

## Headteacher's Half Term Round-Up

Miss Concannon

As we reach the end of another great term, I want to take a moment to reflect on the achievements, exciting events, and heartwarming moments that have made these past weeks so special.

### World Book Day Magic!

World Book Day was a fantastic celebration of our love for reading! It was wonderful to see students and staff bringing their favourite books to life. A huge thank you to everyone who took part in making this year's World Book Day the best to date at Hamilton School

### Bridging Generations: Care Home Visit

We were delighted to welcome residents from Lakeside Care Home to our school this week. The residents had taken time to make Easter cards and came to school to present them to our students with Easter eggs. It was a truly heartwarming experience, and we look forward to strengthening these friendships in the future.

### Year 10 Work Experience Success!

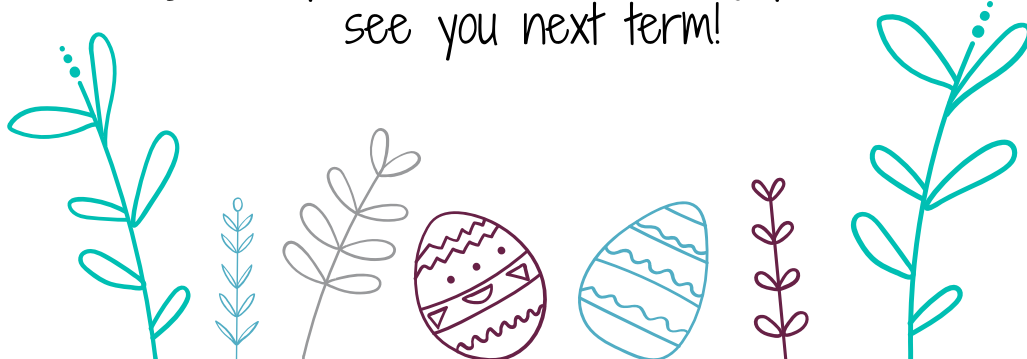
Our Year 10 students recently completed their work experience placements, gaining invaluable insights into the world of work. Employers were full of praise for their hard work, adaptability, and positive attitudes. It's been wonderful to hear about their experiences, new skills learned, and even future career aspirations sparked by this opportunity. Well done to all our students for making the most of this experience—we're incredibly proud of you!

### Farewell to Miss Conroy

As the term comes to a close, we say a heartfelt goodbye to Miss Emma Conroy, our wonderful School Business Manager. Miss Conroy has been an integral part of our school community, ensuring everything runs smoothly behind the scenes and always going above and beyond to support staff, students, and families. Her dedication, kindness, and hard work will be greatly missed, but we wish her all the best in her next chapter. Thank you, Miss Conroy, for everything—you will always be a part of our school family!

Thank you to all our students, staff, and families for making this term so memorable.

Wishing everyone a restful and enjoyable break—  
see you next term!



## Maths

*Mr Ramsamy*

This half term lessons have focused on developing pupils' problem solving skills. Year 11 also sat their second round of mock exams, which provided valuable insight into their progress and areas for improvement.

### Year 9:

Pupils continued their work on percentages. They have engaged with the financial maths topic well; Exploring real world applications such as earnings, taxation, budgeting, bills and loans. These topics have helped them understand the importance of financial literacy and decision making.

### Year 10:

The study of vectors this term introduced the year 10 pupils to fundamental concepts in geometry and movement, while work on ratio and fractions reinforced proportional reasoning. Pupils practiced applying these concepts in problem solving contexts, ensuring they could interpret and solve multi step problems effectively. We have also placed emphasis on exam style questions to improve confidence and exam technique.

### Year 11:

The focus for year 11 this term has been algebraic reasoning, covering topics such as simplifying complex expressions, understanding and generating sequences and solving simultaneous equations. Following the mocks, targeted revision strategies have been implemented to support pupils in improving their performance.

## Outdoor Education

*Mr Russell*

It's been another exciting half term of outdoor education!

We've made pancakes, pasta, hotdogs, chocolate brownies, fajitas, popcorn, bacon and eggs and have been building a range of different fires

outside of the firepit, whilst generally enjoying some the recent additions to the outdoor education area.

We've had multiple wood deliveries, including wood for crafting which some students have been making a variety of items out of, including some rustic shelving.

Next term we'll be trying some new cooking ideas and changing the setup of the multipurpose area once again.



## Physical Education

*Mrs Burford*

Yet another half term has flown by! The PE focus this half term for the whole school has been the badminton tournament. Still in the knock-out stages, we have both students and staff playing against each other. In the coming weeks, we will be playing the quarter finals and semi finals finishing in a final at the end of term. Lots of students and staff signed up and so far it has been an incredible tournament with some surprise knock-outs! Who will be in the final? Watch this space!

As a result of the tournament, lots of classes have been playing badminton in a bid to improve their skills for the tournament. Lots of students across all year groups have shown a massive improvement and I am now starting to see tactical efforts within the games.



APRIL 2025 | HAMILTON SCHOOL | ISSUE 10



**Ms Biddiss joined Hamilton School in January. As a secondary teacher with over 30 years' experience at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and a passion for all things pastoral, Ms Biddiss has taken the reins of the Personal Development and Life Skills curriculum at Hamilton School.**

*"I thrive on building positive relationships with my students and decided to move over to Hamilton School for a new challenge working with SEMH students. I am very much looking forward to working with the team here to develop the Personal Development curriculum to suit the needs of our learners, and see them engage and succeed."*



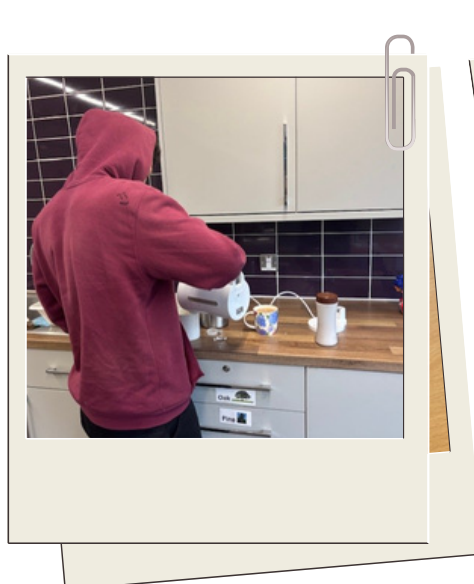
Life Skills is taught in our custom-made room which includes cooking facilities, a fridge and a kettle. One thing that has really impressed me since I started in January is how polite and considerate the students are. On my very first day in the room I was offered several cups of tea, all of which were made to my liking!

In addition to taking it in turns to make drinks for each other, the students are aware that there is always work to be done! I plan for a range of practical and theory-based activities which are relevant to the age, and which are fun and interactive. I also aim to promote discussion with everyone in the room, staff included.

This term, all students have enjoyed making Biscoff Microwave mug cakes and learning the safety surrounding microwave ovens. There have been some real successes, and only a couple of disasters!

Years 8 and 9 have also been learning about budgeting. Year 8 have been planning a picnic which we hope to bring to life in the summer term, and Year 9 have been looking at supermarket prices and working out best value meal plans. Both yeargroups have also looked at household budgeting and what a payslip looks like.

Years 10 and 11 have been spending time looking at next steps, building on the work they did before half term. They have navigated college websites, working out their journeys to and from college, and looking at suitable courses. Year 11 have also spent time before and after their mock exams looking at strategies for 'learning to learn' so that their revision techniques are more effective.



## Science

*Mrs Anchan (KS4) & Mrs Burford (KS3)*

### Science in Action: A Busy and Exciting Term!

Year 8 have focused on physics in their science lessons and we worked well looking at forces and balance. The students all worked well with each other and produced some great work with interactive items. This half term we have focused on the human body, labelled a full-size skeleton and looked at muscles and heart rate. They have taken part in circuit training to fully understand the change to heart rate during exercise.

This term, students in Years 9–11 have been actively engaged in hands-on science lessons, deepening their understanding of key topics and their real-world applications.

### Year 9 – Building the Foundations of Science

Students have explored **forces, states of matter, and atomic structure**, investigating how materials behave and delving into the fundamental building blocks of matter. Their enthusiasm during experiments has been fantastic!

