



ASPIRATION



RESPECT



EXCELLENCE

w/c 9 October 2023 Week B



Open Evening 2023 was a fantastic success! The main hall quickly filled up with prospective parents and students for the main presentation before they toured departments to see what we have to offer at Highdown. Our current students, who were helping in department areas, and prefects who were supporting tours, were all superb ambassadors for our school and community. Our Year 7 and Year 13 speakers spoke brilliantly in the main presentation about their experiences, to date, as Highdowners. Just awesome! We look forward to welcoming prospective families to the school in our Open Morning tours next week.

In other news this week, over 50 students participated in the national Senior Maths Challenge and Mathematics Olympiad. We are confident that they will have all *smashed it* and look forward to seeing their results next month!

Our Year 9 students welcomed AlterEgo, a production group, who presented their 'Unacceptable' performance which focuses on raising awareness of and challenging issues of sexism, sexual harassment and abuse. This is a key part of our annual safeguarding curriculum.

Next week heralds our first House Week of the year, with students focusing on building their House communities within our whole community for the year ahead.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Mr M Grantham, Head of School.

HOUSE POINTS

Mapledurham	22289
Grove	22206
Rosehill	23329
Caversham	22435

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Term dates can be found here: [2023/24](#)

Term 1

House Week 1: Our Community

All Week: Open Morning (9-11am)

Mon 9 Oct: Y9/11 Mandarin (non MEP) trip to London
U14 County Hockey Tournament (10am)

Tue 10 Oct: Y11 Food NEA1 Practical
PA Showcase/Rock Concert 7pm
World Mental Health Day

Wed 11 Oct: Y11 Food NEA1 Practical

Thurs 12 Oct: Y11 Food NEA1 Practical
Y11/12/13 EGX trip

Fri 13 Oct: Y8 Williams F1 trip
Y11 Learning Conference: Building Success



Follow us



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many games which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

AMONG US

A multiplayer 'social deduction' game set in outer space, Among Us enjoyed a surge in popularity in 2020, and has since maintained a dedicated fan-base (globally, around 60 million regular players each month) thanks to its unique nature, simple premise and ease of access across numerous platforms. The game's on-screen action revolves around danger, disguise and deception – and there are certain parallels to be drawn with some of the real-life risks that parents and carers of young Among Us players need to be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SENSITIVE PREMISE

In Among Us, up to three players are secretly assigned to be alien imposters, tasked with murdering their colleagues while the survivors try to unmask them. While the concept's not far removed from traditional games like Wink Murder or TV shows such as The Traitors, some parents may feel uncomfortable about their child playing a video game in which deception and killing are prioritised.

VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

The on-screen death of characters may be fundamental to the gameplay of Among Us, but the majority of the animations depicting this are deliberately cartoonish and only appear very briefly. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the game has a PEGI age rating of 7 – meaning that certain elements (however heavily stylised they may be) could still upset some younger players.

CHAT BETWEEN PLAYERS

With up to 15 people participating in each game online, a large part of Among Us' appeal is speculating with fellow players who the imposters might be and making accusations. This dialogue through the in-game text chat can occasionally become heated – and could, of course, involve your child being put into contact with people (including adults) who they don't know in real life.

GOING OFF PLATFORM

While Among Us provides basic ways to communicate, many gamers prefer to use external services such as Discord: a popular app which offers voice and video chat functions. These undeniably make cooperation easier, but also create a potential route for children to hear inappropriate language – or for strangers to message them privately in an environment which isn't regulated by the game itself.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Among Us is free to download on mobile devices, and costs less than £5 to obtain on console and PC. A related longer-term pitfall, though, is that the game also includes options to pay for upgrades such as removing ads on the mobile version or adding cosmetic touches to characters (such as different costumes). It's certainly possible that a child could spend a significant sum without realising it.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER SOFTER ALTERNATIVES

Although Among Us is hugely popular with young gamers, it's possible that some children might find the murder themes unsettling. If so, plenty of similar social deduction games are available (in both digital and traditional board game formats) which downplay the potentially grislier elements: some centre around undercover spies, for instance, and there's even a Marvel superhero-themed variant.

CHAT ABOUT CHATting

You might feel it's prudent to talk to your child about the risks associated with voice chat while gaming, explaining in particular that strangers online aren't always who they claim to be. Keeping the conversation relaxed will reinforce your child's confidence that they can always come to you with any online concerns – not just about Among Us, but any potential future issues as well.

DISCUSS DISCORD

In general, Discord is an excellent app for keeping online communities together because of its use of dedicated individual servers, which allow comprehensive control over who can join – and who can't. Once you're familiar with the platform, you could set up a secure server for your child and their friends to communicate during games of Among Us, with no access for people they don't know.

AMONG US, AMONG FRIENDS

When your child and their friends get together, they can enjoy a private game of Among Us by choosing a 'local' lobby – that is, only people connected to the same WiFi (your home network, for example) can enter. This prevents any random online users – who may be total strangers – from joining and removes the need for voice chat, as the players are all physically in the same location.

STOP SURPRISE SPENDING

If you're concerned about the possibility of your child racking up an unexpected bill on Among Us' microtransactions, you could consider using a prepaid card with a set limit. Likewise, you could specify in the game's options that adult authorisation is required for every purchase – or you could make sure that no payment methods are enabled on the device that your child plays the game on.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GameRant and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent who understands the value of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.10.2023

Information

Absence Reporting

Please notify us if your son/daughter is unable to attend either online or onsite lessons due to illness or other reason.

Please report all absences using the Class Charts app rather than by telephone, email or ParentMail. We hope parents will find this route much more straightforward and efficient. You can find out more here:

<https://www.highdown.reading.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=1803&type=pdf>.

Problems with Class Charts

If you are experiencing issues with accessing your Class Charts account, please contact vihamer@highdown.reading.sch.uk



Parking

A polite reminder to all parents and carers when parking on roads to drop-off/collect your students, please be mindful to not block access to local homeowners' driveways; not to park on double-yellow/yellow zig zag lines or to block the roads. This would be appreciated and would help ensure students can cross roads safely.

ParentMail Accounts

We respectfully request all parents and carers regularly check their student's dinner money balances to ensure they are in credit.

At peak times, around mid-morning, it can take up to 2 hours for the monies to show on the account.

Therefore, if you need to top them up, please allow time for these to be processed, we have found topping up in the evenings to be the quickest way to add monies to the account.



SEND Guide for Parent Carers

A quick and easy guide for parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Click [here](#) to access the guide.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS FOR YEARS 7, 9 and 11

Vancols Photographers are pleased to confirm that the School Photographs are ready to view using the QR code on your proof card.

If you have already scanned the QR code on the Proof and registered you will receive an auto email notification.

If you have not done it yet, don't panic, you can still view by scanning the QR code on your Proof and following the instructions.

If by chance you have not received your Proof or it has been lost you can call Vancols Parent Line on 01206 273711. For individual photographs you will need the pupil's admission number from the school database. Please place orders by 11 October 2023.

Information

Household Support Fund - applications open

Reading residents on low incomes, who may be struggling with the cost of living, can now apply for financial aid from RBC's Household Support Fund. Priority will be given to low-income households who are at higher risk of falling into crisis. Successful applicants will receive an initial payment of £125, although this is subject to change depending on demand.

Householders can apply for support on the council's website at: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/housing/money-matters/household-support-fund/>

Year 7

Thank you to all Year 7s who volunteered to help at Open Evening last night. It was a great team effort. A special mention to Connie Hasell (7G) and Jasper Gilchrist (7K) for delivering a well received speech to all the prospective parents/carers and students.

Mrs S Bonnett

Year 10 Sporting News

Year 10 Boys Football Team

The Year 10 Boys Football Team were knocked out of the National Cup against Cardinal Wiseman School. It was a scrappy match, but the boys were the better team throughout the game although could not convert their chances into goals. A joint man of the match performance from Rio Robinson, who came on at half time and put in a fantastic performance, scoring to put us level and an outstanding solo goal from Aubin Smith making the game 2-2, which ultimately took the game to penalties. Tommy Veal, our other man of the match, made 2 outstanding saves, especially the one at the end which kept us in the game. Unfortunately, the boys lost 5-4 on penalties despite dominating the game; football can be a cruel game sometimes. Great effort boys!



GROW YOUR AMBITION

Join an exciting programme that will make a difference to you and your community. 48 hours of activities across three experiences.

Boost your confidence / Meet new friends / Be a force for good.

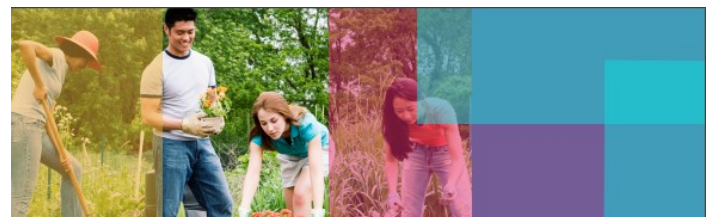
These experiences are open to all Year 11 students.

Join Here



FREE NCS Programme (Grow your Ambition)

Beginning Tuesday, 24 October and running throughout the academic year across several locations.



Grow Your Ambition

Aged 16 or 17 and want to grow your strengths?

Take part in one of our local NCS experiences across the South East. Experiences are free and last 48 hours over 9 to 12 months and you'll get the chance to gain confidence, learn skills employers are looking for, make a difference in your local community - all while having fun and meeting new people. And the best thing?

Taking part in an NCS local community experiences won't cost you a thing.

Experience 1. Grow Your Life Skills

Take part in fun-filled activities that'll push you outside of your comfort zone and help you connect with your inner determination and confidence. All while meeting a whole new set of mates!

Experience 2. Grow Your Employability

Join a series of exciting workshops where you'll learn a load of new skills to get you ready for the world of work — from leadership activities to learning all about how to succeed in business.

Experience 3 Grow Your Community

Join a series of exciting workshops where you'll learn a load of new skills to get you ready for the world of work — from leadership activities to learning all about how to succeed in business.

www.personalbesteducation.com/ncs
01794 510225



Berkshire Horseshoe Lake Programme - Berkshire

In partnership with Personal Best Education, students are invited to participate in the NCS Grow Your Ambition Programme. This programme offers a range of experiences for young people that supports them to become world-ready and work-ready through growing their confidence, independence, and skills; connecting them with people from all walks of life; and empowering them to make a difference in their communities and wider society.

Experiences

Experience 1: Grow Your Skills (24th, 25th & 26th October 2023)

Young people will participate in a variety of fun and engaging activities such as Paddleboarding, Climbing Wall, Life Skills, Employability Workshops, Sailing and Fire lighting at Horseshoe Lake, GU47 8JW.

Experience 2: Grow Your Employability (19th, 20th, 21st December 2023)

A series of exciting workshops where you'll learn a load of new skills to get you ready for the world of work. From leadership activities and learning all about how to succeed in business.

Experience 3: Grow Your Community (13th, 14th, 15th February 2024)

Come together with other young people to build a greater awareness of challenges faced by local communities and improve your understanding of how to make a difference that will have a real impact in your local community.

This programme is free of charge, fully funded by NCS, for all participants aged 16-17 years.

To sign-up, please click on the following link:

[Sign Up— NCS Grow Your Ambition, powered by
Personal Best Education](#)

Personal Best Education

National Citizen Service Trust is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter and established to shape, support, champion and lead a thriving National Citizen Service.

National Citizen Service Trust is registered in England and Wales with Royal Charter Body number RC000894.
VAT Number: GB 413 5896 83



Wednesday 18 October 2023

3.30pm-4.30pm

Online Event

Chaired by Dr Andy Love from Highdown School, winner of the RSB School Biology Teacher of the Year award.



An event for students aged 10-18 to hear what experts do in the fascinating world of neuroscience, ecological monitoring and biomimetic design.

Chaired by Dr Andy Love, we will hear from experts including:

- Samantha Haque from the University of Bristol on Neuroscience and the brain
- Helen Mylne from the University of York on Ecological monitoring of elephants in Africa
- Dr Parvez Alam FRSB from the University of Edinburgh on Biomimetic design

This will be followed by a Q&A providing the opportunity to put questions to the panel and discover how their science really works.

This event is free to attend and advanced registration is essential through the ticket link below.

<https://www.rsb.org.uk/index.php/events/upcoming-rsb-events>

Stars of the Week

7C Mya Farrell

7D Emily Zachariadis

7E Smruti Gadre

7F Ethan Lunnon

7G Phoebe Hinchmore

7H Edward McAdden-Evans

7J Jacob He

7K Evie Webster

7L Lara Newton

8C Oscar McQuillan

8D Imogen Coyne

8E Lucas Griffin

8F Mikano Lovelock

8G Ava Smith

8H Jada Stockwell

8J Theo Kniep

8K Ellie Naylor

8L Isla Neal

9C Georgie Barnbrook

9D Brooke Elton

9E Katy He

9F Paddy Brazil

9G Holly Parr

9H John Vasilakos

9J Harry Lotery

9K Lily Gander

9L Samuel Franklin

Miss Robinson's Bonus:

9K Maisy Hawkins

10C Alice Critchfield

10D Amir Karimi

10E Kathleen Gordon

10F Therene Kejang

10G Eva McCarthy

10H Roshni Taylor

10J Torhin Scott

10K Shlok Varma

10L Milo Nanayakkara

11C Luke Seaman

11D Emmi Tong

11E Sophia Ng

11F Annabel Moore

11G Emily Taylor

11H Paulina Miskufova

11J Emily Baxter

11K Charlie Gomm

11L Poppy Mulroy

11M Alfie Gill

Numeracy Puzzle

- As a prize for good behaviour, you ask your parents for something simple.
- A chessboard (with 64 squares).
- On the first square you ask for 1p, and then on the second square they should put 2p, and on the next square 4p, and the next 8p, then 16p, then 32p.
- What is the pattern?
- How many squares until you have at least £10
- How many squares till you get £100?
- How much is the prize worth?

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL PTA



DISCO

Friday 3rd November 2023
MAIN HALL

YEARS 7 AND 8
6:30 - 8PM

PRICE £4 ONLINE (closes 29th Oct) £5 on the door

BUY TICKETS: www.pta-events.co.uk/highdown
BRING CASH FOR TUCK SHOP

All queries to highdown_pta@outlook.com



The popular annual disco is a great chance for students in Years 7 and 8 to have fun with their friends and make new ones.

DJ, disco lights, and a tuck shop (students must bring cash if they'd like to purchase anything).

Online ticket sales close at midnight Sunday 29th of October. Tickets can be bought at the door for £5.

The PTA are delighted to announce they have a new committee:

Chair: Joanna Morris
Vice Chair: Alisa Scott
Treasurer: Emma Neal
Secretary: Eleanor Morris
Communications Officer: Katy Edwards

The PTA are always looking for helpers, support and ideas.

If parents would like to get involved please email highdown_PTA@outlook.com.

The PTA would also like to pass on its thanks & gratitude to the amazing outgoing committee:

Laura Harmsworth	Chair
Hayley Rumble	Treasurer
Alex Humphreys	Secretary

Learning Support Assistant

Full time, term time only plus 2 staff training days, 8.30am-3.15pm

(NJC P3-4) Actual salary £14,968pa

Part time hours would be considered

You will need a high level of interpersonal skills, be well motivated and enthusiastic about working alongside young people. You will also have an excellent standard of literacy and numeracy. Funding is available for further training to obtain Qualified Teacher Status.

For more information please click [here](#).

Examinations Invigilator

£10.79 per hour, Flexible hours

We are looking to expand our team of invigilators to support the running of internal and external examinations.

You should enjoy working as part of a team and an interest in working in a school is essential. This will ideally suit responsible, punctual, calm, organised and approachable individuals. Full training will be provided.

Full details and an application form can be accessed via our [website](#).

Design and Technology Technician

NJC Point 5-6, £7837 (actual salary)

16 hours per week (term time only) or full time considered to include some site duties.

We will be looking to appoint a hard-working, committed and friendly Technician to join our Design and Technology Department. You will provide general support to the Curriculum Leader and other members of the team. Experience of working in a similar role is desirable.

Full details and an application form can be accessed via our [website](#).

Thursday 16
November
2023
6pm-8pm

Highdown Careers Fair

Can you help?

We are delighted to announce the return of our annual Careers Fair for students in Years 9-13, and their families. The fair is on Thursday, 16 November from 6pm-8pm.

Further details will be sent nearer the time, however we are, at the moment, looking for companies to attend the Careers Fair to meet with students and talk about their organisation/industry, what routes are taken to get into the industry, what it is like to work in that industry, etc. It is also a fantastic opportunity for companies to advertise any Apprenticeships they may have!

If you, someone you know, or the organisation you work for would like to book a stand at this event please fill in this form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/s0Jk4gzd8D>

or contact careers@highdown.reading.sch.uk

You can also scan this QR code which will take you to the form.



Are you in Year 12 and an Aspiring Medic?

In2MedSchool is a registered Charity which supports aspiring medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are inviting students at Highdown to sign up for our **FREE MEDIC MENTORING** scheme. So far, we have around 2,400 mentors, all of which are doctors/medical students who have been through the application cycle and will do their best to help students with their application. All our mentors have agreed to follow our Code of Conduct, which can be found on our [website](#).

To apply click here: <https://bit.ly/I2MS-Mentee>

Whilst we primarily offer a mentoring service, we also run events open to **all** students who would like to learn more about **life as a doctor/medical student, our tips and tricks, UCAT/BMAT/exam support and much more**. You can find more information on our website: www.in2medschool.com.



FREE ART WORKSHOPS

As part of The Big Draw Festival 2023, this year **New Directions College** will be running two fun packed days of Art Workshops for **EVERYONE** across two venues. No experience necessary, just come along and explore drawing in a fun and playful way.

Monday 23rd October at New Directions College

10am- 12pm & 12.30-2.30pm

Stimulate your senses through Musical Marks, Touch Drawings and much more.

Booking essential, enrol online:

www.newdirectionsreading.ac.uk/the-big-draw-festival-2023/

or via the QR code:

Tuesday 24th October at Reading Museum

10am to 3pm

Create Collage Monster Hybrid Drawings

Drop in sessions, no booking necessary.

**These events are FREE for all the family,
Under 16's must be accompanied by an adult.**



Made possible with
Heritage Fund



**www.newdirectionsreading.ac.uk - Tel: 0345 842 0012
330 Northumberland Avenue, Reading RG2 8DH**



READING PARENT CARERS: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)?

Complete our survey by 1st November 2023 for a chance to win one of 5 £20 Amazon vouchers. The link and QR code are below.

The anonymised results will be shared with Reading's SEND Strategy Group, including education, health and social care managers

<https://forms.gle/SMYFnyjahW165yr67>



07516 185380
fran@readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Answer to Numeracy Puzzle

- Answer: 9 squares gives you £10.23
 - Answer: 13 squares takes you up to £163.83
 - Answer: The prize is worth: £ 36,893,4881,474,191,039.99
- When you double numbers, they get big very quickly!

Happy Weekend!