



## Headteacher's Half Term Round-Up

Miss Concannon

Wowzers! I can't believe we are breaking up for the Easter holidays already, that term has passed by quickly, as they say 'time flies when you are having fun!'.

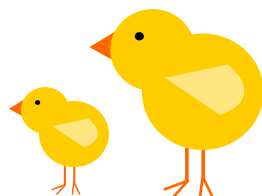
This term has been another busy one with year 11 completing their mock exams successfully in preparation for their GCSEs that start in the summer term. The school also participated in World Book Day seeing many students and staff dressing up as characters from a range of books, with Mr Woolford and Tyler D-B receiving awards for the best costume.

The highlight for me this term has been the successful parents evening; seeing students proudly show their parents around the school and hearing all the positive conversations around progress and targets.

In the new term we welcome Ms Rixson to the Behaviour Support Team and wish her well in her new role.

Sadly we do have to say goodbye to Miss Hill and Mrs Skates. Miss Hill is leaving us to return to her roots and teach primary students; we wish her well in her new venture. Mrs Skates is retiring after serving over 20 years with the school.

I wish everyone a relaxing and enjoyable Easter break.



### English

*Dr Corfield (KS3) & Mr Woolford (KS4)*

KS3 class groups have been studying Shakespeare's *Macbeth* this term (although we have only just revealed that to them!). We began the term looking at the themes such as Power and Corruption, Good and Evil and Witches and the witch trials. The students have been very interested in the lengths people will go to to achieve and maintain power and this has led on to some very thought provoking group discussions. We have been particularly pleased with the engagement and higher level thinking the students have demonstrated as well as their willingness to listen to each other - great life skills!

*The online version of *Macbeth* may be found [here](#).*

In Key Stage 4, we have been looking at descriptive techniques and their use by authors in the first part of a novel to introduce the readers to context, characters and themes of the book. We have looked at the work of Ray Bradbury and Erin Morgenstern. We have also been working on the pupils' creative writing by looking at the structure of a story, techniques used and the pupils have created some fabulous stories.

Year 11 have also been completing revision again analysing unseen texts and working on techniques for persuasive writing.

## Maths

*Mr Ramsamy*

KS3 have been focussing on index notation and its rules; fractions; decimals; and percentages this term. Some of these topics have been new to the students but they have risen to the challenge.

Year 10 have been covering ratio and proportion which included simplification, sharing, scaling and problem solving - not always straightforward topics but they have persevered!

Finally, our Year 11s have shown great determination in starting their revision for their upcoming exams. Topics they have been revising have included transformations, sequences, ratio and proportion, order of operations.

## Art

*Ms Morbi*

In Art this term we have explored the use of transfer paper to trace images onto card or newspaper. Students have then learnt about stippling and pointillism which are both techniques that use lots of small repeated dots to create a larger image. Pointillism, however, utilises a blend of colours that when observed from a distance create a new colour, a result called 'optical mixing'. Students have then used this dot method to fill in their image that has been traced using the transfer paper.

Other students have been working with cardboard and gum tape, which is water activated, in order to create a miniature skate park for their 'tech-decks'. We have also used clay to create models and little pots, which students have painted once dry.

## Physical Education

*Mrs Burford*

Throughout PE, we teach a Concept Curriculum which has over-arching topics and are taught through sport.

Year 7 have been focusing on resilience and self-worth; Year 8 have been focussing on Social Health; Year 9 have focused on self-reflection. All these concepts have been taught through a range of sports including badminton, volleyball, dodgeball and basketball. We have broken down skills and played through games.

Year 10 and year 11 have been working on their BTEC Sport qualification and have been working towards their individual and team sports, mainly playing badminton.

## Forest School

*Mr Russell*



This half term we have been:

- Designing how we want to expand and improve the forest school area.
- Learning to use new tools, including hand drills, screwdrivers, folding saws and hammers.
- Using those tools to break down some wooden pallets, some of which have been kindly donated by parents (more donations are always appreciated!) and building two new log stores to keep our firewood dry.
- Taking whittling to new levels with the new carving tools.

It has been a privilege to see the students building and repairing relationships in the forest school area, by supporting each other in the construction of our new log stores.

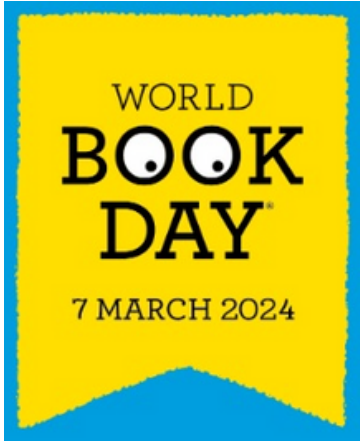
## Food Technology

*Mr Bartenbach*

It has been a joy to continue in our Food Tech journey this term with some brilliantly engaged and enthusiastic students!

Last week, some of our students made some particularly delicious chocolate brownies - just the right mix of chewy and fudgy - perfect. We've also been experimenting with another crowd pleaser: chilli con carne. The students really enjoyed getting our spices just right for this iconic dish.

Alongside making cakes for our visitors from Lakeside Care Home, Year 11 have been putting the finishing touches to their Home Cooking Skills BTEC First Award. I am very proud of their focus and effort.



On Thursday 7 March, Hamilton School celebrated World Book Day with great enthusiasm! Students and staff alike transformed into a myriad of beloved book characters, creating a vibrant and colourful atmosphere throughout the campus. From wizards and witches to superheroes and fairytale creatures, every corner was filled with characters straight out of our favourite stories.

As part of the festivities, each student received a token along with engaging word searches and quizzes related to literature. These activities not only added a fun twist to the day but also encouraged everyone to explore the world of books and reading in a playful way.

Overall, it was a fantastic celebration at Hamilton School that not only brought our favourite characters to life but also reminded us of the endless wonders that can be found within the pages of a book.



Goldilocks & The Three Bears



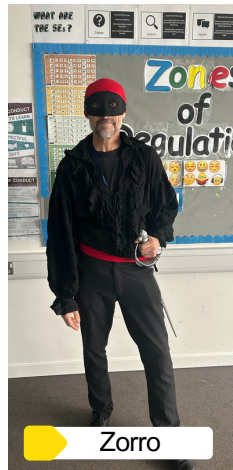
Mrs Trunchbull



Where's Wally?



Chewbacca, Hans Solo & Luke Skywalker



Zorro



Queen of Hearts, Alice, The White Rabbit & The Madhatter



## Careers at Hamilton

*Mr Versace*

On Friday 5 March, students from Year 9 and 10 had the opportunity to hear about the world of work from two visitors from Westcoast, a British IT distribution company that claims to be “the biggest company no-one’s heard of”.



The visitors explained the different roles that can be found in a large company like Westcoast, and the types of skills and characteristics that employers look for. They even spoke about what it means to be enterprising, giving their founder as an example.

The students were fully engaged throughout the session, many questions were asked, and the VR headsets were a particular hit with the students.

This was the first of three sessions as a part of a special Careers project run together with Speakers4Schools and will also include a visit to the Westcoast warehouse to participate in an “Inside the Factory” type experience.

## Parent & Tutor Meetings

*Dr Corfield*

A very successful Parents' Evening was held last week with a good turn out from Mums, Dads, Nans, carers and some siblings too!

There was much to celebrate with a pleasing amount of our students' work on show and plenty of positive feedback from parents/carers who were delighted to see it.



Well done to all our students who have put so much effort into working hard over the term. Keep it up!



# Happy Retirement, Mrs Skates!

Mrs Skates is retiring after serving over 20 years with the school.

Starting as a supply teacher, Mrs Skates has done many things over the years to support the students; delivering a range of subjects, attending off-site residentials, and much more.

Mrs Skates will be fondly remembered for her willingness and dedication to support our students and will be sadly missed by all.

We wish you a very happy retirement!



## Red Nose Day

We had a brilliant day supporting Comic Relief by wearing red for Red Nose Day. We raised £28!



Some of us even went for more than a red nose...

## Year 11 Exams

*Mrs Wilson*

Study Leave for Year 11s will start on Tuesday 7 May, meaning the timetabled school day will be Friday 3 May.

Personalised Exam Packs have been sent home detailing exam entries made, dates and times of exams, and arrangements for the days of each exam. Also included was a Weekly Planner for you to help your child plan their revision time during their Study Leave, and a Candidate Handbook, which details the 'dos and don'ts' of exams. Please do take the time to read through this pack with your child.

I would like to wish all of our Year 11 students every success with their exams.

## Attendance & Absence

We continue to focus on attendance and absence.

Overall attendance this term has been **63.89%**. During this time, a total of **285** days of learning have been lost to unauthorised absence: absence that has not been agreed by the school and is not related to illness or alternative educational activities. In addition to this, we have seen **25** instances of late arrivals by students, impacting on learning time\*.

If you provide transport for your child, or they make their own way to school, please ensure that they arrive between 8.30am and 8.45am.

If your child is unwell, please email [hamadmin@maidenerlegtrust.org](mailto:hamadmin@maidenerlegtrust.org) by **9am**.

*\*Figures as of 27 March 2024*

## Reward Trips

*Mr Versace*

End of term reward trips form a major part of the incentive scheme at school.

Previously the reward trips have been open to those top 10 students who achieve the most behaviour/effort points throughout the term. Last term's trip to Coral Reef was a splash! The swim session was enjoyed by all and then followed up with a McDonalds lunch, before returning to school ahead of home time.



This term, the format of the rewards has changed to allow more students to engage with the incentive. The top ten students will still go on a whole day trip, this time to Jump-In trampoline park in Camberley, but this will be considered the "Gold" reward.

A second "Silver" reward trip will be given to the next ten students whose points were quite enough to make the Gold trip. These students will be venturing out of school to a local park and may even get a meal or snack from the local café.

Students whose points have not reached the totals for either of these trips won't be missing out fully. We understand that some students struggle with the expectations placed on them and missing out on these trips is one of the consequences of this, however we also want them to have something to look forward to at the end of the term. As such, they will have an opportunity to watch a film and enjoy some popcorn onsite here at school while the other 20 students are offsite.

Please do encourage your child to earn those points so they make these trips.

## Online Safety

Following Miss Concannon's letter regarding Social Media use, we have launched a new area on our website: [Hamilton School - Online Safety \(hamilton-school.co.uk\)](https://www.hamilton-school.co.uk/online-safety).

Every Wednesday, [The National College](https://www.thenationalcollege.co.uk) produces guides which are designed to empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing. These guides will be uploaded each week for your reference.

If you would prefer these to be emailed to you each week, please let us know [here](#) or by emailing us.

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 SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthral young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

### 1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

### 2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

### 3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

### 4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

### 5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

### 6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

### 7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound plings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

### 8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

### 9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

### 10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

### Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-62240005>  
<https://sprouts.co.uk/insight/social-media-safety/>