### Year 10 – Powering Up with Physics!

From **electricity and energy to forces and motion**, Year 10 have been developing key skills through hands-on activities. Their current focus on motion and forces links to real-world applications in engineering and space science.

### Year 11 – Cracking the Code of Life!

Students have tackled **organisation, ecology, and genetics**, exploring DNA and inheritance while preparing for their **GCSE Biology mock exams** with dedication and focus.

It's been a productive and rewarding term across all year groups. Well done to everyone - we look forward to another exciting term ahead!



## Food Technology

*Mr Bartenbach*

In our recent Food Tech classes, students have been busy honing their culinary skills and exploring a variety of delicious dishes.

Over the term the students have successfully prepared **garlic butter chicken with saffron flavour rice**; their baking skills shone through as they crafted a **berry crumble**; and they have dived into bold flavours and **aromatic Korean beef and rice**, filling the kitchen with warm, sweet aromas.

Students also created **sweet cheesecake bars** and ending with making **gooey chocolate cookie dough**.

I'm incredibly proud of their enthusiasm, creativity, and growing confidence in the kitchen... well done Hamilton students!



## Personal Development

*Ms Biddiss*

This term, all Personal Development lessons for all students have been based on the Jigsaw Learning scheme of work. The focus has been 'Dreams and Goals'. Year 8 have been looking at 'Can money buy you happiness?' and some great discussions have taken place. Years 10 and 11 have been studying how their feelings can impact their ability to make decisions, and how they see their future.

In addition to the 'Dreams and Goals' work for year 9, we have also welcomed Youth Workers from Brighter Futures for Children to deliver workshops once a week on the topic of Healthy Relationships, Grooming and Exploitation.

These sessions have been very successful and feedback from staff has been positive. One guest speaker emailed afterwards to say **"The classes were great....you've got some great young men there"**.

## Year 7 Transition

*Ms Whalley*

Year 7 have continued to settle into life at Hamilton, learning about how to identify their own needs and managing themselves appropriately around others.

In English, we have been looking at narrative writing, with students working on their own ideas for a story, which they will be pulling together soon. In Maths we have revisited negative numbers and fractions, and are building our confidence in these.

Science lessons have seen us measuring friction in various experiments, and our next topic, Space, is now underway.

In Personal Development, we have been thinking about how to manage stress and anxiety, and how to avoid these feelings in the first place, while in Life Skills we have continued to focus on budgeting.

Some students have opted to participate in the Make Sense Theatre sessions this term; it has been really nice to see the students acting out different roles and having some fun together.

## Art

*Mr Woolford*

This term we have been focusing on individual self-directed projects. Some pupils have been constructing 3-D sculptures from cardboard. One student designed, made and painted this fish based on a Pike and has started to make another one:



Students also had an opportunity to design and make a T-shirt for comic relief. They used Fabric pens and paint markers to transfer their designs onto a T-shirt.

There has also been some collective art that all of the groups have contributed to. This has helped to brighten up the art room and make it more inspiring.



## English

*Ms Ejike*

This half term, Year 9, 10, and 11 students embarked on a virtual journey around the world, exploring the cultures, history, and famous figures of nearly 14 countries. From the bullfighting rings of Mexico to the diamond mines of South Africa, the slums of India, and the Uluru Rock in Australia, students discovered fascinating aspects of each location.

They also learned about influential figures like Che Guevara of Argentina, Vasco da Gama of Portugal, and Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe while imagining dream holidays to destinations like the Caribbean's Turks and Caicos Islands.

Students developed key reading, inference, and writing skills through nonfiction extracts, videos, and music. They analysed writers' techniques and crafted their own descriptive and persuasive pieces. The key highlight was writing a persuasive letter to convince a friend to visit Turks and Caicos for the holiday of a lifetime. This immersive experience has broadened students' perspectives on different cultures and helped them improve their vocabulary, comprehension and writing skills.

Our Year 11s focused mainly on revising for GCSE English language Paper 1 skills using past exam papers and preparing Powerpoint presentations for their Speaking and Listening exam.

Next term, we will focus on fiction, using novels and short stories to explore topical social issues while continuing to strengthen literacy and communication skills.

**Enrichment**  
Miss Millward



This half term we have introduced golf on the driving range at Wokingham Family Golf as an option in our Friday afternoon Enrichment sessions. This has proved very popular with the students and served as a great incentive, re-engaging some of them to earn points in their lessons.

Thanks to the sun *finally* making its reappearance, we have been able to take Friday football onto the back field to have a much larger (and even more fun) game of football. This small change has shown a positive impact on our student's behaviour and social skills.

We look forward to more Enrichment adventures next half term!



**Lakeside Care Home Visitors**

On Monday 30 April, we had visitors from the local Care Home, Lakeside, visit. They brought donations of Easter Eggs which they handed out to the students, along with some beautiful, handmade cards. As you can imagine, the students were delighted and very grateful!

Residents from Lakeside visit us for Afternoon Tea every half term and it is a joy to see our students interacting with them and sharing stories (and cake!).

A big thank you to Mr Bartenbach for arranging this, and for Lakeside Care Home for their generosity and time.



# WORLD BOOK DAY

We had a great time celebrating on 6 March - check out these fantastic costumes!



## Attendance & Absence

*Mrs Lawson-Smith*

Here at Hamilton, we are working hard to reduce absenteeism and increase our overall attendance which currently stands at 62.9%\*, against a national target of 95%.

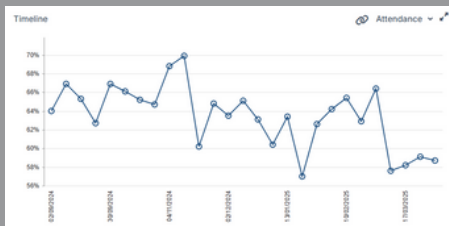
We are looking to start a rewards programme to drive the attendance figures forward and hope to give out lots of rewards over the next few terms.

Full attendance will enhance all students' chances of excelling through their final years, building up skill sets and developing long term positive relationships with peers by increasing social skills.

If you would like to discuss attendance at any point, please do contact me via the school office.

If you need to let us know a child is unwell you can do so by calling 01189375524 or emailing [hamadmin@maidenerlegtrust.org](mailto:hamadmin@maidenerlegtrust.org) before 9am.

*\*Figures as of 2 April 2025*



## Student Medication

*Mrs Walker*

If your child requires medication during the school day, please ensure that this is brought into school in its original packaging, complete with instructions for use,

If medication has been prescribed, it will need to have the original label on from the pharmacy showing your child's details.

If it is the first time your child requires medication during the school day, please contact the School Office to complete an Individual Health Care Plan. We are unable to administer prescribed medication without this being completed.

If there is a change to your child's medication or medication dosage at any point, please ensure that you advise the School Office.

## Careers & Work Experience

*Mr Versace*

This term, some of our Yr10 students had the opportunity to complete a one-week work experience placement. We had students placed at the Whiteknights Coop in Reading University, City Electrical Factors in Tilehurst, Group 1 Ford in Wokingham, and even at our very own school. The five students who took the opportunity for work experience all came away with positive reports from their employers and valuable lessons learnt about the world of work that awaits them after school.

We would like to thank the employers who have given our students this valuable opportunity and look forward to working with them again in the future.

Continuing with the next steps theme, students have also had the opportunity this term to visit Reading College, Bracknell & Wokingham College, and Berkshire College of Agriculture, to tour the facilities and discuss possible courses for the future while getting a small taste of what college life may be like.



In the coming term, as Year 11 look towards completing exams, there will be opportunities for them to begin some transition work with their post-16 placements. Also coming up, some of our Yr9 and 10 students will have an opportunity to participate in a special project through Speakers4Schools, where three workplace encounters with Construction Testing Services (Slough) will take place... stay tuned for more information.

For any Careers enquiries, please get in touch with Mr Versace for more information.



## School Uniform

A reminder that all students must arrive at school in full and correct uniform:

- Plain black trousers
- White polo shirt (with collar)
- Black shoes or trainers
- Hamilton School sweatshirt/hoodie

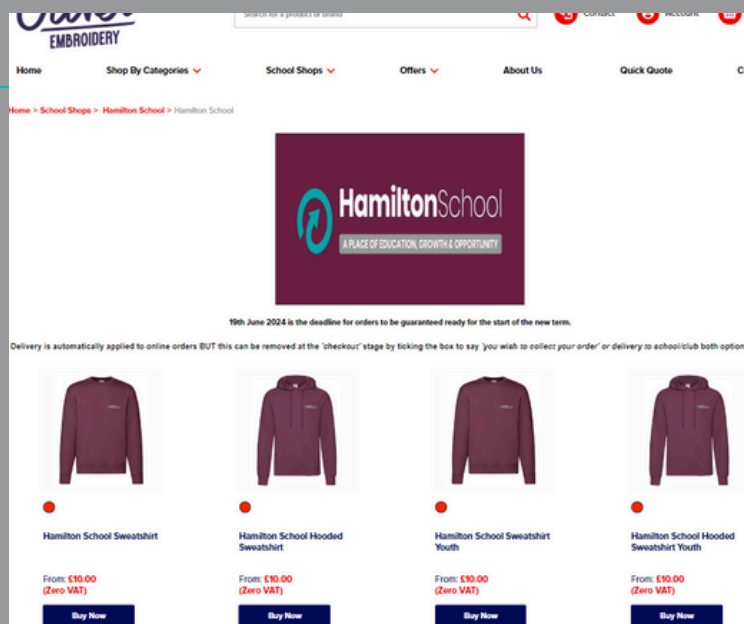
Students are **not** permitted to wear jewellery, except a single stud earring in each ear. Students will be asked to remove any other jewellery and this will be given back to them at the end of the school day. Please encourage you child to leave jewellery at home.

### Every child was supplied with a new school jumper in September.

If your child has lost their jumper, or would like a hoody instead, these may be purchased at a heavily subsidised rate of £10 per item, including delivery directly to school.

If your child arrives at school without the correct uniform, they will be loaned a jumper for the day. These jumpers are 'pre-loved' from our store and are not brand new.

We will expect these to be returned to school and only used until a student's own jumper is found or purchased.



Please click [here](#) to access the online shop. If you have any issues with this, please contact the school office.



Hamilton School has received a generous donation of personal care products such as soap, shower gel, deodorant, hair gel and hand cream from a charity called **Beauty Banks**.

These products are available to **all students** and can be requested at any time by emailing Mrs Nemeth ([g.nemeth@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:g.nemeth@maidenerleghtrust.org)) or calling the school office.

We will also be sending home some products throughout the year. **If you would prefer to opt out of receiving these items, please advise the school office.**

*Whilst all products have been checked against our student allergy records, we would encourage parents to check the items before use.*

## Exams

Mr Woolford

This term, we had a week of Mock Exams. our students tried really hard and used it as future practice for their exams coming up. Some students also sat their BTEC Sport exam, and did brilliantly. The next exams will start on 13 May and will continue until 11 June. We wish all our Year 11's good luck in their exams.

## Parents Evening - School Cloud

Miss Ward

We're pleased to share that our recent Parents' Evening using the new School Cloud system was a great success! We hope all parents and guardians found the system easy to use and enjoyed the experience.

For those who attended in person, you should have received your child's school report. If you attended online, we will be emailing the report to you shortly.

We would love to hear any feedback you may have about the system or the evening itself to help us improve future events.

APRIL 2025 | HAMILTON SCHOOL | ISSUE 10

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM PARENT/CARER SURVEY



Have your say on the workshops we offer

### SHARE YOUR IDEAS

We want to expand on our current parent/carers workshop provision and invite you to share your thoughts on topics to cover.



More info:  
[www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/PC-MHST](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/PC-MHST)

### EXAMPLES MAY INCLUDE:

- developing healthy sleeping habits
- managing worries about tests and exams
- managing big feelings
- anything else you would like guidance on to help you support your child/ren

### SCAN THE QR CODE

Or visit  
[www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/PC-MHST](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/PC-MHST)  
for the survey link.



Survey deadline: 11 May 2025

© Brighter Futures for Children 2025



Information, support and services for Reading's children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



### Contact

- ☎ 0118 937 3777 (option 2)
- @ localoffer@reading.gov.uk
- f @ReadingLocalOffer

Visit [www.readingsendlocaloffer.org](http://www.readingsendlocaloffer.org)



Brighter Futures for Children have created an **Easter Holiday Activities** page on the Family Information Service (FIS) website. Please use the following link to view [Activities Easter 2025 - Holiday Clubs & Activities](#)

**General Holiday Activities** can be found on the following search list: [Search Results](#) | [Reading Services Guide](#)

**Childcare:** for parent carers who need information on childcare, holiday clubs, childminders etc for the school holiday – [www.readingfis.org/childcare](http://www.readingfis.org/childcare)

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



**SEND support group**  
for parent-carers and  
families of children  
with additional needs

No diagnosis, EHCP or documents needed.  
No age, gender, religious, sexuality or  
disability restrictions



[www.fifivision.co.uk](http://www.fifivision.co.uk)



## Sport In Mind

*Sport in Mind® is an award winning mental health charity... with a simple mission:*

***"To improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems through sport and physical activity"***

To view **Sport in Mind's** monthly programmes for other areas, please click [here](#) for youth, and [here](#) for adults.



**Reading**

FREE!



## Sport In Mind Youth Activities for Mental Wellbeing

Registered Charity 110322

Sport in Mind provides **free sport and physical activity** opportunities for children and young people to help build confidence and self esteem, meet new people and support low mood and other mental health challenges.

### Reading Sessions (Spring term)

Day	Time	Activity	Age	Venue
Mon	5:00 - 6:00pm	Football	10-14 years	Palmer Park 3G pitch
Tue	5:00 - 6:00pm	Sport & games	10-14 years	Bulmershe leisure centre
Wed	4:45 - 5:45pm	Football	10-14 years	Prospect Park 3G pitch
Thur	4:15 - 5:15pm	Tennis & games	10-14 years	Meadway Sports Centre (inside)
Thur	4:00 - 5:00pm	Yoga, Dance & Movement	12-16 years	Loddon Valley Leisure Centre (studio)
Fri	4:30-5:30pm	Sport & Games	9-13 years	Morgan Centre, Queen Anne's School

Sessions restart from Monday 6th January and run weekly excluding school holidays

 @sportinmind youth@sportinmind.org www.sportinmind.org 01189479762

Working in partnership with



*Are you feeling that no-one is listening? Are you stuck on a waiting list needing some support?*

*Raising children is probably the most challenging thing we will ever do. You are probably already doing lots of great parenting but sometimes we need extra ideas and techniques, especially as the children turn into teenagers.*

*FACE gives practical, accessible and affordable support to parents and professionals who support children and teenagers.*

*Relevant advice, up to date information and easy to apply interventions.*



### Spring 2025 Newsletter

FACE delivers online support via zoom for parents across the UK  
Talks are 90 minutes long. £24 each - Book Online at [facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)



Schools can now buy a **FACE School Annual Membership** which means **ALL** parents and **ALL** staff get unlimited **FREE** access to **ALL** 16 parent talks

**Thursday**  
24th April  
19:00 - 20:00  
**FREE**



**Responding to Angry Behaviour**  
What can we do in the moment?

**Tuesday**  
18th March  
10:00 - 11:30  
£24



**Anxiety Explained**  
Anxiety, especially in our young is rising. This session explains what it is, why it happens and how you can help.

**Tuesday**  
3rd April  
10:00 - 11:30  
£24



**Supporting a Child with ADHD**  
Challenging the stereotypes and giving practical interventions. Clear explanation of the condition in all its forms and extremely useful advice.


**Tuesday**  
3rd April  
19:00 - 20:30  
£24



**Improving Family Communication**  
How to reduce the shouting and arguing and start the talking.

[facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

[info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

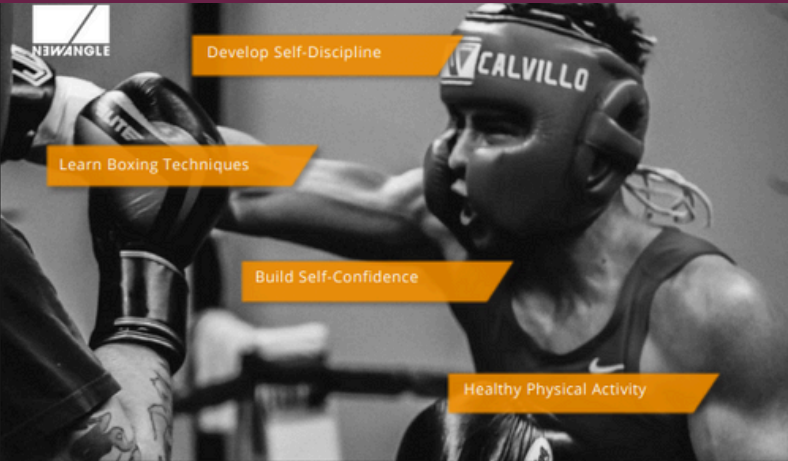


### Spring Timetable

all sessions delivered live online via zoom £24 each 90 minutes long  
book online at [facefamilyadvice.co.uk](http://facefamilyadvice.co.uk)

Anxiety Explained	18 MAR 7pm
What is ACT?	20 Mar 7pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	24 MAR 10am
Supporting Healthy Sleep	24 MAR 7pm
Decreasing Depression	25 MAR 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	25 MAR 7pm
AUTISM: Improving Communication	2 APR 10am
Supporting a Child with ADHD	3 APR 10am
Improving Family Communication	3 APR 7pm
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	7 APR 10am
Facing Defiance	7 APR 7pm
Anxiety-Based School Avoidance	8 APR 10AM
Understanding Anger	8 APR 7pm
Anxiety Explained	14 APR 10am
Cannabis & Ketamine Awareness	14 APR 7pm

APRIL 2025 | HAMILTON SCHOOL | ISSUE 10



Develop Self-Discipline

Learn Boxing Techniques

Build Self-Confidence

Healthy Physical Activity

## Free Boxing Camp

info@n3wangle.com

- 🕒 11am - 1pm or 1pm - 3pm
- 📅 April: 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18
- 👤 Ages 11 - 18
- 📍 MBMT, Bridgewater Close, Reading RG30 1JT

Our intensive training camps develop technical and tactical skills while considering the physical and mental aspects of boxing, improving confidence and decision-making. Alongside skill development, we integrate mentoring throughout the day to support personal growth. A nutritional lunch will also be provided. Boxers will be grouped by age and ability and will join two training sessions each day.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Session 1:</b><br>Boxing technique, sparring and drills.                              | <b>What to bring:</b><br>Appropriate clothing and footwear, headguard, gumshield and gloves (if owned), drinks bottle and water  |
| <b>Session 2:</b><br>Boxing fitness, bag work, circuit, core, strength and conditioning. | <b>All coaches are:</b><br>Child Safeguarding and Emergency, Aid certified, Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checked, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insured |

Scan the QR Code Below to Book Now!



Supported by **RAW MENTORING**



**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.

- Wokingham:** [www.wokinghamrocks.co.uk](http://www.wokinghamrocks.co.uk)
- Reading:** [www.reading-rocks.co.uk](http://www.reading-rocks.co.uk)
- Bracknell:** [www.bracknellrocks.co.uk](http://www.bracknellrocks.co.uk)
- Windsor:** [www.windsorrocks.co.uk](http://www.windsorrocks.co.uk)

**Many of these events are FREE!**



### PARENT CARER WELL-BEING CONFERENCE AT SELECT CAR LEASING STADIUM, READING, RG2 OFL, MONDAY 9TH JUNE, 9.30 AM - 2.30 PM

Join other parent carers of children and young people with additional needs for a day of information and a bit of pampering!

10 am Session on what trauma is, how it affects adults and children, the impact of coping with a traumatised child and sense of loss that may be experienced when child is diagnosed. Sarah Marx - Beacon House

11.10 am Where to get support for yourself/child if you are suffering from trauma - Maryam Makki - Local Offer

Free lunch

12.45 pm Guided Meditation - Samantha Grant

1.20 pm Empowerment exercise

To book: [fran@readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](mailto:fran@readingfamiliesforum.co.uk) or text 07516 185380

Free car parking, on bus route, refreshments provided, free to attend



**storyy®**

Story Group HAF

**When?**

April: 14th, 15th & 17th

10am to 2pm

**What is HAF?**

Government funded HAF programme for all young people who are eligible for free school meals. Come and join us for fun and engaging activities to motivate our young people aged between 11-16 years old.

