. We all work tirelessly here to deliver the best standard of education we can to your children, and we are always keen to receive feedback on what you are happy with and what areas, if any, you would like us to improve. Earlier this week we sent home a survey to all parents asking for your views. We last did this just over a year ago we had approx. 300 replies which was very much appreciated. We listened to that feedback and made several changes as a result (summarised on the email sent home). We are now asking you all again for your views and simply the more parents who reply, the better our understanding of your thoughts so please do complete this for us if you can. The survey and link was sent out on email last week and the deadline is Friday 1st December.

Thank you in advance for the time you will spend on completing this for us

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.

To be brought back to this page, please click the Holcombe Grammar logo in the top right hand corner of each page.

[Normandy Trip](#)

[A Level Post 18 Pathways](#)

[Year 7 Workshop](#)

[Year 10 Drama Trip to the Woman in Black](#)

[Remembrance Day](#)

[Medway Rotary Club Youth Speaks Competition](#)

[Geography Field Trips](#)

[Term 2 Inter-House](#)

[Pulse Poster](#)

[FACE Newsletter](#)

[Money and Mental Health Advice Service](#)

[External Parent Workshops](#)

KEY DATES

Term 2

- **Friday 15th December**
- Last Day of Term 2

Term 3

- **Tuesday 2nd January**
- Staff Development Day
- **Wednesday 3rd January**
- First Day of Term 3

School ties can be purchased for £5, cash only, from Student Services

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](#)



NORMANDY TRIP



Day 1:

On Monday morning a group of students studying French at KS4 and KS5 embarked on a residential trip to Normandy, France. We took Le Shuttle and arrived at our first destination in super quick time, despite the pounding rain.

We visited Le Fournil bakery where we had two demonstrations on how to make croissants and baguettes. Our bakers also gave us useful vocabulary so we knew what the ingredients were. 400-600 loaves of bread are made every day, and when we were visiting the shop, we were able to practice what we had learned when we were buying the goodies on offer!

We then drove to our beautiful accommodation where we spent our evening enjoying our chicken and chips cooked by our chef, and playing board games.

Day 2:

On Tuesday we travelled to a goat farm, where we had another French lesson all about goats and how to care for them. Our host Tony was extremely knowledgeable and friendly, helping our students to feed, brush and check the goats teeth. Someone even felt one goat's belly to see how warm they are compared to humans!

In the afternoon we took a drive to Mont St Michel, where we walked up the numerous stairs to reach the summit of the abbey which overlooks the extraordinary views of the Mont St Michel Bay. There was the opportunity for students to use their French skills in the shops on the way back down and even pause for a cheeky crêpe in one of the many cafés and eateries.

A great trip so far! Part 2 will appear in the next blog. Watch this space to find out more.



A LEVEL POST 18 PATHWAYS



On Thursday 16th November, we welcomed alumni Lauren Cook to share her experiences from her Professional Apprenticeship of Project Management at Atkinsrealis. The guest speaker spoke to four groups of year 12 and 13 students, over 85 students. We thank Lauren for her time and effort to help our current students with life after A levels. Below is student feedback:

Isabella, Year 13 "I found Lauren's speech really helpful in informing me what the process of applying to apprenticeships would be like, including all the stages etc. Also she was very informative when people were asking questions and what her personal experience of applying and working in an apprenticeship was like which i found very insightful."

Daisy, Year 12 "The presentation was very useful. Though I initially thought that I wanted to go to university, the talk gave another option. The points that were covered were good and gave an insight into what a professional apprenticeship is. Finally, the talk gave a simple explanation into the applying process and advantages of a professional apprenticeship."

Oliver, Year 13 "The talk that she gave was very informative, and gave us lots of information about the process of a degree apprenticeship that is available".

Harrison, Year 13 "As I am not going into Project Management, I did not believe the talk would be useful. However, it was extremely useful in giving me information into the world of degree apprenticeships and how they are beneficial. Beneficial, not only financially but in an educational field, as well. This has inspired me to look into Law apprenticeships and has affected my perspective of my future".



YEAR 7 WORKSHOP



We were very pleased to host our second Year 7 workshop, focused on transition and building resilience, recently. Our previous workshop session was reported in this blog and it was clear that students very much enjoyed developing their skills, building on what they covered previously and working with Miss Gunstone (Educational Psychologist). Upon reflection of the progress they have made so far, students commented that they had noticed "better teamwork with my friend", "better confidence for school" and that "the Year 7 workshops have been very enjoyable and I have learned how to work well with a team". The participating students have all been a credit in terms of enthusiasm, engagement and effort so far and we are very confident they will continue their excellent attitude in the remaining sessions.



YEAR 10 DRAMA TRIP TO THE WOMAN IN BLACK



On Wednesday 15th November the GCSE drama students had a terrifying time at The Woman in Black in Richmond. The students had a fantastic day out, appreciating the creative and technical features that made the play so horrifying.



REMEMBERANCE DAY



It was heart warming to see a significant number of our Holcombe students take part in Armistice Day commemorations across Medway recently. Students from all years, Year 7 to Year 13, braved cold and damp weather to show their respect in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We have students who participated by representing a wide range of youth and uniformed organisations including Scouts, Sea Scouts, Girl Guides and Army Cadets, Air Cadets and Sea Cadets.

At Chatham Cenotaph, Year 13 student Oliver Tomlin led prayer as part of his role with Medway Youth Council. Students participated in parades in Chatham, Rochester and other areas and we are always very encouraged to hear of their involvement in uniformed services.



MEDWAY ROTARY CLUB YOUTH SPEAKS COMPETITION



Last Friday at Rotary Youth Speaks, Holcombe Grammar School had 3 fantastic students who gave well researched and well presented speeches on topics that they are passionate about.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves. Rotary members believe that they have a shared responsibility to take action on our world’s most persistent issues. They provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders. Medway is home to 6 rotary clubs which helped set up this event.

For the intermediate category [Under 14] Holcombe had one representative:

Idris Gbede [Year 8] gave a very motivating and passionate speech on the local and global impact of pollution and climate change where he was able to give contemporary examples throughout as well as research which had been conducted!

For the Senior Category [Over 14] Holcombe Grammar School had two representatives:

Christopher Bennett [Year 9] who spoke very eloquently on the factors and environment contributing to a child's education. He was able to speak confidently including specialist terminology and knowledge on this topic.

As well as Luca Perez [Year 12] who spoke from his own experiences and on the importance of faith and religion in the modern age. Throughout Luca's speech was his life experiences and the audience could feel the kind warm heart which was opening up to them on this passion that Luca had for the Bible and the Christian faith.

On this occasion, Holcombe students did not take the winning prize but their efforts and enthusiasm represented the school immensely. See our participants pictured on stage with the Mayor of Medway and representatives from the Rotary Club.

Our Medway Youth Council representative, Oliver Tomlin, who went to support the participants was immensely proud of their speeches and their confidence that the Holcombe Grammar Students had for their subjects of choice and he could see the amount of effort each participant had gone through.

Written by Oliver Tomlin, Year 13

GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIPS



Geography A Level Cohort

Last term our Year 12 class completed their 4 days of compulsory fieldwork. Over the trip days we visited a variety of locations to ensure that the students could collect valuable fieldwork data for the NEA coursework. Our four days comprised of Whitstable, Minster on Sea and Sheerness to view coastal management in different locations, and a visit to Maidstone and then Stratford for view how regeneration in Urban environments has been approached and the level of success of these developments. Although the weather was not always on our side completely, the students showed real resilience and focus in their data collection. We look forward to seeing their write ups over the year.

Geography GCSE Cohort

This term Year 11 are out completing their compulsory fieldwork days, the first visit was on Monday 6th November to Minster on Sea and Sheerness to study coastal processes and the management of coastal erosion along a stretch of coastline. The weather was thankfully clear skies and no rain! During the day the students rose to the challenge and really did themselves and Holcombe proud. We look forward to their next trip this term which is to look at Urban Environments in Ashford.



Pulse

by Smoothwall

**Please remember to
log into Pulse every
Wednesday at pm
reg!**

**It's for your own well
being 😊**

November 2023



Newsletter

LET'S FACE SOME ISSUES!

Tuesday
21st Nov
18:30 - 19:30
FREE



FREE SESSION Decreasing Depression

A range of steps that can help to reduce the crippling impact of depression

Tuesday
28th Nov
18:30 - 20:30
£24



What is ACT?

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy.
How it can help with anger, anxiety
and neurodiversity

Thursday
23rd Nov
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.

facefamilyadvice.co.uk

info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk



MONEY & MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE SERVICE



"PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE MORE AT RISK OF FALLING INTO DEBT, WHICH IN TURN CAN HAVE A SERIOUS IMPACT ON THEIR PROSPECTS OF RECOVERING FROM POOR MENTAL HEALTH."

- MONEY & MENTAL HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

WHAT DOES THE SERVICE DO?

Citizens Advice have a dedicated team ready to help people with both money and mental health problems. A specialist trained advisor will provide a unique and enhanced offer which will cover; benefits, work, debt, consumer, family, finance, housing and financial training.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This free service is available for anyone in Kent and Medway who has both a money and mental health problem. This includes mothers and partners who who are pregnant or have had a baby in the past year, and are experiencing perinatal mental health issues

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS IT MAKING?

This service supports individuals to:

- secure write-off of debts
- identify and claim additional benefits / income
- ensure enhanced financial competency
- improve their mental health and wellbeing



"THIS HAS LIFTED A MASSIVE WEIGHT OFF MY SHOULDERS. I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER THAT I'M NOW DEBT FREE"

"WITHOUT YOUR HELPFULNESS AND UNDERSTANDING I WOULD NOT BE WHERE I AM TODAY"

"AT ONE POINT, MY ADVISOR WAS THE ONLY PERSON I FELT GENUINELY CARED FOR ME"

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023

CLIENTS SUPPORTED:
496

DEBTS WRITTEN OFF FOR CLIENTS:
£145,867

INCOME GAINED FOR CLIENTS:
£574,245

OTHER MONETARY OUTCOMES:
£70,064

100% OF SERVICE USERS REPORTED IMPROVEMENTS TO MENTAL HEALTH

To receive a [referral form](#) or find out more [information](#), please get in touch via the below:

 referral@nwkent.cab.org.uk

[HTTPS://CITIZENSADVICENWK.ORG.UK/PROJECTS/MONEY-AND-MENTAL-HEALTH/](https://citizensadvicenwk.org.uk/projects/money-and-mental-health/)



Parent Workshops

Medway Child Health Team have developed a series of workshops for parents and carers in Medway. The informal sessions will be delivered by our friendly Child Health Team members and will aim to educate and support parents and carers on a number of important topics.

Our courses are free for all parents and carers in Medway, as they are fully funded by Medway Public Health. They will be held at a variety of locations across Medway, and some will be online.

Booking instructions are provided with each course overview.

Basic Self Harm Awareness

This course is for those that would like to learn about self-harm and how to support children and young people that may be engaging in self-harming behaviours.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of:

- Definition & characteristics of self-harm
- Types of self-harm
- Risk factors & circumstances
- Behavioural & physical warning signs to look out for
- Self-harm cycle
- Harm minimisation
- Ways as parent / carers you can help & support their children
- Who else can support – local & national services

Dates of this Course:

Face to Face

- Monday 6th November 2023 (AM and PM)
- Tuesday 5th December 2023 (AM and PM)
- Wednesday 10th January 2024 (AM and PM)
- Thursday 8th February 2024 (AM and PM)
- Saturday :20th January 2024 (AM only)

Online

- Thursday 2nd November 2023 5-7pm
- Monday 5th February 2024 5-7pm

You can [BOOK HERE](#) and check times and venues for each session.

Mental Health – Supporting Your Child

This course is for those that would like to learn about children's mental health and ways in which they can support their children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of:

- How to support positive emotional health and wellbeing
- Adolescent brain development
- Behaviour challenged and emotional wellbeing
- How to identify warning signs of poor mental health
- Coping and support strategies
- Where to seek further information and support

Dates of this Course:

Face to Face

- Tuesday 21st November 2023 (AM and PM)
- Tuesday 19th December 2023 (AM and PM)
- Tuesday 20th February 2024 (AM and PM)
- Saturday 2nd March 2023 (AM Only)

Online

- Tuesday 17th October 2023 5-7pm

You can [BOOK HERE](#) and check times and venues for each session.

Mental Health – Managing Your Own

This course is for those that would like to learn about mental health within the context of their own and their family's emotional health and wellbeing.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of:

- How to maintain positive emotional health and wellbeing
- The mental health continuum
- Coping and support strategies
- Where to seek further information and support

Dates of this Course:

Face to Face

- Monday 27th November 2023 (AM Only)
- Wednesday 10th January 2024 (AM and PM)

Online

- Tuesday 23rd Jan 2024 5-7pm

- You can [BOOK HERE](#) and check times and venues for each session.

Puberty and Growing Up

This course is for those that would like to learn about puberty and adolescence and the changes that happen during this time. As well as how to support children through this time.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of:

- The physical changes which take place during puberty
- The emotional changes which take place during puberty
- Adolescent brain development
- How those changes may affect our children's relationships and how to manage them

Dates of this Course:

Face to Face

- Friday 24th October 2023 (AM only)
- Wednesday 13th December 2023 (AM and PM)
- Thursday 18th January 2024 (AM and PM)
- Tuesday 6th February 2024 (AM only)
- Saturday 2nd December 2023 (AM only)

Online

- Wednesday 7th February 2024

You can [BOOK HERE](#) and check times and venues for each session.

Sexual Health

This course is for those that would like to learn about sexual health, including contraception, pregnancy options, sexually transmitted infections, and information about local services for young people and adults.

By the end of this session, you will have an understanding of:

- The different types of contraception and how they work
- The nature and risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- The choices available following an unplanned pregnancy
- How to access local sexual health services

Dates of this Course:

Face to Face

- Tuesday 6th February 2024 (PM only)
- Tuesday 12th March 2024 (AM and PM)

Online

- Tuesday 5th March 2024 5-7pm

You can [BOOK HERE](#) and check times and venues for each session.