## Support and Information

Information of local services and events that may be of help or interest

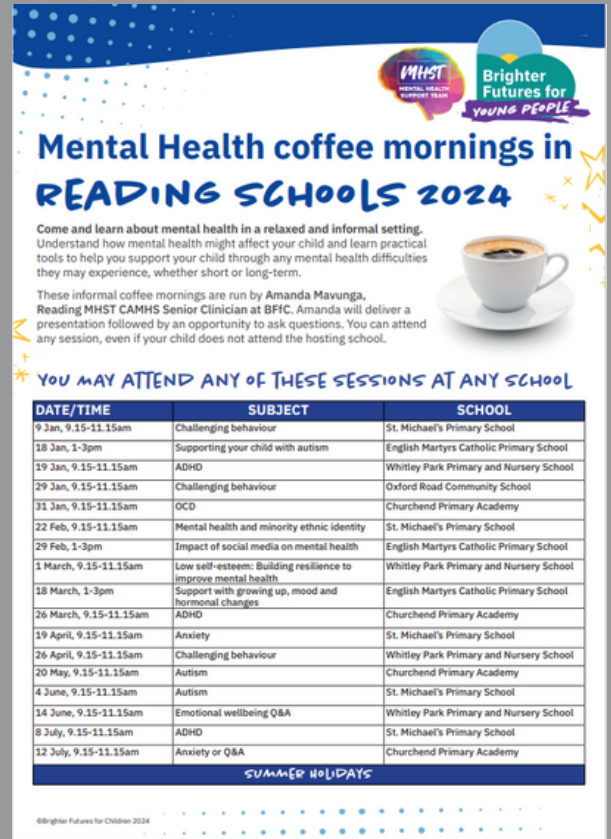
### Places Kids Eat Free in School Half Terms & Holidays

2024: <https://moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free>

**Family Activities:** <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/family-activities/>

**Early Help:** <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/early-help/>

**Reading Food Banks:** <https://readifood.org.uk/>



**Mental Health coffee mornings in READING SCHOOLS 2024**

Come and learn about mental health in a relaxed and informal setting. Understand how mental health might affect your child and learn practical tools to help you support your child through any mental health difficulties they may experience, whether short or long-term.

These informal coffee mornings are run by Amanda Mavunga, Reading MHST CAMHS Senior Clinician at BFIC. Amanda will deliver a presentation followed by an opportunity to ask questions. You can attend any session, even if your child does not attend the hosting school.

**YOU MAY ATTEND ANY OF THESE SESSIONS AT ANY SCHOOL**

DATE/TIME	SUBJECT	SCHOOL
9 Jan, 9.15-11.15am	Challenging behaviour	St. Michael's Primary School
18 Jan, 1-3pm	Supporting your child with autism	English Martyrs Catholic Primary School
19 Jan, 9.15-11.15am	ADHD	Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School
29 Jan, 9.15-11.15am	Challenging behaviour	Oxford Road Community School
31 Jan, 9.15-11.15am	OCD	Churchend Primary Academy
22 Feb, 9.15-11.15am	Mental health and minority ethnic identity	St. Michael's Primary School
29 Feb, 1-3pm	Impact of social media on mental health	English Martyrs Catholic Primary School
1 March, 9.15-11.15am	Low self-esteem: Building resilience to improve mental health	Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School
18 March, 1-3pm	Support with growing up, mood and hormonal changes	English Martyrs Catholic Primary School
26 March, 9.15-11.15am	ADHD	Churchend Primary Academy
19 April, 9.15-11.15am	Anxiety	St. Michael's Primary School
26 April, 9.15-11.15am	Challenging behaviour	Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School
20 May, 9.15-11.15am	Autism	Churchend Primary Academy
4 June, 9.15-11.15am	Autism	St. Michael's Primary School
14 June, 9.15-11.15am	Emotional wellbeing Q&A	Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School
8 July, 9.15-11.15am	ADHD	St. Michael's Primary School
12 July, 9.15-11.15am	Anxiety or Q&A	Churchend Primary Academy

**SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

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## Dates for next Half Term:

15 April 2024	School re-opens to all students
6 May 2024	Bank Holiday - school closed to all students
7 May 2024	Year 11 Study Leave starts Year 11 Exam Period Starts
23 May 2024	Reward Trip (selected students)
27 May - 31 May 2024	Half Term Holiday - School closed to all students



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We would love to hear your views on Hamilton School. Please click below to highlight anything you feel our school has done particularly well recently, or areas you feel we need to improve, as well as a chance to nominate a member of staff you feel has exceeded your expectations. Click on the links below to submit your feedback:

