

## Headteacher's Half Term Round-Up

*Miss Concannon*

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of what has been a very wet half term, I want to thank you for your continued support. Despite the challenging weather, it has been a hugely productive and rewarding few weeks across the school.

I have been particularly impressed by the creativity shown through our whole-school art project, where students have been working towards completing a portrait of me. The enthusiasm, effort, and imagination that has gone into this project has been wonderful to see, and I am very much looking forward to seeing the finished entries.

Our Thrive team continues to go from strength to strength, with their 1:1 sessions now truly embedded within school life. We are already seeing a positive impact on students' confidence, wellbeing, and readiness to learn, and this work remains a vital part of our wider support for every child.

Behind the scenes, work has also been taking place to refurbish a room in school into a dedicated school gym. This is an exciting development, and we are hopeful that the new space will be ready to open to students next half term. We look forward to sharing more updates as the project is completed.

Thank you once again for your ongoing partnership. I hope you all enjoy a well-earned break, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back next half term.



## Personal Development

*Ms Biddiss*

This term in Personal Development, students in Years 8, 9 and 10 have been exploring the theme of Dreams and Goals. Lessons encouraged pupils to think about their future aspirations and the practical steps needed to achieve them. Topics included money management and earnings, the changing future of jobs (including the impact of AI), and the importance of maintaining a healthy work–life balance. Students also discussed how risky choices and short-term decisions can have long-term consequences on their ambitions, helping them to make more informed and responsible choices.

Year 11 students have been focusing on the theme Healthy Me, which supports their growing independence and wellbeing. Learning has centred on understanding healthy relationships, consent, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These lessons aim to equip students with accurate information, promote respect and responsibility, and support them in making safe, healthy choices as they move towards adulthood.

We are also very proud to have recruited three Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, all of whom will be fully trained, with the initiative led by Miss Lamond. The Anti-Bullying message is crucial, and is embedded in all areas of the curriculum, especially Personal Development.

## Art

*Miss Harris*

It's been a vibrant and creative half term in Art at Hamilton School, with students exploring the bold and colourful world of Pop Art.

Students across the school have been creating work in the iconic style of Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, developing their understanding of Pop Art techniques and ideas. This has included creating lino cuts and printed artworks inspired by Warhol, painting Pop Art canvases, and students designing their own Pop Art-inspired LEGO figures, with some fantastic imagination and individuality on show.

This term also saw the exciting launch of our Mr Porter sponsored Art Competitions! The first challenge invited students to create a portrait of Miss Concannon! Some brilliant, and some... more questionable entries! Watch this space for next term's competition.

We were incredibly proud to participate in an exhibition of David Bowie inspired artwork at a tribute gig at South Street Arts Centre, performed by the band Moonage to mark the anniversary of Bowie's death. Students from Years 7, 8, and 9 worked collaboratively to create a striking piece that showcased both their creativity and teamwork. The artwork was warmly received and attracted fantastic feedback from those who viewed it.

A huge well done to all our Hamilton artists for their creativity, enthusiasm, and willingness to take risks this half term. We can't wait to see what next term brings!





**Mr Ramsamy**

Maths Teacher

*I started teaching many years ago and have worked in several schools across the north and south of England. When I eventually joined Hamilton it immediately felt like the right fit for me. Over the many years that I have worked at Hamilton I have met pupils full of potential, character and curiosity. There is one question that I have been asked on numerous occasions:*

**When will I ever use maths?!**

*You will **always** use maths and many times it will not be obvious that you are indeed using maths. You will use maths—maybe not in the “solve for x” way, but in the “run your life” way.*

*Every time you compare prices, plan a trip, manage time, follow a recipe, judge risks, or make a big decision, you’re doing maths. It trains your brain to spot patterns, think clearly, and not get fooled by bad logic or flashy numbers. That skill shows up everywhere: in money, work, technology, science, creativity— even in arguments.*

*Maths isn’t just about answers. It’s about learning how to think when things are messy and unknown. And that? You’ll use that all the time!*

## This Term

It’s heartening to reflect on the progress made across all year groups in the Maths Department.

**In Year 8**, students have demonstrated commendable understanding of equations and inequalities, sequences, and indices. Their ability to apply these concepts in problem-solving scenarios has been particularly impressive, showcasing their analytical skills.

**Year 9** students have excelled in mastering the order of operations, as well as working with fractions, decimals, and percentages. Their engagement in class discussions and collaborative activities has fostered a supportive learning environment, encouraging peer-to-peer learning.

