

ISSUE 11
1st March 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent and Carer,

Welcome to our first blog of Term 4.

I am writing this on Friday 1st March, the start of meteorological Spring! I am not a fan of Winter and I am thrilled that lighter mornings and lighter evenings are upon us.

Our best wishes go to our Year 13 students who have their second and final Prelim examinations starting next week. They will be starting their final A Level examinations in approximately 7 school weeks from now so these examinations are a final rehearsal before the real thing. Good luck to all involved. It was our pleasure to welcome Year 12 and 13 parents and carers into school on Tuesday evening to receive advice on student finance from the University of Kent. Thank you to all who attended.

Year 11 had their results from their second Prelim examinations and their reports sent home this week. Their GCSE examinations also start for real in approximately 7 school weeks from now and we wish them well as they make their final preparations.

This edition contains some great updates which I hope you enjoy reading. You will have seen from previous blogs as well as this latest edition that we are significantly increasing our number of school trips – I hope you continue to enjoy reading about them and more importantly that your children are talking highly about their experiences.

Finally, as I said in previous blogs, in each edition I will address a concern that was raised in the recent parental survey. In the last two editions I provided updates on concerns expressed about trips and lunchtime provision. This week I would like to address concerns expressed about the amount of praise for those students doing the right thing.

We have worked hard on this over the past year or so. The vast majority of our students are a delight who behave well and work hard and we wanted to ensure they were praised more regularly. The main vehicle for doing this is ClassCharts which I know the vast majority of parents and carers now use regularly. If you are not engaging with ClassCharts at this time and need help to set up your account, please contact the main office who will be willing to support you. However, in addition to ClassCharts, we have also increased the number of rewards that Heads of Year are providing and Mr Potter is rewarding approximately 10 students on a Friday who have had a week without any negative comments by giving them a highly sought after queue jump card to get their Friday lunch before the rest of their peers! In addition to all of this, and much more formally, I am very proud to announce that we will be introducing a formal Key Stage 3 Celebration Evening for students who have excelled in Years 7-9 on Thursday 27th June 2024. Much more information will be issued on this nearer the time, but please do make a note of the date.

I look forward to providing further updates in two weeks time.

Mr L Preston

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.

[Year 11 Poetry Live Trip](#)

[Young Reporters](#)

[Sixth Form Student Finance Talk](#)

[Year 8 Swimming Sporting Success](#)

[Year 7 Extra-Curriculum Success](#)

[Reading at Holcombe](#)

[Maths Club](#)

[Bus Diversion Information From Medway Council](#)

[Protect Your Child From Measles](#)

[Group Chats Poster](#)

[Toothcare Dental Poster](#)

[Chess Tournament Poster](#)

KEY DATES

Term 4

- **WC 4th March - WC 11th March**
- Year 13 Prelims
- **Thursday 21st March**
- Year 9 Options Evening
- **Friday 22nd March**
- Year 8 Ypres Trip
- **Thursday 28th March**
- Last Day of Term 4

Term 5

- **Monday 15th April**
- First Day of Term 5

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](#)



YEAR 11 POETRY LIVE TRIP



When comes to revising poetry for GCSE English Literature; who better to help students to understand and revise the poems than the very poets themselves?

40 Year 11 Holcombe students enjoyed a trip to the luxurious Savoy Theatre last Friday to the annual poetry live event that helps students explore the set texts on their GCSE course and to approach the unseen poetry section of the exam.

They were in good company: Both the current and former British Poet Laureate (Simon Armitage and Carol Ann Duffy) read and discussed the context of their poetry to an inspired and attentive audience – none more so than the Holcombe contingent. They were joined by award winning poets Imtiaz Dharker, Owen Sheers and Daljit Nagra (presenter of BBC Radio 4's Poetry Extra Show). The finale was led by the ever-entertaining John Agard who recently won the BookTrust's Lifetime Achievement Award (the first ever poet to do so).

The daunting challenge of unseen poetry was also addressed at the event by no less than the AQA chief examiner who gave clear and appreciated guidance to students.

Travelling through the sights and landmarks of central London provided plenty of poetic inspiration on the way home. It was not lost on any of the party that this was more than a functional trip about revising the course; this was an explosion of art and culture – fully embraced by the Holcombe students.



YOUNG REPORTERS



Year 12 Students have been successful in enrolling on an external Young Reporters Course and have started their creative writing with gusto. Mentored by Miss Bloomfield, their first assignment has been submitted and available to view online, as our aspiring journalists have been sent into the local community to find their next news article to write about. James Saied has already featured on the front page, which is quite the achievement. The articles that they write will be uploaded and available to 39 million readers every month, with the students having four separate articles to produce, we are sure they will be learning valuable skills to take further. The course, once completed, will be a great addition to their UCAS application or CV.

You can find their articles [here](#).



The students are: James Saied, Favour Osibodu, Karen Danso and Camarli Lee.

SIXTH FORM STUDENT FINANCE TALK



On 27th February we welcomed Beth from the University of Kent to come and talk about all things relating to Student finance to our Sixth formers. Beth delivered a superbly informative presentation to both year groups in the afternoon and returned in the evening to present a parent's version. Students and parents were encouraged to ask questions, and also the opportunity to stay and speak to Beth afterwards. As well as guidance on benefits, levels, application process and encouragement of part time work, a lot of myth's were also busted, which most people reported as helpful. The Powerpoint from the presentation can be found on our [website](#).



YEAR 8 SWIMMING SPORTING SUCCESS



Billy Larter, Year 8, competed at the Kent County Swimming Championships on the 10th and 11th February. He represented Sevenoaks Swimming Club in 5 races.

He came 2nd in 50m and 100m backstroke, 5th in IM and 100m breaststroke and 8th in 50m breaststroke. He is now 1st in the South East Region and 3rd in the UK in 50m backstroke for his age group.

Well done Billy!



YEAR 7 EXTRA-CURRICULUM SUCCESS



Congratulations to Ryan Bawden, Year 7, who participated in a scout arrowhead competition on the 17th February. His group came 2nd out of 41 groups.

Well done Ryan!



READING AT HOLCOMBE



Reading at Holcombe

See below for the English Department's book recommendations. We have included a contemporary choice and a literary classic!



KS3

Coraline by Neil Gaiman. By the author of *The Graveyard Book* (our set text in Year 7), this is a creepy fantasy tale which twinkles with literary brilliance.

The War of the Worlds by HG Wells. A classic tale of an alien invasion. A must read for any fans of sci-fi.



KS4

Signed, Sealed, Dead by Cynthia Murphy: Paige finds herself embroiled in a dark and gruesome quarter-of-a-century old mystery in her new hometown. Perfect for fans of *Stranger Things*.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury. A dystopian tale in which books are banned and 'firemen' are in charge of burning them up. A classic.



Studies have shown that those who read for pleasure have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with difficult situations.

MATHS CLUB



Over the coming term, the maths club will be looking at code cracking! This week, students engaged in cracking a code using a Caesar cipher, where each letter is shifted by the same amount in the alphabet. For example, if the shift were 4, then “a” could represent “e”, “b” could represent “f” and so on. Students used a cipher wheel to help in their quest to crack the code and several of them were able to solve it through determination and persistence, but can you?

Zhoo grqh, brx'yh fudfnhg wklv frgh! Kdyh brx zrunhg rxw krz wklv phvvdjh kdvd ehq hqflskuhg? Wkh ohwwhu 'd' zdv pdsshg wr 'g', 'e' wr 'h' hwf. Wklv lv fdoohg d Fdhvdu vkliw, zlwkd d vkliw ri wkuhh ohwwhuv lq wklv fdvh. Zh dovr pdgh wklqjv d elw hdlvhu eb ohdylqj sxqfwdxwlrq d qg wkh vsdfhv ehwzhhg wkh zrugv lq. Krz glg brx ghflskhu wklv? Brx pdb kdyh wulhg ornlqj iru uhshdwhg wkuhh ohwwhu zrugv vxfk dv 'wkh', ru frxqwhg krz pdqb ri hdfk ohwwhu dsshduhg lq wkh flskhuwhaw d qg jxhvvhg wkdw wkh prvw frpprq ohwwhu fruuhvsrqgv wr 'h'. Wklv vhfraq phwkrq lv wkh edlv ri d phwkrq fdoohg iuhthqfb d qdoblv d qg lv yhub xvixio iru prqrdsokdehwlf flskhu. Li brx nqrz krz wr surjudp, brx fdq vdyh brxuvhoi d orw ri wlph eb zulwlqj vrph frgh wr gr lw iru brx! Grq'w zruub li brx grq'w wkrxjk, wkuhh duh orw ri zdbv brx fdq gr lw. Wkh 'ilqg d qg uhsodfh' wrro lq d zrug surfhvvlqj surjudp fdq eh yhub xvixio, mxvw pdnh vxuh brx grq'w fkdqjh djdlq wkh ohwwhuv brx'yh douhdbg uhsodfhg! Rqh zdb durxqg wklv lv wr wxuq wkh zkroh phvvdjh lqwr orzhu fdvh, d qg wkhq xvhd fslwdov iru wkh ghfusbwhg phvvdjh. Wkh qhaw phvvdjh zloo eh voljkwob kdughu, jrrg oxfn!



BUS DIVERSION INFORMATION - CLOSURE OF A228 FRINDSBURY HILL

From: 11 March 2024 until Sans Pareil roadworks completed

<p>ARRIVA/ASD 191</p>  <p>ARRIVA 193 SUNDAY</p>	<p>191- divert via Hollywood Lane > Brompton Farm Road > Gravesend Road > A2 Strood (Both directions Wainscott passengers to board and alight at Hoo Road/Liberty Park and Hollywood Lane stops at Higham Road and Greenfields Close) In Strood, board for 191s towards Hoo/ Grain at Commercial Road Stop G (opposite McDonalds)</p> <p>The 191 will <u>not</u> be stopping at the following bus stops:- North Street- Strood Post Office, St Mary's Road; A228 Frindsbury Road – Station Road, English Martyrs Church, Bingham Road, Sans Pareil; Wainscott Road- Gill Avenue, The Walk</p> <p>The Sunday 193 service will follow the same diversion as the 191.</p> <p>www.arrivabus.co.uk</p>
<p>ARRIVA 692/694</p>	<p>School Services 692 and 694 will follow the 191 diversions in both directions. However with the 694 not being able to serve Wainscott Road, the bus will turn at Four Elms roundabout and serve the bus stops at Hollywood Lane -Higham Road and Greenfields Close.</p>
<p>ARRIVA ASD 133</p>	<p>Normal route via Cliffe Road. Service may have extra delays due to weight of traffic using alternative routes.</p>
<p>ASD 170</p> 	<p>Due to Canal Road Strood operational in only one direction, ASD 170 in both directions will divert along A2 to Strood, at Chatham end will serve via from Chatham Waterfront via Medway Tunnel to Medway City Estate Neptune roundabout. 170 will not be serving Whitewall Road, Commissioners Road or Canal Road. Passengers to proceed to stops Anthonys Way, or the A2.</p> <p>www.asdcoaches.co.uk</p>
<p>NU-VENTURE 172/173/197</p> 	<p>Nu-Venture 172/173/197 to run normal route, likely to be subject to delays</p> <p>www.nu-venture.online</p>
<p>NU-VENTURE 652</p> <p>671 PM</p> <p>673</p>	<p>652 afternoon journey to divert through along A2 through Rochester and Chatham to avoid Canal Road. Morning journey will follow normal route via Canal Road but that may lead to delays</p> <p>671 will divert away from Frindsbury and the Sans Pareil, and solely serve Wainscott Road on route to Hundred of Hoo. Afternoon journey to follow morning route. Frindsbury passengers too use 601 and 673 services.</p> <p>673 will be diverted via Hollywood Lane, omitting Frindsbury and the Sans Pareil in both directions.</p>
<p>FARLEIGH COACHES BUSES TO MARITIME ACADEMY TWYDALL</p> 	<p>Cedar Road: Will remain picking up at the same point but travel along M2 instead of through the Medway Towns.</p> <p>North Street: Pick up point will be moved from North Street to A2 by Canal Road (Passmores) bus stop. Bus will then take a route which is either through Chatham Bus station and back onto Pier Road or up A2 Chatham Hill to Twydall.</p> <p>Wainscott: Buses will continue to pick up outside Wainscott Primary School and proceed the normal route through the tunnel.</p> <p>www.farleighcoaches.com</p>

PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM MEASLES



Measles isn't just a harmless childhood disease and can lead to serious illness, but it is preventable through two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. Following a rise in cases in England, the NHS are urging parents and carers to make sure their children are up to date with their MMR vaccinations. Catch-up clinics are available to school-aged children, and teens up to 19, in Chatham on Saturday, 2 and Saturday 23 March. To book an appointment phone the School-aged Immunisation Service on 0300 123 5205 or email via kchft.cyp-immunisationteam@nhs.net. If you're not sure whether your child is up to date with their MMR jabs, look in your child's red book, or check with your GP, who can also offer MMR catch-up appointments.

56

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

64

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

74

Advice for Parents & Carers

117

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

TOOTHCARE DENTAL


At Toothcare Dental we believe every child deserves a healthy, happy smile! We are thrilled to announce that we are now accepting NHS children under the age of 18 that haven't been seen by a dentist in over 2 years.


Why Choose Toothcare Dental for Your Child's Dental Care?

- Experienced and Friendly Dentists
- State-of-the-Art Child-Friendly Facilities
- Preventive Care to Keep Little Smiles Healthy
- Gentle and Caring Approach for Anxious children.

NHS Dental Services for Children Include:
Regular Check-ups and Cleanings - Fillings and Sealants - Emergency Dental Care - Oral Health Education - x-rays

 01634 232204

 367 MAIDSTONE ROAD, WIGMORE, KENT, ME80HT

 TOOTHCAREDENTAL@NHS.NET

ALL SCHOOL CHESS TOURNAMENT

FREE ENTRY VIA TEAMS
AMAZON VOUCHERS AND
OTHER PRIZES TO BE WON

FINAL MATCH OPTIONAL VIEWING

DATES TO BE DETERMINED ON ALL SCHOOL TEAMS CHANNEL
FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES CONTACT : AMI02@TSATSTUDENT.ORG.UK