



# NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive  
School & 6<sup>th</sup> Form College

Issue: 133

Date: 14th May 2021



*Dear all,*

It's been a busy couple of weeks since I last wrote to you all and it feels like our school has come a long way in that short time. The final assessment phase for our year 11 and 13 students is drawing to a close, we are finalising our planning for our year 5 open evening and the year 6 welcome days that I mentioned in my last newsletter. We've had a full week of reading support and intervention for a carefully chosen group of children, we've all engaged in a whole school mental health awareness week and for the first time in 15 months, our staff had the opportunity to 'meet' for a socially distanced brew and a cake outside under our new canopy. Children in years 7, 8 and 9 are almost ready to move to the next year group. They are growing up so fast and the transition from child to young adult seems to happen in a flash. Across our community, It really does feel as if we are entering a phase where things are slowly becoming more like normal.

Earlier this week I announced to the community that we would continue to stick with all of our well established 'covid safe' protocols, including wearing masks in the school buildings, and would review this position again in two weeks. We are well aware of the complexity of information on all sides of the covid debate as well as the current media focus on emerging variants. I will continue to do my very best to make balanced and sensible decisions based on the underlying principle of keeping our community safe. We all crave the normality of a school day where the children have space to play and socialise and where we can see their faces again. I am convinced that we are on that journey but are not there yet. I'd like to say thanks for the supportive emails and messages that you have sent in this week.



The year 11 and 13 students will complete their final assessments today and a number reached this milestone in their education a little earlier in the week. Their conduct and behaviour has been excellent and almost all have taken these assessments seriously. We have worked hard with the examination regulator and the boards to create an assessment structure and process that helps ensure that the data we submit to the examination boards is objective, representative and fair. Staff are now marking these assessments and are going through a rigorous process of marking, cross marking and moderation. We are highly confident that we will submit a very high quality dataset to the examination boards on time so that they can award grades to our students. This whole process has been well delivered at school and well supported by our families. As a result we have been able to take good care of our children in the final part of year 11 and 13.

On Monday 17th May we start our year 11 enrichment fortnight with many students coming into school to prepare for post 16 education and learning. The activities and experiences over the coming two weeks have been planned to be engaging and purposeful as well as to raise the level of challenge and expectation for the students regarding the next steps in their learning journey. We are all aware that the students in year 11 have had anything but a typical couple of years and as a result, these transition weeks are a great opportunity for them to look forward to their future. It's really important that all students who decide to attend these sessions approach this programme with a positive attitude and mindset

I was talking with a group of year 11 students at lunch the other week and it was something that one of the girls said that really brought home the impact of the pandemic. She told me that the last 'normal' year at school for her was year 9. Although I was well aware of this, it's a sobering point of reflection and made me think about how we celebrate the end of this very special year. Whilst the pandemic has prevented us having a whole year group event such as the prom, I am looking forward to a covid safe year 11 celebration on Wednesday 26th May.



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This will be based in tutor time and information has already gone out explaining what is happening and when. I'll be visiting all of the tutor groups on the 26th to talk to the students and to wish them every success. I'll miss this group greatly but I feel very happy that they are going on to the next steps in their lives and are growing up to be happy and fulfilled people. I'm also very happy that so many are choosing to come back to our sixth form college and I'm looking forward to seeing them in August for results and then in September when they start their post 16 studies.

I'm grateful for the invite to an afternoon picnic from our outgoing year 13 students who are planning a celebratory get together next Wednesday afternoon. It will be a real privilege to go along and spend some time talking to them all before they leave us. They've also been through the mill over the last two years and their experience of college life has not been an ordinary one. They have been an incredible bunch. As their time at our school comes to an end, I wish them every success and happiness and a bright future.

Finally in this newsletter, I'd like to share a couple of personal reflections. For one reason and another, I've had a number of long chats with parents and carers over the last two weeks. Although these have sometimes been challenging conversations, I've been pleased by the way in which most parents and carers have engaged with me. I feel that we have both had the opportunity to talk but also to listen. This is reflected in the many more conversations that other colleagues have had with families. For the most part, conversations have been calm, respectful of each other and most importantly mutually supportive with the growth and development of the child at the centre. Thank you all for this. Mutually constructive conversations between home and school are a critical part of helping our children to become happy, fulfilled people and I think it's really worth investing in this as part of our shared behaviours and culture.

I'd also like to comment on how many children around school are so well mannered and polite as well as being such open, honest and often funny people to spend time with. I've spent some very pleasant hours in the last two weeks chatting to our children at lunch, at breaks and in lessons and felt that they really do reflect the best of all of us. I'm a massive believer in embedding good manners as a part of normal behaviour and I'd like to thank you for the obvious input from home that supports this key part of a young person's development.

Thanks to all mums, dads, carers and relatives for being a positive part of the home-school relationship and for making our community one which is filled with children that we can all be proud of.

Warm regards

**Nigel Bielby**  
Executive Headteacher



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## Covid safe systems and behaviours to remain in place

We have reviewed our school plans in response to the latest announcements regarding the UK government's road map out of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are encouraged to see the continued fall in Covid-19 cases in our local community and by the support that we have had from families in working together to keep our school community safe.

[Click here](#) to read the full article





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## Mental Health Awareness week

Thank you to all the staff and students who have actively participated in our mental health awareness week. Tutor time sessions throughout this week have focused on developing understanding around mental health and practical strategies to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

This week we have asked students to send positive postcards, reflect on the things that make them happy, wear green ribbons, discuss mental health and support our bake sale. Thank you to everyone who has taken part and contributed positively to the wellbeing of the others.

The theme for mental health awareness week has been focused on the theme nature in order to promote the value of exercise, mindfulness and appreciation of the natural world. The mental health foundation, through research, suggests that nature has contributed positively to our mental health and wellbeing during the national lockdowns. I hope everyone makes time during the weekend and over the weeks ahead to practice some of the strategies we have shared in order to positively and proactively support their mental health and wellbeing. For more practical advice and support, please visit the mental health foundation.

Young Minds has also published a "parents survival guide" with further useful information and support.

We are encouraging our community to connect with others in order to support their own wellbeing and that of others. Focusing on valuing the importance of kindness and support. We have many students who go above and beyond to positively support others within our community. It would be great to recognise their kindness at school and within our community. If your child has been exceptionally kind at home or in the community please let us know. It would be great to ensure as many children as possible, get the recognition and praise they deserve. As part of a national campaign please access the Be Kind Awards. In order to submit your application, please visit the website from June 7th onwards.





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## Curriculum Enhancement - 4th June

KS3 pupils focused on different aspects of the HCCS careers programme. Parents can find more information about the programme by accessing the school website: [www.hccs1978.co.uk/curriculum/careers](http://www.hccs1978.co.uk/curriculum/careers)



**Year 7** engaged in an enterprise challenge called 'Heartbreak Hotel'. The students investigated a failing hotel and worked as a tutor group to understand the causes of their under-performance and recommend strategies for turning it around. One aspect of the careers programme is to enable students to have experience of running a business of their own which many will eventually do. They will cover marketing, operations and finance. Each tutor group had 3 representatives who 'pitched' their ideas in front of the dragons.

**Year 8** used the 'Careerpilot' software to explore how to go about deciding their career, looking at relevant career opportunities, investigating jobs of the future and completing their own careers action plan.



**Year 9** studied local employment and further education opportunities. They looked at information such as what positions available now and likely to be in the future. They completed a skills assessment which will ultimately suggest some potential employment areas based on who they are, what they like doing and what they are best at.

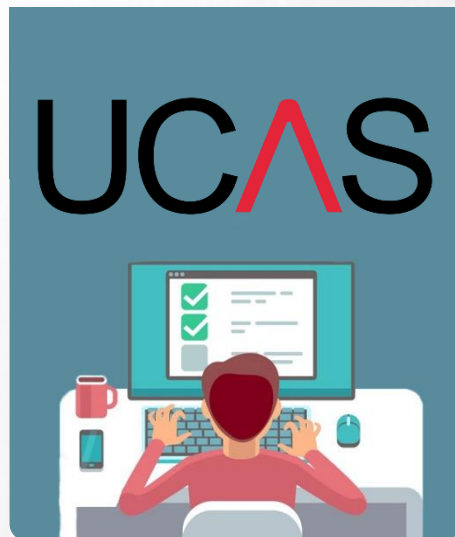
They will also be introduced to the school's work experience programme which provides all Year 10 students to take one week's work experience next year.

**Year 10** looked at moral issues in line with our statutory requirement to explore religious and moral issues.

**Year 11** had 2 focused hours revising for assessments and discussed a range of helpful revision strategies to help support them in their final run of assessments

**6th Form Year 12** students used the morning to prepare for a UCAS online event that took place the following day. This was a well timed curriculum enhancement morning as it allowed students to fully make the best of this event. Students took the time to consider and reflect their future interests, where their strengths are and what they need to do to meet the entry requirements for their chosen course. Students used some time to explore different University options, different courses and to get a taste for life at University. As well as this, students were able to explore opportunities in apprenticeships. This was a great morning and very well engaged by all students.

**Year 13** students took this opportunity to prepare for their end of year assessments. This was a valuable, unbroken block of time allowing students to revise effectively for this important process.



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# CLASS OF 2021

## Year 13 Leavers

Today is the final day for all of our Year 13 students to be in College. Whilst some will continue to come in, over the next couple of weeks, for the majority this is the last day that we will see them in lessons. As a year group, our Year 13 students have been significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic. However we have seen a real development of growth and resilience in our students. Our students have developed a greater appreciation for community and connection, with many of our students saddened to leave and lose contact again with the community that they have become part of.

At this time of year we would normally be celebrating with a leavers' assembly and a formal dinner. Unfortunately circumstances have not allowed for that this year. However with our greater ability to adapt and be flexible our student leadership team have taken on the task to redesign the end of year celebrations. Students have arranged, what I am sure will be an exciting event, in the way of holding a garden party. Students will picnic on the lawn (weather permitting), they will take part in a communal game of rounders, listen to speeches by our student leadership team and receive awards. As well as this, students are decorating the space, baking brownies to share and we will also have a special visit from the ice-cream van. We very much look forward to this event and are pleased that we are able to do something to recognise the significance of this milestone in their lives.

## National Reading Champions Quiz

The National Literacy Trust is running its first National Reading Champions Quiz.

We have two keen and talented year 9 teams who on Thursday afternoon for 3 hours are going head to head with 35 other teams in the North West Regional heat. The question master will be Mr Dilly, the children's entertainer. The teams have got to answer 10 rounds each comprising 10 questions which will then be submitted by email and marked whilst the next round takes place.

Lunchtimes over the past two weeks have seen the students in the library buffing up their knowledge on authors, books and their characters and storylines. We have had a lot of fun already and the students are looking forward to testing their knowledge.

**Team 1:** Scarlett Critchon 9CC, Marcus Fu 9MC, Finlay Hettrick 9CH, Emily Hodgson 9TC  
**Team 2:** Tabitha Alcock-Bailey 9MH, Olivia Bagley 9CH, Freya Sellars 9TC, Rosie Sumpter 9TC



We have two people in reserve: Ruby Knowles 9CC and Luca Pearson 9AH. We send both teams our very best wishes and good luck. An update on how they got on will be reported in the next newsletter.





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## Volcanic Activity in Learning Support

Well done to Finley Vaughan in Year 8, who chose to make a model volcano in his 1-to-1 sessions, after learning about the rock cycle in science.

The volcano was made out of rolled up newspaper covered in paper mache, which was then painted. Finally, to create the eruption, Finley mixed vinegar and baking soda inside the volcano!



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## Message to year 11

I would like to congratulate all Y11 students on completing the assessment period. There are a few students with some assessments to still sit but 99% are completed. You have demonstrated perseverance and a strong commitment to your learning. I am proud of the efforts you have put in and I look forward to working with many of you in the future in the 6th Form. The past two years have been a challenge to say the least but the way you have responded to the hurdles put in front of you is remarkable. This period of time will show you that you can overcome great challenges. Congratulations once again and take some time this weekend to reflect upon your successes.

Mr Gallagher

VIRGIN MONEY UK

**Whizz-kidz**  
*move a life forward*

Laurence Manley in year 12 is training to complete the London Marathon on 3rd October 2021. He is hoping to raise awareness and money for Whizz Kidz charity. The charity supports children in need of a wheelchair. If you would like to donate to this worthy charity please click on the link.

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=laurence-manley&pageUrl=1#>

Or scan the QR Code:







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## Year 8 tutor time reading activities.

We all love reading, right? Well, as wonderful as that would be, where people argued over their favourite authors instead of who ate the last waffle, it simply isn't true. A survey by the National Literacy Trust found that only 53% of children enjoy reading in some capacity, and while the school's current five minutes of reading at the start of every lesson is helping to an extent, there could still be more done. This is where the idea for this week's activities came from; to foster a love of reading within students. Every tutor time this week, a group of year 8 students, led by both teachers and Sixth Formers, have been engaged in a series of fun reading activities, such as matching up book genres to their definitions, and reading a selection of books hand picked for a combination of readability, enjoyment and popularity. Following the conclusion of these activities, many of the students have requested that this project continue, with a huge majority having enjoyed this week's event.\*



Written by Theodore M. Castle, 12TH

\* Other tutor time activities around reading will be organised after ½ term. Watch this space.



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## 8x1

### Sweet Treat Characters

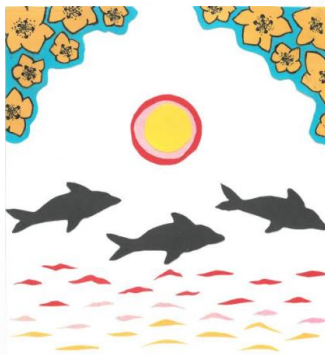
Examples by Emily, Rhianna, Alicia & Kitty



## 9x1

### Aboriginal Art Paper Collage Work

Examples by Emily, Susie & Elyned







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## A message from our local PCSO

It's been a while since my first contribution to the HCCS Newsletter earlier this year but I said at the time that I would contribute as and when I felt I had something newsworthy to share or needed to highlight any reoccurring issues which may be of interest to you as parents of children at the school.

I think there is a common misconception that the Police are killjoys or spoilsports when it comes to dealing with young people and, to a certain degree, I suppose we are. We often see the phrase "they're just kids being kids – we were all that age once" on social media in response to our posts about anti-social behaviour (ASB) so we thought it might be useful to have a look at the definition of ASB:

*Anti-social behaviour, as defined by the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 is 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm of distress to persons not of the same household.'*

Examples of reported ASB in recent weeks include footballs being kicked from atop Holmes Chapel Medical Centre into the adjacent

car park, trespassing on school property and tampering with play equipment at both Hermitage Lane and Holmes Chapel Primary (the latter being used as a toilet) and under-age drinking at Sutton Oaks which has also led to cars being damaged which residents have had to have repaired.

Firstly, we know that a vast majority of pupils at HCCS wouldn't dream of acting anti-socially and we are also open to the possibility that some of the ASB being committed could be from people coming into the area. However, the examples above do show occasions when the line has been crossed from "kids being kids" to kids behaving anti-socially and it is this that we want to reduce.

We recognise that one of the main reasons young people behave anti-socially is that they can be easily bored – that they need activities to engage with to relieve that boredom. To this end, officers at Sandbach Police Station will be facilitating several events during the summer holidays which will provide a timely distraction to the tedium of being off school for six weeks! Full details will be circulated in due course.

Furthermore, we are always open to partnership working in order to increase and improve engagement with young people and would welcome any suggestions you may have via our social media account on Facebook and Twitter. We realise that anti-social behaviour is hardly the crime of the century but if it is genuinely causing distress to people in the local community then we have to look at ways to tackle it. Any help in doing so from parents, guardians and carers would be extremely appreciated.

Thank you for reading (if you've managed to make it this far!) and until next time, stay safe.



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Thank you, from all of us at HCCS & HC6F