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Game Zone       | Orienteering   |
| Arts & Crafts   | Dance Sessions |
| Sports Sessions | Cooking        |

Your child can choose which activities most interest them throughout the session, to ensure we are offering something that interests them and motivating them to engage and learn.

All activities are led by our friendly, nurturing and highly trained staff who are committed to giving every child an opportunity to thrive.

We will provide a healthy meal and snack at every session.

**Where?**

Park United Reformed Church, Palmer Park Ave, Reading, RG6 1DN



www.storyy.group | 01344 987877



## A new type of Food Bank in your area!

When you become a member of a Pantry, in exchange for a small weekly subscription (£5) you will have access to food that you choose, including fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and store cupboard favourites, which will be worth on average £21 more than your 'pay as you shop' membership payment.

There are several pantries in the Reading area. Membership is open to those on benefits or low incomes who live in each catchment area. Proof of benefits / income is required to be come a member, along with proof of address. For a Pantry in your area, please click on the areas below:

- [Reading Coley Park](#)
- [Reading Norcot](#)
- [Reading Pavilion](#)
- [Reading Southcote](#)
- [Reading Wesley](#)
- [Reading Whitley Wood](#)



## Include Me2 Group for Young People with Additional Needs

Do you want to make a difference to mental health support in Wokingham and Reading?

Me2 Club help young people become mental health champions. We support you to look after your own mental health and support others.

Open to Reading and Wokingham young people with additional needs aged 10 - 20 years.

Enjoy takeaways & £10 vouchers for pieces of work the group do.



Proudly supporting youth social action



You can help young people stay safe. Here's how the TRUE approach can help:



**TALK**

Create open and honest dialogue with young people. Help them build respectful relationships where they are treated as equals.



**RECOGNISE THE REALITY**

Acknowledge what's happening and recognise their feelings and fears, without adding more. Offer up the facts and share information about consequences, in all their forms.



**UNDERSTAND**

Demonstrate you're trying to understand by truly listening to their experiences. Give them space to talk freely with no judgement or instruction.



**EMPOWER**

Help young people understand their own capabilities. Help them recognise the things they can positively do for themselves, and help them consider who they trust to ask for help.

Stay True to You is a website with information and resources that have been developed by Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership.

We know parents want to keep their children safe, and that at the same time conversations about safety can be difficult. We also know that with the right support and advice from the adults

they trust, young people want to, and do, make the right choices.

You can help them stay true to themselves, and build their confidence about the right thing to do – so they can trust their instincts and make their own positive decisions, knowing that there is always someone they can turn to.

We're not here to tell you how to parent. Just to share the approaches young people and youth workers have told us work best when having difficult conversations.

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

# TIKTOK



### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's Following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, For You is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app *could* potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.



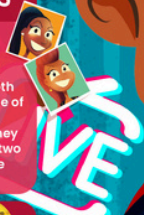
### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables anyone to download or comment on them.



### BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.



### MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

### ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

### IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.9 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.



### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.



### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.



### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/tiktok-2025>

### Dates for Next Half Term:

Friday 4 April	Inset Day - School closed to all students
Monday 7 April to Monday 21 April	Easter Holidays
Tuesday 22 April	All students return to school
Monday 5 May	Bank Holiday - School closed to all students
Tuesday 13 May	GCSE Exams start (entered Year 11 students only)
Thursday 22 May	Reward Trips
Monday 26 May to Friday 30 May	Half Term Break - School closed to all students
Monday 2 June	All students return to school

Wishing all our families a very happy Easter break.  
We look forward to welcoming all students back with us  
on Tuesday 22 April.

**Our News Feed:** [Latest News](#)

**Term Dates:** [Hamilton School Term Dates](#)

**School Timings:** [Our School Day](#)

**Parent Help & Support:** [Information](#)

**Class Timetables:** [Timetables](#)

**Letters for Parents:** [Letters](#)

**Maiden Erlegh Trust Vacancies:** [Vacancies](#)

**About Hamilton School:** [About Us](#)

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:

