



## Headteacher's Half Term Round-Up

*Miss Concannon*

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

As we reach the end of this half term, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the dedication and hard work shown by our entire school community. It has been a busy and productive few weeks, filled with numerous activities, achievements, and memorable moments.

Our Year 11 students have entered a crucial phase of their academic journey as they begin their exams. I urge all Year 11 students to stay focused and continue to give their best in the upcoming weeks. Remember, your hard work now will pave the way for future success.

In addition to the hustle and bustle of exam preparations, we have also had the pleasure of welcoming visitors from Westcoast, the largest unknown logistics company, to our school. Year 9 and 10 students had the opportunity to engage with them and visit their premises in Bracknell to get a real flavour of what logistics is all about.

As we look forward to a well-deserved break, I encourage everyone to take this time to relax and recharge. It is important to balance hard work with rest and reflection. I hope you all enjoy quality time with family and friends and return refreshed and ready for the next half of the term.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in our school community. Together, we create an environment where every student can thrive and achieve their potential.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

## Physical Education

*Mrs Burford*

Well, what a busy time it has been! We have been taking advantage of the nice weather and a few groups have been heading over to the tennis courts to play some games.

Some groups have been having their PE lessons on the field and playing frisbee - it is a lot harder than it looks! Students have been working hard on making their throws more accurate.

Year 7 had a game of basketball against Oaktree School. Huge thank you to all staff and students involved in this! We are hoping to hold more fixtures against Oaktree in the near future! Watch this space for an update!

Year 10 are working hard on their BTEC Sport coursework whilst Year 11 have finished their coursework and will be sitting their exam very soon - good luck to all students.



## English

*Dr Corfield and Mr Woolford*

Key Stage 3 have been studying the 1977 play by Willy Russell, *Our Day Out*. It is set in Liverpool with the backdrop of the recession and associated challenges. Mrs. Kay teaches the "Progress Class" which is taken on a coach trip. Mr. Briggs, the authoritarian Deputy Headmaster, also goes. The children visit the zoo, where the students enjoy the animals so much that they try to steal most of them! The zoo attendant discovers this just in time before the coach pulls out and makes them return the animals. The group also visits a castle and the students race around exploring the grounds, cliffs and beach.

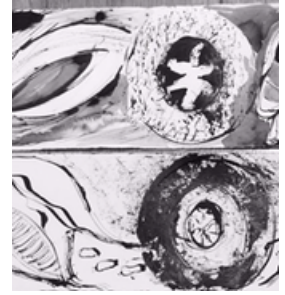
The themes explored in the play are poverty and aspiration and the importance of education to challenge these. Our groups also looked at different styles of teaching and what sort of teachers they prefer and why. Along the way there has been much conversation about the poor quality of television, the "funny" clothes and the Liverpudlian accent. The children have really engaged and we are delighted with the depth of thought and discussion that the play has provoked. In addition, the classes have attempted some GCSE level work associated with the play and worked together to understand and answer the questions; very pleasing to see.



## Art

*Miss Morbi*

In Art this term we have worked with different materials including sponges and rollers to create different patterns and effects with paint. The students have also used natural materials with leaves, where they have chosen a leaf of their liking, painted it and transferred the pattern onto paper.



Others have painted landscapes onto canvases, and experimented with the sun being in different positions and the impact that has on shadows.

## Maths

*Mr Ramsamy*

This half term has seen Year 11 continuing their revision for their GCSE exams. To maximise chances of achieving a maths qualification pupils, several students were entered for the GCSE as well as the Entry Level Functional Skills maths qualification. Students took their first maths GCSE exam on 16 May.

Year 10 have been learning about data handling this term, covering types of data, data gathering processes and presentation of data. I've been impressed by their focus. Some of our Year 10s (& 9s) will also be sitting their Entry Level Functional Skills maths exam next term, so we have been preparing for these.

Our Key Stage 3 students have been learning about the various angle rules including angles within parallel lines and within polygons. We have also enjoyed construction of triangles and quadrilaterals.

## Food Technology

*Mr Bartenbach*

We have had a great term in Food Tech! We have been perfecting that chocolate brownie recipe - we now have just the right amount of coca and chocolate and the perfect amount of squidgy goodness!