**Year 10** has tackled more complex topics such as angles and bearings, circle geometry, and vectors. The enthusiasm shown during practical applications of these concepts has been inspiring, and it is evident that students are developing a strong foundation for future mathematical challenges.

Finally, **Year 11** have focused on multiplicative reasoning, including direct and inverse proportion, as well as geometric reasoning involving angles and vectors. Their dedication to preparing for assessments is commendable, and the improvement in their confidence levels is a testament to their hard work.

Overall, the commitment and resilience displayed by all students this term is truly commendable. Let us continue to build on these strengths and support each other in our mathematical journeys.



## Physical Education

*Mrs Burford*

All students have been working extremely hard in Physical Education this year, and it has been wonderful to see such positive engagement across all year groups.

In Key Stage 3, classes have been taking part in combined lessons. This approach has helped to develop teamwork and communication skills, while also allowing students to participate in team games with larger numbers. As a result, lessons have been more inclusive and dynamic, creating greater opportunities for learning and enjoyment within PE.

Key Stage 4 students are continuing their work towards the Entry Level GCSE in Physical Education. They have been focusing on practical activities such as basketball and football, demonstrating commitment, cooperation, and a positive attitude throughout their lessons.

It is encouraging to see students working together so well and genuinely enjoying their Physical Education lessons.

## Life Skills

*Miss Holmes*

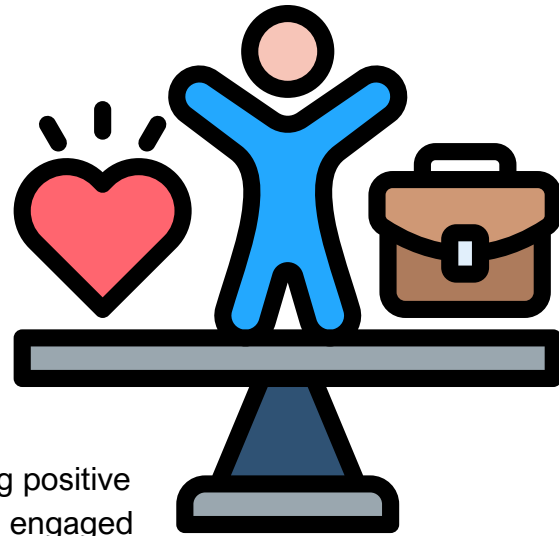
This half term, we have focused on decision making, preparing for work, and employability skills.

As part of our classes surrounding positive decisions, students engaged in mature discussions surrounding the internet and how to stay safe in the age of AI.

We also made great progress identifying the causes of conflict and how to resolve issues with each other amicably in our anger management module.

Classes engaged in practise interviews and thought about how our qualities would help us succeed in the workplace. Years 9, 10, and 11 began to explore apprenticeships as an option for life after school.

Well done Hamilton! Looking forward to next term



## Transition - Year 7

*Ms Whalley*

The Year 7s have continued to settle into their time at Hamilton, focusing on building relationships and finding different ways to regulate. They have been enjoying a range of therapy sessions, along with activities and games in the classroom.

In English, students have looked at first person accounts, with Anne Frank's diary requiring some empathy and sensitivity. Maths has seen them practising different methods using the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This term's Science topic has been forces, so plenty of opportunity for experiments, including investigating how an egg can survive a fall. In Personal Development students have continued their work on dreams and goals, and in Zones of Regulation they have been noting the finer points of non-verbal communication. All important and useful learning!



## Food Technology

*Mr Bartenbach*

This term in Food Technology, students prepared a range of sweet and savoury dishes, developing their practical cooking skills and confidence in the kitchen. Recipes included jam roly-poly, spicy Cajun chicken with quinoa and rice, chicken fajitas, a classic Victoria sandwich, and chocolate chip cookie dough. Throughout the term, students practiced accurate measuring, followed recipes independently, and demonstrated good kitchen safety and hygiene while evaluating their finished dishes.

## Outdoor Education

*Mr Russell*

Another exciting half term draws to a close! We've had the Duke of Edinburgh group supporting year 7's as part of their voluntary work, starting the physical element of their Award in local parks and continuing their outdoor work for their individual skills choice. We've had shelter and fire building, outdoor cooking and a wide variety of wood based construction projects, from planters to pool tables, benches to tables. After half term we're moving back to team building and challenges, with some exciting activities to look forward to!



## Science

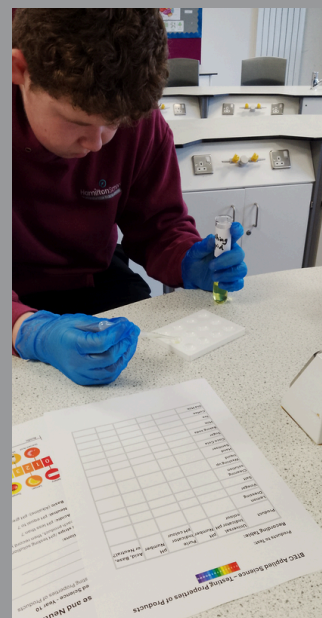
*Mrs Anchan*

It has been full of hands-on learning for our science students!

**Year 8** have been exploring Forces, getting stuck into practical activities to test different types of forces and see science in action.

**Year 9** have been learning about Energy and its stores, conducting experiments to measure the energy in food and testing their favourite food (CRISP) to understand how it powers them.

**Year 10** have started working on their BTEC award, researching and doing their practical by testing acid and alkali with range of items, from everyday objects to food, putting their science skills to the test.



Year 11 have been diving into one of the toughest areas of GCSE Physics - Atomic Structure and Radiation. They've explored how a single atom emits radiation which can be both a cure and a risk, showing curiosity throughout.

We are incredibly proud of all our students for their hard work and effort they have shown this term!

## Careers

*Mr Versace*

The Year 10 students have an opportunity for a week-long work experience placement beginning on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. Application forms that were completed and sent in by the deadline meant students were then allocated an interview with a representative from the Education Business Partnership, who source suitable placements for students. These interviews were conducted successfully in late January and most students who applied have now been given a placement. Students are required to make contact with their workplace supervisor and pre-placement visits will be happening in the first two weeks of next half-term. We look forward to hearing all about the placements and visiting the students during that week to check their progress.

National Apprenticeship Week (9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> February) was also celebrated with additions to the tutor presentations each morning and guest speakers coming in from AWE to talk about a range of apprenticeships available with them. National Careers Week will also be celebrated during the week beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, with a focus on accessing Unifrog, an online platform that guides students through the careers maze to find jobs, apprenticeships and careers that suit their interests, preferred working environments and dreams and aspirations. We can't wait to hear all about the different options students find for themselves!



## English

*Ms Ejike*

**Year 9** have been exploring the world through a travel-writing scheme that combines cultural exploration with the development of reading and writing skills. They especially enjoyed learning about the harsh weather and mining in Norilsk, Russia; Mexico's bullfighting traditions; and the Turks and Caicos Islands, known for their tourism.

Students developed comprehension, inference, vocabulary, and descriptive writing skills. They applied these skills in their own writing, including letters to friends. The scheme broadened cultural understanding, enhanced writing skills, and encouraged curiosity about the wider world.

**Year 10** students have been reading *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes, a novel inspired by the real-life case of Emmett Till. The text has prompted thoughtful discussions on racism, prejudice, injustice, inequality, grief, and empathy.

Students have practised persuasive writing and analysed how the author uses language, structure, and vocabulary to convey key messages. They are nearing completion of the novel and have engaged deeply with its themes, reflecting on the importance of challenging injustice and promoting understanding.

**Year 11** students have begun the year with great zeal for their GCSE preparations. This half term, they have focused on developing skills for the English Language GCSE Paper 1 (Fiction). We used a range of resources, including CGP revision materials, past papers, Seneca, revision videos, and extracts from 19th- and 20th-century fiction such as *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to practise comprehension, analytical, and creative writing skills. Short horror story clips also inspired imaginative writing.

## Staffing & Site Updates

*Miss Ward*

It has been a busy and productive term at Hamilton School, with staff continuing to work incredibly hard to support our students and ensure they are able to thrive both academically and emotionally. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their ongoing dedication, flexibility, and commitment during what has been a full and rewarding term.

In terms of staffing, Mr Boateng is currently undertaking the role of Cover Supervisor, providing valuable support to maintain continuity across the school. All other staffing arrangements remain unchanged.

We are also delighted to share some exciting developments within the school. Our new school gym will be opening very soon, which will be a fantastic addition to our provision and a real asset in supporting students' physical health, wellbeing, and positive engagement. Alongside this, our quiet rooms and reflection rooms are being fully redesigned in collaboration with a specialist sensory company. These thoughtfully designed spaces will offer enhanced opportunities for regulation, reflection, and emotional support, benefiting both our students and the wider school community.

We are very proud of the progress being made and grateful to our staff for the continued energy and care they bring to Hamilton School every day.

## Enrichment

*Ms Archer*

The past few weeks in enrichment have been great fun. Music enrichment has been a real success, with students now producing their own music. They have also enjoyed playing the drums and keyboards. Xbox sessions have been popular too, with students enjoying a good game of FIFA. Many students head off on Fridays with a bit of dancing in the lower corridor while waiting for taxis, ending the week on a high note.

## Attendance

*Ms Biddiss*

Attendance continues to be a key focus this term, as regular attendance plays a vital role in students' academic and social progress, wellbeing, and sense of belonging at school. We are pleased to see that many students' attendance is improving, and we want to recognise the effort this represents from both students and families. To celebrate this progress, we are pleased to see the number of praise postcards and letters being sent home, acknowledging positive attendance and commitment to learning.

We kindly remind parents and carers of the importance of reporting their child's absence promptly on each day of absence. Clear and timely communication helps us to ensure students are safe and appropriately supported. Thank you for your continued partnership in promoting good attendance and helping students make the most of their time in school.

## Thrive

*Ms Archer*

It's been another fantastic term of Thrive interventions. Our students are really beginning to understand what Thrive represents, and we're proud to have created a safe, welcoming space where every student feels they belong and can truly be themselves. It's been wonderful to see students confidently asking for more 1:1 Thrive interventions, highlighting how valued and effective this support has become.



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Our School Advisory Board (SAB) is fundamental for the success of Hamilton School. Our SAB is involved in the life of the school, focusing on three key areas:

The voice and perspective of **pupils** and **students**

The voice and perspective of **staff**

The voice and perspective of **parents** and **carers**

[Click here to find out more about each SAB member](#)



Chris Jones  
(Chair)



Sarah Concannon  
(Headteacher)



Emma Bliss  
(Vice-Chair)



Mike Bellamy



Jill Corfield



June Lau



Hazel Bingham  
(Parent Member)



Scott Versace  
(Staff Member)



Sanskruti Jain

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Brighter Futures for Children  
Reading Borough Council  
Working better with you

## Understanding Autism

Parenting programme

📅 Wednesday - 25 Feb, 4 March and 11 March 2026 ⌚ 6.30-8.30pm  
📍 Online via MS Teams

Join our three-week term-time programme for parents and carers.

This course provides an overview of the Living with Autism course, covering areas where parents commonly need support with their children such as play, sleep and toilet training. Each week will also include information about emotional regulation. All sessions will emphasise a growth approach to autism.

- ★ **Week one:** Understanding autism and your child as an individual
- ★ **Week two:** Practical strategies and approaches to play, sleep and toilet training
- ★ **Week three:** Enabling environments, including education settings.

To enquire or book your place, please contact:  
[parenting@reading.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@reading.gov.uk)  
or call **0118 937 4858**



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## Helping Young People Stay Out of Harm's Way

*We're not here to tell you how to parent.*

**Stay True to You** has been developed by **Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership**. Designed to help you have better conversations, they provide free practical materials to help start meaningful conversations with your child about safety. Please click on the below links to access some of the support on offer:

### The Insights behind Stay True to You

All of this starts with what young people and youth workers told us. Start here to dive into the core principles of our approach, understand how young people feel about their safety, and consider how we can best communicate with them.

Download  
PDF, 808.41 KB

### Free online training

Two short videos which together make up a package which aims to raise your awareness of the risks facing your children, the signs and symptoms to look out for, what can help protect them, and practical tips in having difficult conversations that help them to make their own more positive choices to keep them safe.

Access the training

### Parent/Carer Information booklet

A free booklet with advice for parents/carers on how to help keep your child safe.

Download  
PDF, 2.68 MB



[Click here for the Family Information Service information page](#)

[Click here for information about childcare](#)

[Click here for Early Help & Support](#)

[Click here for the SEND Local Offer](#)

[Click here for information about Preparing for Adulthood](#)

[Click here for SEN Support](#)



**WOKINGHAM, READING & BRACKNELL ROCKS™**

For details of half term events taking place in and around your area, please take a look at the 'ROCKS' sites below.

[Click here for Wokingham Rocks Activities](#)

[Click here for Reading Rocks Activities](#)

[Click here for Bracknell Rocks Activities](#)

[Click here for Windsor Rocks Activities](#)

**Many of these events are FREE!**



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE BULLYING

Defined as "ongoing hurtful behaviour towards someone online", cyber-bullying makes its victims feel upset, uncomfortable and unsafe. In the digital world, it has numerous forms – such as hurtful comments on a person's posts or profile; deliberately leaving them out of group chats; sharing embarrassing images or videos of someone; or spreading gossip about them. Cyber-bullying can severely impact a young person's mental health – so, in support of Anti-Bullying Week, we've provided a list of tips to help trusted adults know what to look for and how to respond to it.

### 1. GET CONNECTED

Playing online games together with your child or connecting with them on social media (providing they're old enough) is not only fun but also an excellent way of establishing some common ground to discuss things you've both seen or done online – as well as keeping an eye on who your child is communicating with in the digital world.

### 2. KEEP TALKING

Regular chats with young people about their online lives are good practice in general, but they can also be an excellent refresher to help prevent cyber-bullying situations. Topics you might want to revisit include why it's important to only connect online with people we know and trust, and why passwords should always remain secret (even from our best friends).

### 3. STAY VIGILANT

Observe your child while they're using technology and just after they've used it. Are they acting normally, or out of character? Possible signs of a problem may include seeming quiet or withdrawn, jumpy or anxious, angry or repeatedly checking their phone. When you feel it's the right time, you may want to check in with them to see if everything is OK.

### 4. MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

If an online bullying incident does occur, it may take a while before your child is ready to open up about what happened. Just gently remind them that they can always come to you with any problems – and that they won't be in trouble. You might also suggest a trusted family member they could turn to, in case they feel too embarrassed to tell you directly.

### 5. BE PREPARED TO LISTEN

When conversations about online bullying do take place, they're likely to be difficult, emotional and upsetting for both you and your child. Actively listen to your child while they're bringing you up to speed, and try not to show any judgement or criticism – even if they haven't dealt with the situation in exactly the way you would have hoped.

### FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE

If you or your child need additional help with an online bullying issue, here are some specialist organisations that you could reach out to.

**Childline:** talk to a trained counsellor on 0800 1111 or online at [www.childline.org.uk/get-support/](http://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/)

**National Bullying Helpline:** counsellors are available on 0845 225 5787 or by visiting [www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html](http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html)

**The NSPCC:** the children's charity has a guide to the signs of bullying at [www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/) and can be reached on 0800 800 5000

### 6. EMPOWER YOUR CHILD

Depending on their age, your child might not want a parent "fighting their battles for them". In that case, talk through their options with them (blocking the perpetrator, deleting the app and so on). By allowing your child to choose the path they take, you're putting them in control but are also demonstrating that you're there to support them along the way.

### 7. REPORT BULLIES ONLINE

Cyber-bullying often takes place through a particular app, social media platform or online game. If this is happening to your child, encourage them to report the offender to the app or game in question – ideally with screenshots to support their complaint. Most games and apps have reporting tools specifically to stamp out abusive behaviour and protect users.

### 8. ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

Protecting themselves online is the priority, of course, but young people should also feel empowered to help if they witness other people falling victim to cyberbullying. Even if they don't feel confident enough to call someone out on their abusive behaviour online, they can still confidentially report that person to the app or game where the bullying occurred.

### 9. SEEK EXPERT ADVICE

Victims of online bullying frequently experience feelings of isolation and anxiety, a loss of self-esteem and potentially even thoughts of self-harm or suicide. If you think that an incident of cyber-bullying has affected your child's mental wellbeing, then seek psychological support for them. There are some useful contact details in the central panel below.

### 10. INVOLVE THE AUTHORITIES

If the nature of any online bullying makes you suspect that your child is genuinely in imminent physical danger – or if there are any signs whatsoever of explicit images being shared as part of the bullying – then you should gather any relevant screenshots as evidence and report the incidents to your local police force.

### 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.



Monday 23 February	All students return to school
Friday 27 February	Inset Day - school closed to all students
Monday 2 to Friday 6 March	Year 11 Mock Exams
Thursday 5 March	Trust Employment Fair at Maiden Erlegh School
Monday 9 to Friday 13 March	Year 10 Work Experience
Wednesday 18 March	Parents Evening
Thursday 26 March	Reward Trips
Friday 27 March	Last Day of Term - students finish at 12:30pm
Monday 13 April	All students return to school

*Wishing all our families wonderful half-term break!  
We look forward to welcoming all students back with us on  
Monday 23 February*

**Please ensure your child is wearing:**

- **Full school uniform - burgundy school jumper or hoodie, white t-shirt, black trousers and black shoes/trainers**
- **No jewellery (one earring stud in each ear)**

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