

THE DUCHESS'S COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL, ALNWICK



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019



ROTARY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

SEE PAGE 14

Headteacher's Report

Welcome to our Spring 2019 Newsletter. Once again it showcases all the wonderful things our young people have been up to emphasising there is more to school life than 25 lessons week – if you want it!



The last few weeks have certainly had their ups and downs as my communications to parents have shown. Fundamentally, the core question is whether we trust each other to provide the best possible environment in which our young people can grow and develop. This works two ways. Can you as parents trust our school to provide a safe, stimulating atmosphere for your children? And....can the school trust our parents to provide the best possible home environment where children can grow and develop key character traits such as empathy, respect and resilience?

It was said by one researcher a few weeks ago that since January 2018 there have been 200 separate requests for different skills and knowledge to be added to the school curriculum....as if every aspect of a young persons' development needed to be taught in schools. This is clearly unrealistic and fails to recognise the crucial importance of the family and local community. As a school, we see our students for approximately 25% of their waking lives. What happens in the other 75% is vital to how they will develop into young adults we can be proud of.

We are the only Secondary School in the Alnwick area and because we also draw students from other areas of North Northumberland we have a very complex mix of family backgrounds and needs. This creates a real mix of young people. Catering for all their needs would be easier

(but never straightforward!) if the dialogue between home and school was a positive, respectful one that looked for strategies and engagement that were in the best interests of each individual child.

The nature of our school community can be seen in our recent communications on uniform, mobile phones, use of social media and the behaviours of some of our young people. Not surprisingly there is no majority view on any of these topics. To deal with everyone's views is very challenging, hence the need for the type of dialogue I mention above.

So growing more and more TRUST is the key to Building Relationships..... the question is how do we further develop this Trust for the interests of our children?

What you see in our Newsletter is a raft of positive activities, in and out of school, that our young people have been engaged in. From a parents perspective are there activities missing? Are there specific groups of young people who we could better support so they can engage more in these activities? How can we do this?

Hope everyone has a good Easter break... and our Year 11 and 13s have their revision plans organised!

Maurice Hall
Headteacher

BLOG: Students share their creative learning experiences



This month **Culture Bridge North East** (part of Tyne & Wear Museums) visited The Duchess's Community High School and talked to three sixth form students to find out their thoughts about creative learning & how it's shaped their lives. To read their Blog about their visit, please follow the links below.



If you are reading this in a pdf, to view the blog, click the logo above. If reading this in print, put the following into a search engine:
<https://culturebridgenortheast.org.uk/news/blog-duchess-s-community-high-school-students-share-their-creative-learning-experiences>

Conservation and Environment

Over the last few winter months planning has been taking place for some conservation and environmental issues in the summer term.

Some students are beginning to plan and prepare raised beds in the school grounds to grow bee friendly flowers and home grown vegetables.



Students have been making Eco bricks and the plan is to start building some planters to grow plants in to enhance the environment of the school.

Students are taking on the responsibility of looking after what they grow to develop their understanding of looking after and respecting the environment around them.

There is also a Galapagos fundraising activity in the pipeline to take place next term.

Students are beginning to organise and advertise a **Big Clean Up Alnwick Day**. They are approaching companies within the Alnwick community to help and support them.

We also will be launching the **John Muir Award** now



we have more daylight hours. Watch this space for more information on this.

Why is RE so important on the curriculum?

Religious Education is a great way of creating a progressive, integrated society. Religion has a huge influence on culture, behaviour and national life. The more young people know about various faiths, the more likely they will embrace our multicultural society. This is particularly important in a rural community such as ours, where young people often have little experience of world religions.

Indeed last year, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales warned that a shortage of religious education teachers could contribute to religious stereotyping and

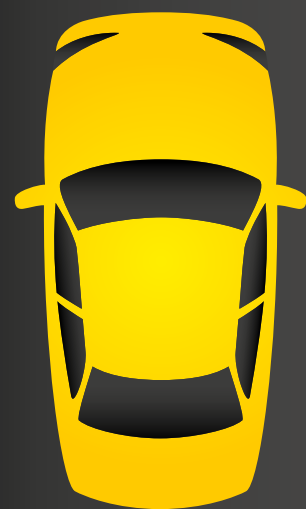
discrimination that leaves students at risk of becoming ignorant or bigoted. They suggest that explaining religious and non-religious worldviews in an academic way allows young people to engage with the complexities of belief, avoid stereotyping and contribute to an informed debate.

Imagine if your child went through life basing their opinions on inaccurate sources or misleading stereotypes. With the abundance of material on social media, students need to be able to differentiate between reliable information and sources that are more likely to lead to religious

discrimination and hatred.

RE lessons at DCHS constantly challenge students to examine their own beliefs, and the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. Perhaps most importantly, students learn to look at arguments from others peoples' points of view and understand that answers are seldom black and white. Students grow to respect the views of others and learn one of life's most valuable lessons – When there are differences of opinion, celebrate that diversity rather than letting our differences become a barrier to conversation and friendship.

REMINDER - protocol for dropping off and picking up children by car.



As I am you sure you will agree our primary concern is to ensure the safety of our students. We now have over 20 coaches/minibuses and numerous private taxis dropping off and collecting students in the morning and evening; it is incredibly busy.

In order to support us we request that any drop offs and collections take place in the Willowburn Leisure Centre car park. Please do not use our car park to drop students off unless they have mobility issues or other issues that we have been made aware of. Please also do not park on either Willowburn Avenue or on Taylor Drive as this leads to unsafe crossings for students and also prevents the school transport from getting onto the site. Taylor Drive is now marked with double yellow lines.

If there is a particular reason why you need access to the car park please do contact us.

BBC News Day

We were delighted to be chosen to take part in the **BBC Young Reporter competition representing DCHS on the 6th March 2019 and enjoyed working with Miss McCarthy from English to create a range of different news stories about our own interests.**



We had the chance to be off timetable that day with Miss McCarthy, planning, filming and then editing news stories that we had created with her support and help. Using iPads

we were able to interview staff about topics such as: plastic pollution, music, technology and students striking for climate change. We had to arrange times to interview people, create scripts to make sure we knew what to say and then the most difficult part was actually editing the videos together so that it looked like a real news report because it took longer to edit than we first thought.

As a team we had people working in front of the camera and then behind the scenes editing, so it felt like we were really working as reporters. Having this chance to take part in the BBC Young Reporter was really special and many of us would love to do it again next year if we get the chance.

Students involved:

Beth Carragher

Katy Knight

Amy Knight

Izzy Darby Burn

Bethan Powell

Dan MacLeod

Luke Fortune

Billy Clayton

Morgan Simpson

Elana Purkins

Poppy Harris-Jones

Pandora Barnes

Jay Smith

Tanya Lamb.



Luke Brown 10JK

My interest in farming started when I helped out a local farm on weekends and it has grown with various opportunities for me.

My aunty and uncle have a caravan on a working farm in Middleton Teesdale, I asked my aunty if she thought they might let me do work experience - I contacted them to see if this was possible and they agreed that I could go.

I requested to attend for a week's work experience and Mr Hall agreed. It was a great week where I was able to help with all the animals. It was lambing and calving time so it was very busy; early mornings and late nights but I loved it! 'The beast from the east' caused a lot of problems for the farmers as they had to get all the ewes in from the fields to make sure that they were able to lamb safely. We had to get all of them from the fields into prepared barns ready for lambing. It is sometimes not possible for the ewes to feed their lambs and you have to feed the pet lambs every 4 hours.

Thomas and Catherine (the farmers) were amazing! They made sure that I knew the theory about what was happening practically which helped me to understand



have some as long as I looked after them - our friends agreed that I could rent a field from them and the local farmer bought 4 ewes with 7 lambs at foot on my behalf

and then the real learning started. Catching sheep is not as easy as it looks and you really need a sheepdog (border collie) - so I got my dog, Ava (in picture).

I have worked hard looking after the sheep and our local vet has been

really helpful providing me with really useful advice and guidance; it's not easy and you don't get a day off! I now have 100 sheep, with about 40 ewes due to lamb from 1st April so I'm going to have a really busy Easter holiday!



what needed to be done and when. They let me use machinery including a gator, tractor and loader and skid steer as all these things help to make the jobs on the farm easier.

I was really pleased when they asked if I would like to stay for longer - I said yes and stayed for the Easter Holidays. I knew that I had made a good decision as I learnt so much from them and they were great in supporting me - they asked me to go back in the May week holiday and I said yes!

I decided that I would like to have my own sheep so I spoke to my mum and dad and they agreed that I could

FOOD ALLERGIES

We have a growing number of students in school with severe nut allergies (covering a whole range from peanuts to pistachios). Some of these allergies are very serious and rapid in their reaction. Please be mindful of this if you are preparing packed lunches or snacks for students, and, where possible, avoid including nut products (or, if necessary, place in a sealed container).

Whilst this is difficult to police we ask for your help and cooperation to ensure minimum impact on students' welfare. Please discuss with your child the potential impact of what is bought by students from shops and cafes and brought into school.

Our school kitchen does not use any nuts in the preparation of meals and snacks. School also delivers assemblies to all year groups regarding anaphylaxis to raise awareness and understanding.



Northumberland
County Council

Education Welfare Service
Child Employment

Did you know that?

All children from the age of 13 years and who are working must be registered with the Local Authority and be issued with a work permit.

It is an offence for an employer to employ children without registering with the local authority first.

The numbers of hours you can work whilst attending school are restricted. Children must not work before 7am and after 7pm.

Any children working without a permit is not covered by their employer's liability insurance.

More information and application forms can be obtained from:

Education Welfare
Virtual Schools
Education and Wellbeing Service
Wellbeing and Community Health Service
Brunel Building, 64 Regent Street
Blyth,
Northumberland
NE24 1LT

Tel: 01670 622800

British Science Week 2019

8-17 March
British
Science
Week
2019

British Science Week runs in March each year. This year we were lucky enough to be awarded a grant from the British Science Association to run activities with each of year 7-10 and host a very successful open evening for our students and students in other local schools.



Year 8 looked at DNA and how to recreate a face. Scientists can use archaeological remains and DNA evidence to more accurately work out what people from the past looked like. They can also use DNA to show where humans originated and how they have migrated over time. In this

activity, year 8 looked at DNA clues that can help us work out what people from the past looked like. They created their own character, wrote their DNA profile and then recreated their face, just



The theme for this year's British Science Week was 'journeys', encouraging young people to think about the different scientific journeys that happen every day and how they can discover science through their own lives and experiences. It was also a chance for young people to consider how journeys can help us experience more of the world around us.

Year 7 made a wind up car. It was a tricky method but there were so many successful student cars! During the activity they learnt how to use energy to move a vehicle. They discovered that energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transferred. By winding up the coiled paper, and letting it uncoil the motion propels the cars forward. We heard many stories of competitions using these cars going on at home. We hope you enjoyed them as much as we did!



like an archaeologist would. Students enjoyed this and were able to solve a game of Guess Who!

There is a lot of plastic in landfill sites which often ends up journeying to the ocean. It is estimated that a plastic bottle may take up to 450 years to rot away. Plastic also causes problems for wildlife; some animals become tangled in it and some mistake it for food. This can be fatal to animals and, even when it isn't, scientists are worried that plastic is ending up in the food chain as it can break down into small particles called micro-fibres. Year 9 discussed the effect of using



plastics and how we can reduce our own use. In their investigation they tested the prediction that micro-fibres of

plastic get into the water when synthetic clothes are washed. You'll have to ask them to see what they found out!

Throughout history, people have found ways to make perfumes. Perfume making was particularly popular in the golden age of Muslim civilisation. In year 10 chemistry lessons, students made a perfume from essential oils adapted from a recipe from over a thousand years ago. The essential oils are mixed together with olive oil, which acts as a 'carrier' to move the fragrance to the skin. Perfumes can also be mixed with



water and sprayed as an air freshener using a spray bottle. Some of our students think they made the next big selling aftershave whereas other made something you could use to baste a chicken! Lots of fun but I think we might have scarred the science technicians with all the mixing of smells! They loved it really!

On Thursday 14th March, we invited the parents and carers of students in other local schools as well as the parents of our own year 7-10 students. Sixth form students and science staff were on hand to show all visitors what students have been up to. It was a very enjoyable night! Thanks so much if you made it!

The art and textiles departments also got on board with a big project experimenting with mixed media. They've looked at milk and PVA glue and been able to mimic some of the fantastic patterns seen in nature! We're looking forward to this becoming a big display in the science department.



We really appreciate all the support for events such as this. Thank you to everyone involved and to the British Science Association for the financial support. Watch out for the date of our open evening next year. It'll be in March 2020!

World Book Day

On Thursday, 7th March, we celebrated 'World Book Day' in 'Secondary Style'. Over the course of the day, there were many 'book related activities' going on off site, in class and in the school library.

We took Y7 off site for the day to the Lindisfarne Adult Learning Centre site where the students took part in a carousel of activities, including some with a Drama and Oracy focus.

Some students (and the staff) dressed up as book characters and some brought a 'book themed' picnic complete with 'picnic paraphernalia' such as plastic cups, cutlery, picnic blankets etc.

The remainder of our students celebrated World Book Day in school during lesson time and in the library at lunchtime. We held a range of competitions including an 'Extreme Reading' competition- for this, students brought in a photograph of themselves reading a book in an unusual place e.g. on a climbing frame, up a mountain etc. A display of these was put up in the school library and prizes were awarded for the best entries.

Another of the competitions involved the students designing a book token. We held our own 'in school' competition for this and we also sent a selection of the best designs to a nationwide competition in which students have the chance to win lots of 'National Book Tokens'. The winner of the national competition will have their design turned into an actual token which will be distributed to book shops across the country in time



for Christmas.

There was also a 'design a book cover' competition for which a range of prizes was awarded.

Our raffle proved to be very popular and enabled us to raise some funds with which to buy some new books for our school library.

Students also received a book token which they can either exchange for a free book (there are ten titles to choose from) or can use to get £1 off a full price book or audio book priced over

£2.99 at local booksellers.

We very much enjoyed the day and hope that our students enjoyed it too.



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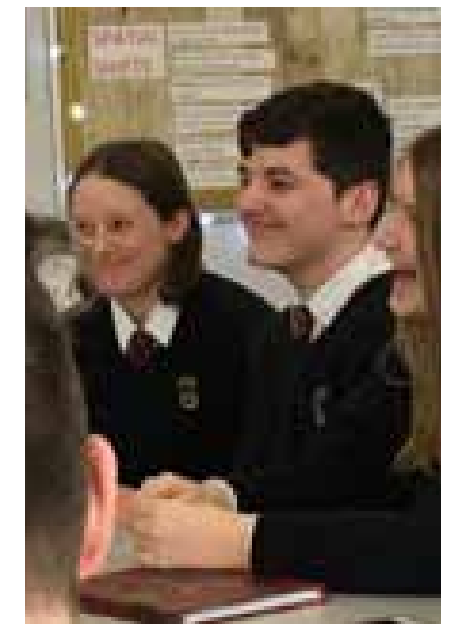
Poetry Club

We welcomed poet and Newcastle university tutor Christy Ducker to the poetry club this term. Christy ran a workshop on the theme of 'transformations'.

The event was part of an outreach programme to encourage young north-east poets to enter the university's poetry competition. 'The students were very excited to meet Christy, and to be tutored by such a well-known and respected poet,' said Mrs Newton. 'It's really exciting to be forging links with our local universities, and showing the students what they can aim for.'

Year 10 student Antonia Johnson won't forget her first experience of a professional writing workshop: 'Having Christy in the creative writing group was definitely a memorable experience. I felt that it was inspiring, and I now have plenty of material to work with, along with techniques to explore.'

Christy enjoyed it so much, she's returning next half term to run a further workshop.



ADVERTISING IN THE NEWSLETTER

If you wish to advertise in the Newsletter please contact Karen Gregory at Admin@dchs-alnwick.org

Mental health support



In order to further focus our support, this term we have been looking at the themes presenting with our children and young people, basing strategies around those.

An overview of presenting issues from the 40+ students who have benefitted from our counselling and psychotherapy service since it commenced last summer, has shown us that we currently need to focus on areas around anxiety in particular. Our relational approach is working well in creating key relationships in which our children and young people have someone to talk with about how they are feeling. Some students have a designated teacher, or team of staff, to whom they can go at any point in the school day if they feel they are really struggling – with either feelings or behaviour. This means that there is always a safe place and safe person in school for some of our students who find it difficult to access learning because of high levels of anxiety, or for other issues which mean it is more difficult to settle and learn.

In our staff training we have been looking at what might underlie anxiety and unsettled behaviour in a child or young person, how we might better understand that and what responses can help. We have gone on to look further at resilience – that ‘bounce back’ ability that can really help a student to manage the stresses of the school day or recover quickly from difficulties of a broader nature.

Developing resilience is becoming a key area of our mental health support strategy. Sometimes – particularly at exam time – it is all too easy to think of academic achievement as the ‘be all and end all.’ We are aware that striving for academic achievement can come with its own pressures, and needs to be balanced within the whole spectrum of what we need to flourish, to grow in our identities and sense of who we are, to feel good about ourselves and learn how to feel calm and relaxed – which in turn helps us to work at our best.

The key areas of resilience we have been considering are:

- Having a hobby or something I enjoy doing
- Being able to identify what I am good at

- Having friends and a sense of belonging
- Being able to put my feelings into words and having someone to talk to about them
- Having a healthy self-image and positive self-esteem: feeling good about myself

Our school structure aims to facilitate each of these areas of growing resilience: our commitment to the creative arts, music, drama and sport provide many opportunities for our children and young people to spend time doing something they love and developing talents, which in turn help them to feel good about themselves. In staff training we have been considering how we offer more targeted praise and recognition to students: whether conditional (‘you worked well there’) or unconditional (‘I like having you in my class.’)

We all need to feel recognised and rewarded. The many positive comments, emails, conversations (and cakes even!) that the staff have received this term have been gratefully received. Thank you to the wonderful parents and carers who support us with our own resilience through working together with us so positively.

Our highly skilled pastoral team continue to be the empathic hub of the school, caring and supporting many of our young people to work with their feelings and difficulties so that they can grow and learn more effectively.

Our counselling service still has a number of advanced trainee therapists attached to it making this a cost effective way to increase availability of a ‘listening ear’ within school. We now have a small number of trainee therapists working with us in conjunction with Community@NE66 so that, where we see critical need, we are able to offer more targeted support to parents – for example around significant bereavement or mental health difficulty benefitting from family support in this way. This is a small service and therefore places are limited, with some waiting time, but do get in touch if you feel this is something

you need. Our school psychotherapist, Mikala Richards, can discuss this further with you: mikala.richards@dchs-alnwick.uk

Our team continues to be strengthened with the input of our school nurses, Educational Psychologists, behaviour support and autism specialist services, youth team as well as the multi-disciplinary work we do with children’s services and referral, where needed, into Children and Young People’s Service. Wrap around support in this way means that we can better assess and refer to the person or service that we feel will help the child or young person most.

At the heart of all of this are the day to day relationships between staff and students which are what makes our school such a vibrant, relational place to be. It has been great to see parents of new students looking round and noticing those small, positive interactions going on between our young people and their teachers – from asking how the football game went at the weekend to noticing a new haircut as well as spotting when a child might not be quite themselves today: all the small conversations that make our school a place to belong and to be proud of.

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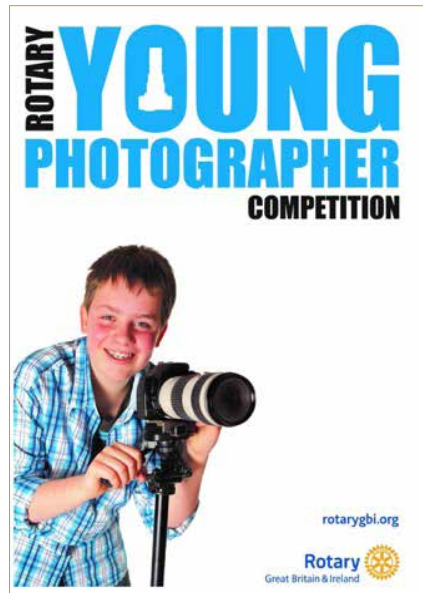
www.johnmacs.co.uk

Rotary Photography Competition



Congratulations to the winners in the senior and intermediate categories! We had stacks of entries from students in every key stage, who responded to the theme "the beauty of nature". The Rotary competition has become a regular event and showcases the growing popularity of Photography at DCHS.

We'd like to encourage all students with an interest in Photography to keep sharing their work with us and talking to us about their experiences.



INTERMEDIATE WINNERS:

First: Harris Hall

Second: Megan Park

Third: Caitlin Taylor

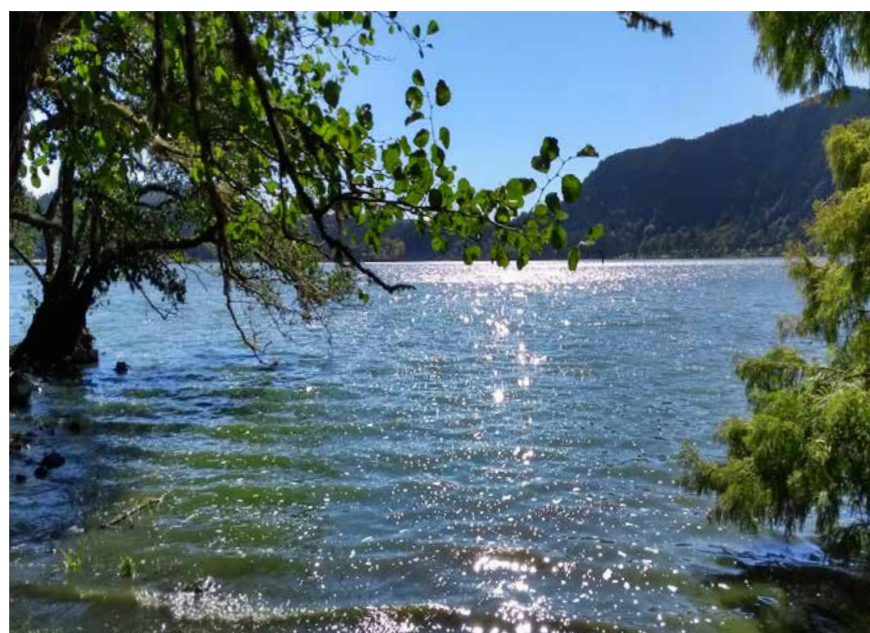


SENIOR WINNERS:

First: Hannah Fleming

Second: Amy Wilson

Third: Katelyn Campbell



Articulate Arts Award Project

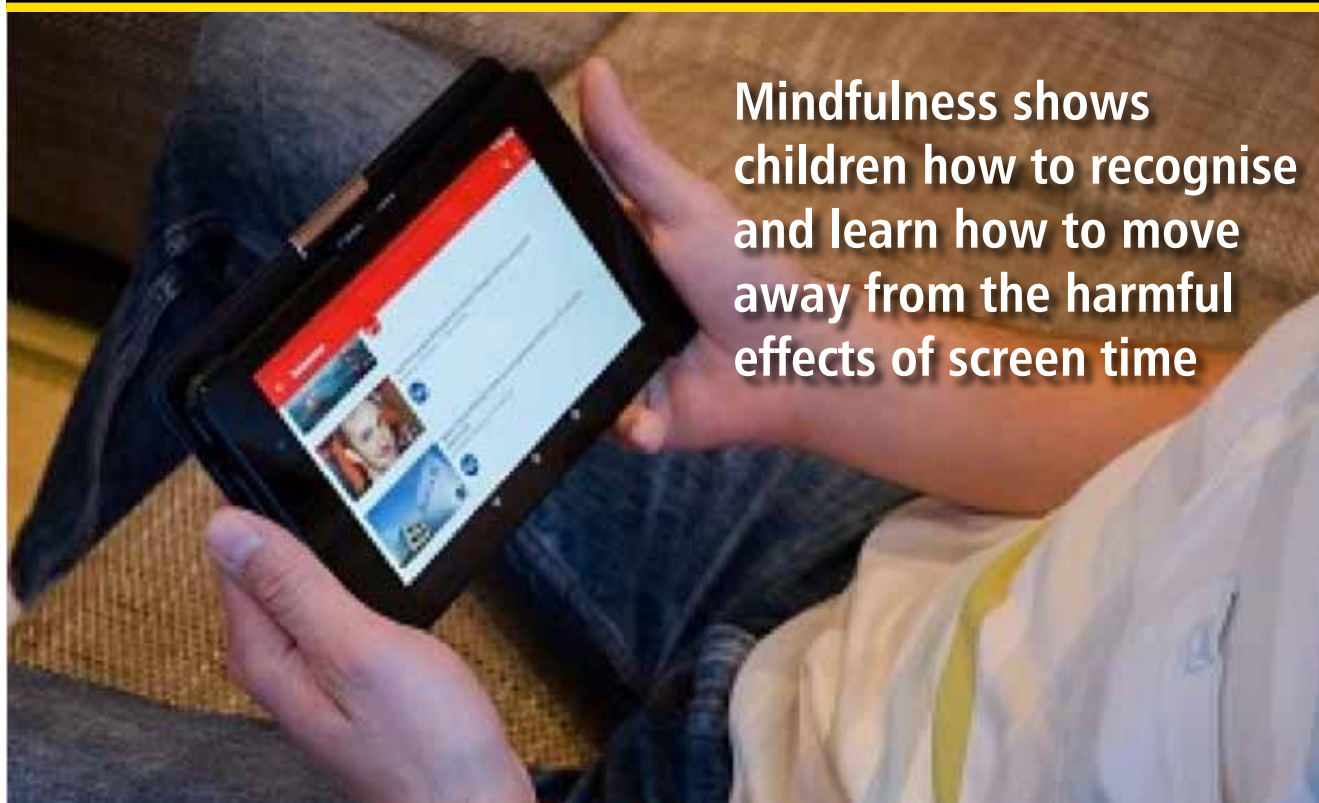
Now it its third year, the Articulate project is a collaboration between the Art department and the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. In previous years groups of students have visited the gallery to do creative projects that support their Art and Photography courses, as well as developing English language skills through engagement with the gallery. This year Year 9 students have visited the Laing, and are having two days of creative workshops with

gallery educators back in school, which will lead to a Bronze Arts Award certificate for students. Watch this space - over the next few years we hope to provide lots more opportunity for Arts Award up to and including Gold level - equivalent to a B at AS Level! As important as certificates are, the importance of projects like this in building students confidence and cultural awareness through exciting, authentic experiences through the Arts is incredibly valuable.



Mondays
@ Lindisfarne School
9:30, 11:30am, 5pm & 7pm
slimmingworld.co.uk
 0344 897 8000
facebook.com/SlimmingWorldAlnwick

Screen Time



Mindfulness shows children how to recognise and learn how to move away from the harmful effects of screen time

There are many reasons to look at the possible and likely harmful effects that may come to our children through their experience of 'screen time'. Usually this discussion winds up placing the emphasis on either inappropriate content or the delirious effect of staring at a screen for long periods of time.

It is the actual sensation of the experience of using technology (screen time), that powerfully pulls the attention of the child away from noticing and acting its own experience, and instead places it on external and 'virtual' triggers that frequently manipulates the attention of the child. This leaves children vulnerable.

This real time interaction with technology is a very 'brain and nervous system' centred activity: it involves thinking, hand/eye coordination, focus, posture and even breathing - not to mention emotional reactions and other sensations in the body. These brain events happen swiftly and often

automatically. And it is in the brain that the changes need to be made to protect themselves from online harm.

This means that children need to develop the skill of choosing to pay purposeful attention on how they are feeling during screen time, and coming to a conscious awareness about what they think about what they see online. In other words, developing the ability to learn how to be aware and learning to be able to make distinctions between what they experience when they are 'randomly surfing and clicking', in preference to directing their choices to that of being curious, hungry to learn and excited to explore the wealth of human knowledge and experience. This is after all, the potential great gift of the internet itself.

The problem is this random activity is (largely) decided by the internet (advertisers as well as less healthy influences). This is a powerful draw on the child's attention (which

undermines its natural ability to choose a more purposeful use of their time on internet). Their resistance to this draw also swiftly diminishes the longer the child is online.

The more exposure the child has to these triggers (to view other content that the computer is choosing for them) the more likely the child will lose opportunities for its own pleasure and self improvement. This loss can involve aspects of how they experience their wider education, personal comprehension and the development of key cognitive skills.

Not that the average teenager would respond to the question "are you developing your cognitive skills in there, kids?" with anything but a snort!

None the less that is what is happening. Our children are learning how to be constantly connected to electrical technology as a major part of their daily life and they are increasingly under its influence.

That is why it is so important that children and teenagers learn how to tap into their own power, to be more self aware, learn self respect and so make better choices, by learning the skill of becoming more self directed in their use of the internet.

So how does mindfulness help with all of this?

Mindfulness is defined as the skill of practicing 'paying attention, moment by moment, to the present moment, on purpose and without judgement'. That means children learning to become dispassionate about their choices ('being objective') and also not

responding reactively (that's the 'on purpose and without judgement' part) and instead choosing to focus and constantly refocus their attention, by first of all, accepting distractions (so as to not become 'tangled up' in fighting them) and skilfully move their attention to where they want it to be, and in this way learning to disengage skilfully from undesired and unasked for content.

So that when they feel pulled away from what they want to be paying attention to, they learn to practice being mindful of their own power by choosing again what they really want to do.

This skill of focusing their attention keeps them examining what their feelings and thoughts really are (because they notice them as they are having them) so their choices become more and more informed by real needs and preferences. This results in more of their needs being met appropriately.

Mindfulness puts the child in the 'driving seat' and this skill of 'noticing what I am feeling', moment by moment, becomes an increasingly natural attitude. With practice.

We need to guarantee that all children will always have (at the very least) a safe and - hopefully - useful and fulfilling experience online and yet we must face the fact that this technological revolution is unprecedented in human history. None of us - especially our teenagers and children - really know how to live healthily with this pocket sized computer that connects us to 'everything in the world', healthy or not, instantly, and with minimal cost and little accountability.

GREAVES GRINDLE

Chartered Accountants

Victoria House, Bondgate Within, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1TA

Email: accounts@greavesgrindle.co.uk



In January the organisers of NCS came in to deliver an assembly to the students in Year 11.

What is the National Citizen Service?

NCS is a Government backed and partially funded opportunity for young people to develop their skills and give something back to the community.

It is a great opportunity to improve CVs, applications for university, apprenticeships and jobs as well as interviews and have an unstoppable summer.

With NCS, students will:

- ✓ Develop vital skills for life and work
- ✓ Meet incredible people and have fun
- ✓ Spend time living away from home
- ✓ Challenge themselves and grow in confidence
- ✓ Make a positive impact in the community
- ✓ Achieve things they never dreamed possible
- ✓ Broaden their horizons and unlock new opportunities

During the summer, the NCS journey will begin with four nights, five days of outdoor adventure in the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales or Scottish Borders. The residential is jam-packed with exhilarating activities that will make students feel unstoppable.

After two days off they will go away on another four night, five day residential, experiencing independent living, and

spending time developing new skills ready for work and life.

Finally, they get a chance to put everything they've learnt into action. Together with their team, they will create a project that makes a difference in the local community.

At a celebration event they will be awarded with a certificate of completion signed by the Prime Minister that can really help them to stand out.

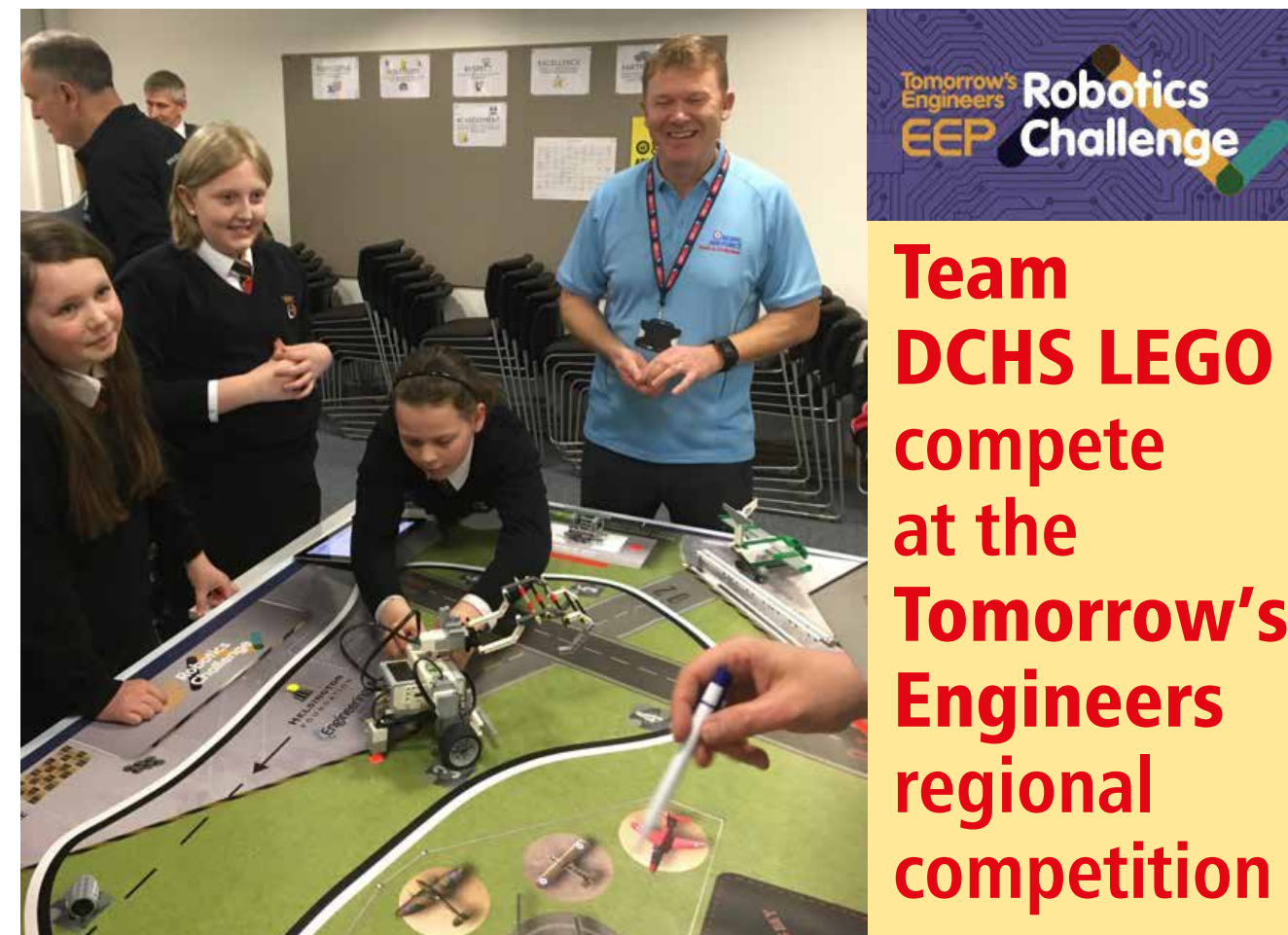
NCS is open to 16 and 17 year olds. Places will never cost more than £50 (£10 for those eligible for free school meals), which includes the two residentials, food and transport on the residentials, training, activities and more! Sign-up online at NCSYES.co.uk for £35 or, if you get free school meals, call us on 0800 197 8010. Places on this summer's NCS are now very limited.

I am thrilled to say that we have 41 students fully signed up for the programme from Year 11. It is great to see our young people putting themselves out there and making the most of a fantastic opportunity. There is another assembly in March if students still wish to participate there may be additional places they can sign up to.

Places on NCS are not secure until students return their medical form. If they haven't received one yet or have lost it, please call our the NCS team on **0191 338 7800**.

Visit **NCSYES.co.uk** and secure a place for just £35!

Find out more at NCSYES.co.uk



On March 1st, eleven of our year 7 students represented DCHS in the 2019 Lego "Tomorrow's Engineers" Robotics Challenge north east heat at Nissan, Sunderland. The competition, supported by Lego Education and the RAF involved the design and construction of two autonomous robots able to compete in a speed challenge and a series of programmed challenges themed around humanitarian aid.

Our team performed brilliantly and were ultimately runners up in this national competition. Team DCHS LEGO won the Robotics Challenge part of the competition (the really difficult programming challenges) and worked hard on the day to improve their programming, robot design and performance over several rounds of competition. The team narrowly missed out on taking the speed challenge title by a mere 0.181 seconds. Overall winners were the more experienced Emmanuel College (who pipped us at the post with an excellent team presentation) who go on to compete in the national finals at the Big Bang science fair in Birmingham later in March. The team are already redesigning their robots to compete in next years challenge.

Team members are Claudia Ilderton, Milly Jackson, Hermione Lewis, Gabi Stirling, Molly Weatherill, Jamie Davison, Fred Williams, Edvin Vea, Louis Mascall, Chris Straughan and Kieron Miller.



Team DCHS VEX Robotics

Team DCHS VEX Robotics - regional winners in our first ever competition

On Wednesday 6th February, Team DCHS VEX took part in the North East heat of the international VEX IQ Robotics challenge at Nissan, Sunderland. This competition involves designing and building a multi-purpose robot that can be driven to perform a range of different tasks and also be programmed to solve challenges autonomously.

Throughout the day the team battled through a series of heats and were firmly placed at the top of the leaderboard after 8 rounds. Teams from 21 regional schools competed with partner schools from across the north east to score points in a number of challenges. Team DCHS VEX won the overall Team Challenge and the Driver Skills challenge (including programming tasks.). Overall they scored the most points and have qualified for the National Final in Telford next month alongside Fellside Primary School, Whickham. Nissan awarded us £1000 towards the cost of travel to the final in Telford.

The team of year 7 students included **Kathryn Ball, Ben Allan, Louis Mascall, Joe Bottomer** and **Will Thompson** were a hugely positive reflection of our students at DCHS and worked professionally with the teams they were competing with on the day, developing winning strategies and training their partner teams to use the technology accordingly. Core skills for DT and their futures!



Team DCHS VEX Robotics compete in the UK national finals

The year 7 Team DCHS VEX returned on Monday 4th March at nearly midnight following their first experience of competing in the 2019 Vex Robotics National final in Telford. 60 teams from 40 schools nationally qualified and spent two days competing in numerous challenges including programming, driver skills and teamwork. Over the two days Team DCHS VEX worked incredibly hard at impressing a range of judges from the UK and the USA from science, engineering and aerospace backgrounds. Performing their robot driving skills with numerous alliance schools from across the country in a 400 seater arena event, filmed and presented on large video walls proved to be an exhilarating experience for the team members at this huge event. At only our second ever competition event the team were able to post some solid results against some very experienced teams, achieving 24th place nationally for their driver and programming skills, where the top 30 UK teams competed again to decide the overall winners, narrowly missing out on the opportunity to compete at the world finals in Louisville, USA in April. Despite their disappointment, the team were back in school the following day, and within 14 hours of their return, had stripped down, redesigned and rebuilt the robot in readiness

for the North East Vex alliance season closing competition in May. The team are keen to mentor the next generation of roboteers and are already planning for the next season and have a strong desire to improve their international ranking of 693rd out of over 6500 schools across the globe.

We are also involved in a successful funding bid with the Royal Academy of Engineers to secure some more Vex equipment to roll out to our Alnwick feeder schools - this will be happening in the next few weeks.



Girls' Sport

HOCKEY

We have fielded 3 teams this year, not bad considering we have no pitch to train or play on. Home matches are at Longhirst Morpeth.

The U14 team are growing in confidence and Captain **Emma Walsingham's** inspirational play and organisation really motivates the team. Their season came to a positive end drawing with Dame Allans at the County Tournament. **Harriet Robson, Emma Walsingham, Holly Spencer, Joely Hindmarch, Frances Maxwell, Connie, Annabelle** and **Ellie Turner** have been playing hockey with Morpeth Ladies and their experience is a real boost to their respective teams.

The U16 and U18 have enjoyed playing matches fitting them in between their school work and part time jobs.

NETBALL

We have practiced every Tuesday night all through the winter and had a great turn-out particularly from juniors. Year 10 have had some great performances this season and reached the Regional Finals.

Seniors had a good start to the season but unfortunately demands of work have affected their commitment.

There are a number of girls playing regularly at Alnwick Ladies who train at Willowburn on Tuesday evenings.

FOOTBALL

The U13 team has had a great season. They have only lost 2 games in the league and have made it through to the semis of the cup.

U14 's are currently 3rd in the league.

RUGBY

We have fielded teams in the county festivals and many girls have enjoyed leading and refereeing at first school festivals.

Well done to **Bridie Dunn** Y11 who has been selected to play for County U18.



CROSS COUNTRY

Area Junior and Inters won this event with 14 girls chosen to represent North Northumberland at the County event at Temple Park. Special mention to **Mille Breese, Lauren Brown, Hannah Johnston** and **Lilia Purvis** who then won through to the National Finals. **Mille came 23/354!**



Tell us about medical needs and medication!

We keep records in school of information supplied to us by parents/ carers to enable us to support students with medical conditions.

Details of the full policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, is on our website as well as copies of forms to complete should your child need medication while at school. Please read the information and complete the relevant forms if your child has a condition we should be aware of. It is your responsibility to inform us of any condition, change to a condition or medication for your child.



Boys' Sport

BADMINTON

The junior and senior teams have enjoyed successful seasons. In the first fixture against Longridge Towers both teams produced dominant performances and won all singles and doubles games. Pictured below is the junior team, **Finlay Telfer, Oliver Thew, James Taylor** and **Gregor Batley**.



The highlight is always the county tournament held at Blyth Sports Centre. Both teams qualified as the top 6 in the county. The competition was tough but the junior squad battled hard and achieved a creditable 5th place finish.

The senior boys league was a high quality affair. After good wins against KEVI Morpeth and Emmanuel College Gateshead, there followed a very exciting semi-final against Ponteland High School. Unfortunately we lost 3-2 but the team of **Ian Taylor, Oli Telfer,**

Hugh Shackleton and **Oscar Patten** can be proud of their performance.

*Pictured in action are **Hugh Shackleton** and **Oscar Patten**.*



CROSS COUNTRY

The boys have enjoyed another successful term in cross country, with a number of students participating in the Inter Area round competition which took place at Temple Park, South Shields. The boys involved performed strongly with a position in the top 16 rewarded with a place in the next round of the competition in Temple Park again. In the year 8 and 9 race **Max Murray John** ran extremely well to advance and in the year 10 and 11 race Max's brother, **Ben, Barnabas Harvey** and **Ollie Telfer** qualified also. In the following round the competition again became stronger as our students fared well on a cold Saturday in February. Of the four to qualify Ollie performed particularly well to seal his place in the English School's Finals held in Leeds. Ollie ran with 331 other boys and finished a creditable 275th; an impressive achievement when considering the race contained some of the top runners in the country! *Well done to Ollie and the other boys involved during the cross country season.*

RUGBY U15s

On Tuesday March 19th a group of 13 year 10 boys travelled to Percy Park, Tynemouth to take part in the County 7s. This tournament features schools from across Northumberland, providing the boys with opposition of a very high standard. The team were drawn in a group with Kings Tynemouth, St Cuthbert's, Newcastle School for Boys and St Mary's. The boys were outstanding and went through the group unbeaten, scoring nineteen tries to guarantee a third place finish. The next round of the tournament saw the group play against Gosforth Academy and Cramlington.

Although the team battled well and scored five tries against very talented opponents, they ultimately came up short. Despite losing these final two games, the boys can be delighted with their achievement, placing third in the whole county whilst representing the school with distinction.

Below is a picture of the team (*minus **Jamie McCaig, Max Harrison** and **Charlie Sutherland***). They are (*back left to front right*): **George Balmbro, Jude Hall, Calvin Inglis, Archie Allan, Matthew Whiteley, Scott Cameron, Robbie Burn, Spike Patton, Andrew Spark** and **Joel Ellis**.



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Outside of school, a number of year 10 boys have been called up for the county, another fantastic achievement. They are **Max Harrison, Joel Ellis, Robbie Burn, Andrew Spark, George Balmbro** and **Matthew Whiteley** (pictured above). **Spike Patton** has also been selected from year 11. In addition, three of the group mentioned previously have made it through to the latter stages of the Falcon's Academy selection process. **Spike Patton, Andrew Spark** and **Max Harrison** have shown dedication and undoubted ability to make it this far. *We are extremely proud of them for their efforts and we hope to hear soon of their final selection for the academy. Well done and good luck to the boys.*

RUGBY U13s

The U13 rugby team took part in the county finals tournament at Kingston Park stadium, having qualified from a difficult pool containing RGS and Longridge Tower. As the group had finished first in the pool they were drawn in the top 'Cup' competition facing some of the best teams in the county.

The boys played games against Chantry, St Thomas Moore, St Cuthbert's, Dame Allan's and NSB. They performed well, suffering narrow losses to St Thomas Moore, St Cuthbert's and NSB, despite going ahead in all three games. The other games were an excellent opportunity to learn against some very strong and imposing opposition and the boys were a credit to the school with their attitude and effort levels. Well done to all those who took part with special mentions to captain **Ryan King**, who tackled and ran with purpose and to **Cameron Cullen**, who performed superbly up until injury cut his tournament short. Finally congratulations to the year 7s who played alongside the year 8s; **Ed Brown, Harry Parkinson, Noah Hall** and **Matty Hill**, who did not look out of place alongside some much more experienced players. We hope the group continue to develop and enjoy their rugby next year.

FOOTBALL U19s

The Duchess U19 football team is continuing their good form shown in the early stages of the season.

Duchess recently beat Excelsior Academy 6-3 in the quarter final of the Chronicle Cup. Excelsior started the game really well scoring 2 early goals in the first 15 minutes but a stunning free kick from **Leon Midgley** gave Duchess some much needed confidence. Excelsior then scored again to make it 3-1 but **Joe Eggleston** scored just before half time to reduce the deficit to 1 goal.

The second half produced some excellent individual performances from the Duchess players. Goals from **Leon Midgley (2), Liam Cravagan** and **George Hedley** resulted in Duchess winning the game 6-3 and progressing to the semi-final stage of the competition. A fantastic team performance showing immense character and determination to win the game 6-3 after being 2 goals down in the first 15 minutes. Monkseaton Academy will travel to Alnwick for the semi-final which is sure to be a competitive match with both teams looking to secure a place in the final.

Duchess are currently joint top of Division 2 and have every chance to be crowned champions if we win our remaining fixtures. A possible league title and promotion into Division 1 is proving to be a successful 2018/19 season for the U19 team, alongside the possibility of reaching the final of the Chronicle Cup.



Joe Threlfall on the attack against Excelsior Academy.

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Important Calendar Dates

Friday, April 5

School **closes** for Easter holiday

Tuesday, April 23

School **reopens** after Easter holiday

Thursday, April 25

Year 7 Parents' Evening

Monday, April 29

PC3 for Y9/10 opens

Tuesday, April 30

Y12 Higher Education Fair – Metro Arena

Friday, May 3

PC3 for Y9/10 closes

Monday, May 6

May Day Holiday

Tuesday, May 7

PC3 for Y7/8 opens

Friday, May 10

PC3 for Y7/8 closes
Y13 Leaver's Assembly – p.m.
Y13 Study Leave begins

Thursday, May 16

Y9 Parents' Evening

Friday, May 24

Y11 Leavers' Assembly
School **closes** for Spring Mid Term holiday

Monday, June 3

School **reopens** after Spring Mid Term holiday

Thursday, June 6

Y8 Parents' Evening

Friday, June 7

Y8 Geography/History fieldtrip to Edinburgh

Week beginning June 10

Healthy Eating week

Wednesday, June 12

Y12 Parents' Higher Education Information Evening

Week beginning June 17

Y12 Exams week

Monday, June 17

PC4 for Y9/10 opens

Thursday 20 – Saturday June 22

English Stratford Residential Trip

Friday, June 21

PC4 for Y9/10 closes
Y11 Prom

Week beginning June 24

Y10 Exams week

Monday, June 24

PC4 for Y7/8 opens

Tuesday, June 25

Y7 Presentation Evening

Thursday, June 27

Y8 Presentation Evening

Friday, June 28

PC4 for Y7/8 closes
Y13 Leavers' Dinner

Week beginning July 1

Y12 Work Experience Week
Y12 Biology Field Trip week

Tuesday, July 2

Y10 Presentation Evening

Friday, July 19

School **closes** for Summer holiday

Thursday, August 15

GCE Results Day

Thursday, August 22

GCSE Results Day