Year 10 have been demonstrating some high level skilled knife work, chopping and peeling fresh vegetables for a delicious cottage pie. To top it off, they grated some cheese for some superb cheesy mash.

We'll be transferring these skills to making a classic lasagne before finishing this half term with 'treat week' - picking their favourite culinary masterpieces so far to perfect yet further.

Finally, our Year 11s - I have been wowed by your attitude to your Home Cooking Skills BTEC portfolios. I would like to wish you every success with the rest of your exams and your life beyond Hamilton School.

## Forest School

Mr Russell

It's been another exciting half a term in forest school, with new tools arriving which have already been put to good use! Students have been involved in a wide variety of tasks and projects, including:

- The construction of a rope bridge that utilised wooden planks, upcycled from palettes
- Work on the creation of our own guile suits while learning how camouflage is used in nature
- Constructing a wooden bench, upcycling an old picnic bench (it's not quite finished but it's coming along!)
- Constructing a small play area for toy-based play
- Learning how to safely use an axe to prepare wood for fire building, looked at how to sharpen tools to keep them safe and effective
- Safe use of drills, both hand and electric, a variety of saws and a spirit level
- We've also revisited some shelter building and hammock making



I'm looking forward to an exciting half a term ahead in Forest School!

## Year 9 & 10 Careers Project

Mr Versace

The Year 9 and 10 students at Hamilton have had an opportunity over the past month to be involved in a special Careers project facilitated by Speakers4Schools. The project involved a local business sharing some experiences with the students over three separate sessions, with the middle session taking place in the workplace.

Westcoast Ltd, an IT distribution and logistics company based in Theale, was matched with us and the first session saw two representatives, Sonia and Liz, present their business to the group of students. They also brought along a VR headset for the students to try, which was a hit. The session explored the various job roles involved at Westcoast and gave the students a better understanding of what the company did.

For the second session we ventured over to their warehouse in Theale, and we were introduced to a number of Westcoast staff, from security and warehouse supervisors to the sales team and the canteen staff. Students were given a task to do which involved finding a stock item from the warehouse shelves, fixing a postage label to it, and then loading it onto a conveyor belt to go onto a lorry. The session was a huge success, especially when the parcels arrived the following day and students were able to take home the goods! Students received power banks, water bottles, drawstring bags, snacks and drinks – all generously donated by Westcoast.

The final session back at school the following Monday, saw the Westcoast staff share some feedback about the students' visit to the warehouse and hand out trophies, certificates and yet another gift donated by the Westcoast owner, a set of wireless earphones. Students were overjoyed by the project, the gifts and the generosity of the company, and the school presented Sonia and Liz with a thankyou card and chocolates for their invaluable careers input into the lives of our Year 9 and 10 students.

## Reward Trips

*Mr Versace*

With this year's reward trips being such a huge success already, last term we trialled expanding the rewards into a tiered system of Gold, Silver and Bronze rewards.

The Gold trip went for the day to Jump-In in Camberley, the Silver ventured to Palmer Park for the afternoon with a stop at the café, while the Bronze reward saw other students watching a movie with popcorn in the afternoon at school.

All students (and staff!) enjoyed the rewards, and the tiered system will continue for the remainder of the academic year.

Students selected for this term's Gold trip have participated in some water sports, while our Silver trip students went to watch 'IF' at Showcase Cinema. Students participating in the Bronze reward headed to Sol Joel Park for some fun and games.

All reward trips occur in the final week of the half-term as a way of celebrating the successes throughout the term, in both behaviour and work effort. These efforts are recorded on daily points, so please encourage your child to earn the best points they can.

## Year 11 Exams

*Mrs Wilson*

Our Year 11s have started their exams - thank you to all our parents for your support with getting children to school on time each day.

Students have completed one GCSE paper in each subject now. We have more exams scheduled for after half term.

Parents - please keep encouraging that can-do, positive attitude in your children. The end is in sight now!

Keep up the good work, Year 11 - not long until your end of term celebration at Lagoona Park waterpark on 21 June!

## Summer Weather

Please ensure that you send your child to school with a water bottle in the warmer weather. Water bottles can be refilled throughout the day - we do encourage students to drink well throughout the day to stay hydrated.

Please send a hat and suncream as well for those who are sensitive to the effects of the sun.

If your child suffers from hayfever, parents/carers may bring in clearly labelled antihistamines in original packaging with instructions for use to the school office. Please **do not** send medication in with children.



## Attendance & Absence

We continue to focus on attendance and absence.

Overall attendance this term has been **61.88%**. During this time, a total of **238.5** 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 **34** 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@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:hamadmin@maidenerleghtrust.org) by 9am.**

*\*Figures as of 23 May*

THANK YOU TO ALL PARENTS, STAFF AND STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED OUR SURVEYS SENT OUT LAST TERM. IT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL TO READ YOUR FEEDBACK!

"The staff team work together really well and everyone supports everyone"

"We get a weekly update from his form tutor discussing how the week has gone. This is very good indeed and ensures that any issues are picked up as they are emerging"

**WOW**

"I get to see staff and have a nice chat. I get to go home earlier than my sister!"

"You all rock! From the Head Teacher to the cleaning staff. I appreciated you getting out of bed everyday for my child, I know some days aren't easy!"

"The staff are always excited to share any success they have noticed"

"Behaviour management from staff is good"

"Staff are very supportive of each other"



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

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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**Let's Get Creative!**  
For Connected/Kinship Care Families

Building social skills through different forms of art

Parenting Special Children runs a monthly group for children aged 5-12 living with Kinship/Connected Carers and/or Special Guardians. Children & young people are split into age groups to attend workshops with music and play therapists, who have training and experience in attachment and therapeutic arts.

Venue: The Lower Earley Baptist Church, Maiden Place, Earley, Reading RG6 3HE  
Timings: 10am - 12noon  
Cost: Currently free (but places are limited, so only book if you are planning to attend)

Carers will be required to stay for the duration of the session in the room next door. This will be an informal support group - an opportunity to speak to others and relax with a cup of tea/coffee ☺ Carers can also join the support group on their own if children are younger/older or busy elsewhere.

Summer 2024 dates:

- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April
- Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Booking: <https://bit.ly/LGC-K-MAY2024>



For further info, call 07557 102623 or Email: [tas@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk](mailto:tas@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk)

SUPPORTED BY



## 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/>

Need something to do with the children this Half Term?



The below websites have some great events listed, many of which are free of charge!

<https://whatsonreading.com/themes/half-term-reading>

<https://www.reading-rocks.co.uk/things-to-do/half-term-in-reading>

<https://berkshirerummies.co.uk/free-or-low-cost-may-half-term-whats-on-guide-in-berkshire/>

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides 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, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ENERGY DRINKS

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Energy drinks are highly caffeinated beverages often consumed for a quick energy boost. However, excessive intake can lead to health risks like increased heart rate and sleep disturbances. Statistics underline these products' popularity among young people – many of whom consume them regularly. Here's our expert's advice on addressing the concerns surrounding energy drink consumption in adolescents.

#### HIGH CAFFEINE CONTENT

Most energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine: often much more than a typical cup of coffee or fizzy drink. Excessive caffeine consumption can lead to increased heart rate, high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, digestive issues and – in extreme cases – even more severe conditions. For children and adolescents, whose bodies are still developing, excessive caffeine intake can be particularly harmful.

#### INCREASED RISK OF HEART PROBLEMS

The combination of high caffeine levels and the other stimulants found in energy drinks can put extra strain on the cardiovascular system. Potentially, this could lead to irregular heart rhythms, palpitations and increased future risk of heart attack – especially in individuals who have an underlying heart condition.

#### IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

The significant levels of caffeine and sugar in energy drinks can exacerbate anxiety, nervousness and even – in susceptible individuals – contribute to panic attacks. Additionally, the crash that often follows the initial energy boost can actually make mood swings worse and possibly lead to feelings of depression and irritability.

#### DISRUPTED SLEEP PATTERNS

Consuming energy drinks, especially during the afternoon or evening, can disrupt normal sleep patterns. The stimulating effects of caffeine can make it difficult for children and young adults to fall asleep – leading to insufficient rest and its associated health risks, including impaired cognitive function, mood disturbances and decreased academic performance.

#### LINKS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Some research has suggested a correlation between energy drink consumption and higher rates of alcohol and drug use among young adults. Young people may mix energy drinks with alcohol, mistakenly believing that the energy drinks' stimulant effects will counteract the sedative nature of alcohol. This combination, however, can be dangerous and increase the risk of accidents, injuries and alcohol poisoning.

#### POTENTIAL FOR DEPENDENCY

Frequent consumption of energy drinks can lead to tolerance – meaning that individuals may need to consume increasing amounts to continue achieving the desired effects. This can potentially lead to dependency and addiction, especially in younger individuals who may be more vulnerable to addictive behaviours.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### LIMIT CONSUMPTION

It's wise to educate young people about the potential risks related to energy drinks, emphasising the consequences of excessive caffeine consumption. Encourage healthier alternatives like water, herbal teas or natural fruit juices. You can model healthy behaviours by restricting your own consumption of energy drinks and creating a supportive environment for informed choices.

#### ADVOCATE FOR REGULATION

If this is something you're particularly passionate about, you could work with local health organisations and policymakers to advocate for regulations on energy drink sales to children and young people. Raise awareness among parents, educators and community members about the potential health risks associated with energy drinks and support initiatives promoting healthier options in schools and communities.

#### PROMOTE HEALTHIER HABITS

Schools can help with this issue by including discussions about the possible dangers of energy drink consumption into their health education curriculum. Encourage children and young adults to critically evaluate the marketing messages they see and make informed choices about their health. Teachers could also provide resources and support for children to identify healthier alternatives.

#### SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

Adults can model healthy behaviours by visibly choosing alternative beverages instead of energy drinks. Maintain open communication with children and young adults about the reasons for limiting energy drink consumption – underlining the importance of balanced nutrition, adequate hydration and sufficient sleep for overall wellbeing and academic success.

#### Meet Our Expert

Dr Jason O'Rourke, Headteacher of Washingborough Academy, champions food education and sustainability – and his school holds the Soil Association's prestigious Gold Catering Mark. Jason has spoken about food education at Westminster briefings and overseas. A member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food, he co-founded TastEd, a sensory food education charity.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at [nationalcollege.com/guides/energy-drinks](https://nationalcollege.com/guides/energy-drinks)

## Current Year 7

Yr 8	Breakfast	Tutor	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Reading	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
	8:30 – 8:45	8:45 – 9:15	9:15 – 10:00	10:00 – 10:45	10:45 – 11:05	11:05 – 11:30	11:30 – 12:10	12:15 – 12:55	12:55 – 13:40	13:40 – 14:25
Mon	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	Forest School	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Creative	
Tues	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	English	Break	Reading	Science	Lunch	Climbing	
Wed	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Art	Break	Reading	Social Skills	Lunch	Sports	
Thurs	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Maths	Break	Reading	PE	Lunch	Life Skills	
Fri	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	English	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Food	
JUNE 2024	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	English	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Food	

In June, all Year groups will be starting their new timetables in their new Year groups. Please see timetables below.

## Current Year 8

Yr 9	Breakfast	Tutor	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Reading	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
	8:30 – 8:45	8:45 – 9:15	9:15 – 10:00	10:00 – 10:45	10:45 – 11:05	11:05 – 11:30	11:30 – 12:10	12:15 – 12:55	12:55 – 13:40	13:40 – 14:25
Mon	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	Social Skills	Break	Reading	English	Lunch	Sports	
Tues	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	Forest School	Break	Reading	English	Lunch	Creative	
Wed	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	English	Break	Reading	Art	Lunch	Life Skills	
Thurs	Breakfast	Tutor	PE	Maths	Break	Reading	Science	Lunch	Food	
Fri	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Maths	Break	Reading	Science	Lunch	Outdoor Ed	
JUNE 2024	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Maths	Break	Reading	Science	Lunch	Outdoor Ed	

## Current Year 9

Y9/10	Breakfast	Tutor	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Reading	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
	8:30 – 8:45	8:45 – 9:15	9:15 – 10:00	10:00 – 10:45	10:45 – 11:05	11:05 – 11:30	11:30 – 12:10	12:15 – 12:55	12:55 – 13:40	13:40 – 14:25
Mon	Breakfast	Tutor	Social Skills	Maths	Break	Reading	Science	Lunch	Outdoor Ed	
Tues	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	Maths	Break	Reading	English	Lunch	Life Skills	
Wed	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	English	Break	Reading	Forest School	Lunch	Food	
Thurs	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Science	Break	Reading	Art	Lunch	Creative	
Fri	Breakfast	Tutor	PE	English	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Sports	
JUNE 2024	Breakfast	Tutor	PE	English	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Sports	

## Year 10

Y10	Breakfast	Tutor	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break	Reading	Lesson 3	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
	8:30 – 8:45	8:45 – 9:15	9:15 – 10:00	10:00 – 10:45	10:45 – 11:05	11:05 – 11:30	11:30 – 12:10	12:15 – 12:55	12:55 – 13:40	13:40 – 14:25
Mon	Breakfast	Tutor	English	Science	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Food	
Tues	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	English	Break	Reading	Art	Lunch	Sports	
Wed	Breakfast	Tutor	PE	Science	Break	Reading	Maths	Lunch	Creative	
Thurs	Breakfast	Tutor	Science	English	Break	Reading	Social Skills	Lunch	Outdoor Ed	
Fri	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	Forest School	Break	Reading	English	Lunch	Life Skills	
JUNE 2024	Breakfast	Tutor	Maths	Forest School	Break	Reading	English	Lunch	Life Skills	

## Dates for next Half Term:

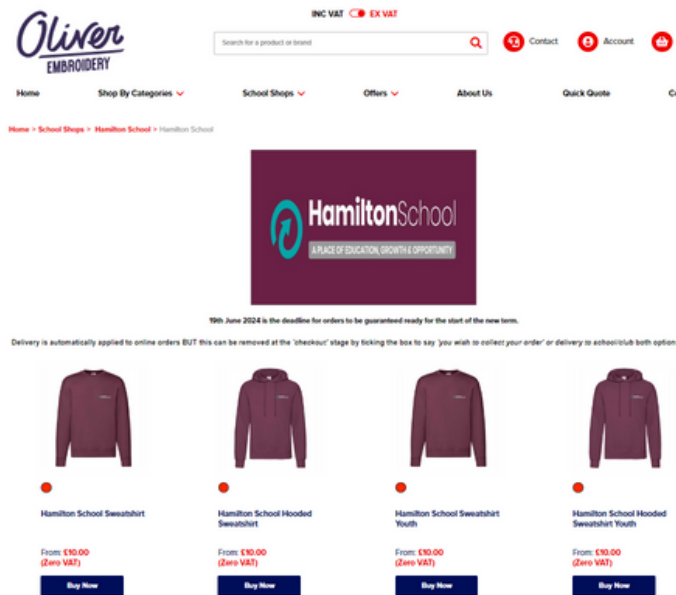
3 June	All students return to school
17 June	Year 8 Immunisations and Catch-Up
21 June	Year 11 Celebration Trip
3 July	Inset Day - school closed to students
11 July	Parent & Tutor Meetings
12 July	Sports Day
w/c 15 July	Parent Teas (more details to follow!)
18 July	Reward Trip (selected students)
19 July	School Reports sent home
24 July	Last day of term - early finish at 12:30pm

## Online School Uniform Shop

We are pleased to announce that we have partnered with [Oliver Embroidery](#) to open a new online uniform shop for Hamilton School sweatshirts and hoodies.

Sweatshirts and hoodies may be purchased at a heavily subsidised rate of £10 per item, including delivery either directly to school or to your home address.

Any additional uniform that you require for your child must now be purchased directly through [this site](#). Please do think ahead in time for September as well to ensure your child has the correct uniform for the new school year.



If you have any issues accessing this site, please contact the school office.

Wishing all our families a restful Half Term break.

We look forward to welcoming our students back on Monday 3 June.

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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:

