



ASPIRATION



RESPECT



EXCELLENCE

The weekly newsletter of Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre

w/c 16 October 2023 Week A



Following our busy Open Evening last week, we have been welcoming families and prospective Year 7 students to Highdown every morning this week for tours of the school. This is a really great way of getting to see the school in action and get a sense of our culture and ethos. It was lovely to receive such positive feedback from families at the end of their tours. After half term, on Thursday, 2 November, we move to thinking about our Year 11 students' progression to post-16 study, with our Sixth Form Subject Fair. Please do book your tickets for one of the time slots still available to come and find out more about the wide range of courses we have on offer.

This week was our first House Week of the year, when students joined their peers from across the year groups to think about community. As part of the week, we collectively participated in our 'Great Litter Pick'. I joined Year 9 on Wednesday afternoon to help keep our wonderful site as clean and tidy as possible. Thank you to everyone for helping and taking their role so seriously.

It's been a joy, as always, to visit lessons this week, to see students so engaged and proactive in their learning, as well as being really challenged in their thinking. Of course, it's not all about the learning in the classroom! We've had a number of extra-curricular activities going on this week too. My thanks to the Performing Arts Team for organising, and to students performing in the Rock and Pop Concert and congratulations to our Under-14s Hockey Team for their performance in the County Plate Competition. We've also had some visits this week for our Computer Scientists going to EGX 2023 in London, and some students going to Williams Formula 1 Racing for the day.

Wishing families, a relaxing weekend ahead!

Mr M Grantham, Head of School

HOUSE POINTS

Mapledurham	26895
Grove	26412
Rosehill	28255
Caversham	26746

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Term 1

All Week:

Mon 16 Oct:	Restart a Heart Day Y10 'County Lines' Performance
Tue 17 Oct:	Open Morning
Wed 18 Oct:	University Admission Tests Y10 Learning Conference: A New Adventure
Thurs 19 Oct:	University Admission Tests Y12 Geography Reading Fieldwork Y7 Mentor Evening
Fri 20 Oct:	University Admission Tests End of Term 1



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 apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit nationalonline.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH UPSETTING CONTENT

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Raising children in the digital age seems to be getting tougher, with the world currently experiencing so many uncertainties. From climate change to the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Israel, right now children across the globe can scarcely go online without being exposed to unsettling stories, images and ideas. Reassuring a concerned child can be difficult, especially when bad news feels omnipresent. We've put together some advice to help you in discussing upsetting events with young ones.

1 FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD KNOWS

There are many ways that children are exposed to upsetting content in the media, both online and offline. Before swamping your child with information, find out what they know already. Show them you're interested in what they have to say, practice active listening and try to gauge how much your child has been impacted by what they've seen.



2 RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Starting a conversation about upsetting content probably isn't the best idea when your child is studying for an exam or about to go to bed. Choose a time when they're relaxed and open to talking, to make sure you have their full attention. Remember, these conversations can become emotional, so choose somewhere your child feels safe and comfortable.



3 KEEP IT AGE APPROPRIATE

With younger children, try and keep the conversation more general and avoid leading questions and complex detail. You can go slightly deeper into the specifics with young teenagers but keep monitoring their emotional response. With older teens, you can be more open about the realities and consequences of what's happening – but again, do stay aware of their emotional state.



4 EMPHASISE HOPE

Upsetting content can make anyone feel angry, scared, sad or overwhelmed. Try to find stories of hope, generosity and strength related to the content you're discussing. Children often feel reassured when they know they can do something to help, so encourage your child's sense of control through activities which make them feel they're positively impacting the events they're concerned about.



5 MONITOR REACTIONS

All children react differently, of course, and young people might not directly say that they're scared, angry, anxious, confused or uncomfortable. Emotional reactions are natural when discussing upsetting topics, so take note of your child's body language and reactions. Allow them to express their feelings in a non-judgmental space and try to stay mindful of how they might be feeling.



6 CONSIDER YOUR OWN EMOTIONS

It's not only young people who find upsetting news difficult to process: adults also have to deal with strong emotions in moments of stress. Children develop coping strategies by mirroring those around them, so staying on top of how you appear to be regulating your emotion on the outside is important for supporting your child through worrying times.



7 SET LIMITS

Managing screen-time and content can be difficult even in normal circumstances, but especially in unusual or stressful periods (at the start of the pandemic, for example). It's virtually impossible to keep children away from upsetting content completely, but it's important to try to limit exposure by using parental controls, talking about the dangers of harmful content and enforcing screen-time limits.



8 TAKE THINGS SLOWLY

Try not to overwhelm your child with information all at once; instead, take the discussion one step at a time. You could make the first conversation a simple introduction to a potentially upsetting subject and then wait until your child is ready to talk again. Opening the door to the conversation and demonstrating that your child can talk to you about this type of issue is a vital first step.



9 ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Online, troubling images, posts, videos and stories are shared across multiple platforms, many of which your child might access. Even if the content is actually inappropriate, encourage your child to discuss what they saw instead of being angry at them for seeing it. Children are still learning that not everything online is accurate – you want to be their ultimate source of information, not their device.



10 FIND A BALANCE

There's often a tremendous compulsion to stay right up to date with events. Our phones frequently send us push notifications urging us to read the latest article or view the most recent video on social media. It's essential to remind your child that it's healthy to take regular breaks, and to focus on positive events instead of 'doomscrolling' and risking becoming overwhelmed by bad news.



11 BUILD RESILIENCE

News has never been more accessible. While our instinct may be to shield children from upsetting stories, it's important that they're equipped with the tools to manage this content when they are exposed to it. Talk about upsetting content more generally with your child and emphasise that they can always tell you or a trusted adult if something they see makes them feel uneasy.



12 IDENTIFY HELP

It's hugely important that children know where to find support if they encounter upsetting content online. Encourage them to open up to an adult that they trust, and make sure they're aware of who their trusted adults are. It is essential that children understand that they're not alone, and that help is available if and when they need it.



Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is the director of FaceUp South Africa, which is a reporting system that is currently being used by schools and companies to fight bullying around the world. FaceUp helps give a voice to bystanders by encouraging them to speak up and get the help they not only want but need.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-61049002> | <https://www.children.com/blog/supporting-your-child-with-upsetting-content/> | <https://www.unicef.org/press/en/2022/04/22/how-to-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>



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NOS
National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

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.

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/>

Lost Property

There are many items of lost property waiting to be reclaimed in the school office.

Next week all items of lost property will be on display at student reception. If your student has mislaid something, please ask them to come and have a look and reclaim their missing items. Thank you.

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.

Water Bottles

As the seasons change, we urge all our student to keep well hydrated, as we would in the summer months.

We want our students to stay well, and it is really important that we all look after our health. Please can you ensure that your students bring a water vessel to school, which they can refill and stay well hydrated throughout the school day.

Year 10 Rugby Team

Well done to the year 10 Rugby team who performed excellently in their fixtures earlier this week, drawing a game they could have so easily won with Forest school and then putting in a dominant performance against Maiden Erlegh School, Wokingham, winning by 4 tries. After a tough start against The Piggott School and Bohunt School last week, the boys have remained upbeat, trained well and it all paid off in yesterday's fixtures. All the boys played very well but a special mention goes to captain Max Negro-Halpin, Joel Fenning and man of the match Charlie Baker who only started playing in the rugby team for fun, with no intention of playing in fixtures and he was possibly one of the bravest on the pitch, going on darting runs and putting in some solid tackles.

Once again fantastic effort from all the boys in year 10!

Mr Gordon, Dr Brown and Mr Stickley

U14 County Hockey Tournament

Monday, 9 October saw the U14 Hockey Team take part in the County Hockey Tournament at Bradfield College. It was always going to be a hard tournament, as we were the only state school attending, but the squad held their own and improved throughout the day.

The best results were a 0-0 draw against both The Abbey School and Crosfields School and their biggest defeat was only a 3-0 loss against the eventual joint winners, Bradfield and Pangbourne College.

Their excellent team play, determination and resilience saw them finish 3rd in the Plate competition.

Well done to everyone in the squad; Ayan A, Isabelle B, Aishah B, Reilly B, Imogen C, Lara G-S, Imogen H, Emma K, Zoë K, Isabel L, Khyra L, Ava P and Evie S and our non traveling reserves, Katy H and Stella S.

Miss Clark



Chinese Culture Trip to The British Museum and China Town

Year 9 and Year 11 Chinese students went to London to the British Museum and China Town for their Culture Trip on Monday, 9 October 2023. Students had a great time exploring the Museum and Chinatown for Chinese Culture.



Get into the Halloween Spirit by reading a spooky story



Goosebumps 1 Creepy Creatures: Graphic Novel

Watch your back! Three of "Goosebumps" scariest monsters come alive in this howling, growling, spine-chilling comic book! The anthology contains "The Scarecrow Walks at Midnight", "The Abominable Snowman of Pasadena" and "The Werewolf of Fever Swamp".



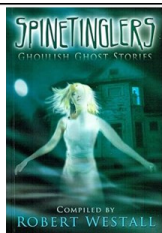
Hex Hall

In the wake of a love spell gone horribly wrong, Sophie Mercer, a sixteen-year-old witch, is shipped off to Hecate Hall, a boarding school for witches, shapeshifters and faeries. The traumas of mortal high school are nothing compared to the goings on at "Freak High."



Spinetinglers Goulish Ghost Stories

This chilling collection of ghost stories will haunt your imagination. From the ethereal beauty of 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' to the chilling horror of 'Thornley Abbey', this collection brings together a wide range of supernatural stories by top classic and contemporary writers. Prepare to be scared out of your wits!



The Hunting Ground

When Elliott and his brother, Ben, move into old and crumbling Glebe House they don't expect to find themselves sharing it with ghosts.

But soon sinister events are unfolding. An old diary reveals glimpses of the mansion's past — and of a terrible tragedy. *Winner of the Calderdale Award*



October is Black History Month

In the Hive we are honouring black people by sharing books by black authors, stories with black characters and books about famous black people. Here is a small selection of books we have in the library:

Ghost Boys A heartbreaking and powerful story about a black boy killed by a white police officer, drawing connections with real-life history, from award-winning author Jewell Parker Rhodes.



Pig Heart Boy Thirteen-year-old Cameron Joshua Kelsey has a serious heart condition, and urgently needs a transplant. He has been given hope and turned down twice. So, in desperation, Cameron's father secretly contacts Dr. Richard Bryce, a transgenics expert.



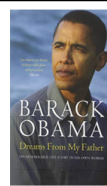
About This Boy Leon "Locksmith" Rolle is one-quarter of the phenomenally successful band Rudimental. In this book, he shares his aspirational story. With chapters on mindset, self-belief and confidence, Leon encourages you to find balance and happiness, no matter what life throws at you.



The Black Flamingo Big hearted and dizzily flamboyant, Atta's verse novel about a black gay teen reclaiming his identity as a teen artist is an outspoken triumph from the opening couplet to the last.



Barack Obama – Dreams from my Father An international bestseller which has sold over a million copies in the UK, *Dreams From My Father* is a refreshing, revealing portrait of a young man asking big questions about identity and belonging.



Kelly Holmes Kelly's Olympic diary takes you through the tension of the heats to the rituals before the race and the post-race jubilant atmosphere. A unique insight into the tremendous strength of one of our greatest athletes and the emotions that fuelled her on the track to glory.



Black Brother, Black Brother A powerful coming-of-age story about two brothers - one who presents as white, the other as Black - and the ways they are forced to navigate a world that doesn't treat them equally.



Becoming Muhammad Ali A New York Times Bestseller. From two heavy-hitters in children's literature comes a biographical novel of cultural icon Muhammad Ali.



Lewis Hamilton A simple, motivational biography of a high-profile sport star, his career, his upbringing and his involvement in sport.





Please save your boxes!

The D&T department would be grateful for donations of containers – both chocolate tubs and takeaway boxes.

Donations can be dropped off to Miss Lobo in DT3, or reception.

Thank you!




Numeracy Puzzle

Here are some sequences. What comes next in each sequence:

- a) 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 ...
- b) 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 ...
- c) 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 ...
- d) 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36 ...
- e) A, C, E, G, I, K, M ...
- f) A, E, I, M, ...
- g) J, F, M, A, M, J, J ...
- h) O, T, T, F, F, S, S, E, ...?

House Stars of the Week

CAVERSHAM HOUSE

- 
- A yellow diamond-shaped crest featuring a lion's head in profile, facing left. The word "LIONS" is written in a stylized font at the bottom right. A large, faint "S" is visible in the background.
- C1 Michael Foulkes
 - C2 Thomas Leach
 - C3 George Gealy
 - C4 Marcus Gomes Rosa
 - C5 Liam James
 - C6 Evie Sills
 - C7 Scarlett Mendham
 - C8 Ostin Malaj
 - C9 Noah Flint
 - C10 Lenny Rogers
 - C11 Megan Brooks
 - C12 Jack Bell
 - C13 Therene Kejang

GROVE HOUSE

- 
- A green diamond-shaped crest featuring a griffin standing on its hind legs, facing left. The word "GRIFFINS" is written in a stylized font at the bottom. A large, faint "S" is visible in the background.
- G1 Darcey Jones
 - G2 Sam Escott
 - G3 Sam Beauchamp
 - G4 Amelia Beard
 - G5 Phoebe Hinchmore
 - G6 Lucas Huynh
 - G7 Beau Perry
 - G8 Xavier Nath
 - G9 Amaan Mohammad
 - G10 Lara Newton and Ollie England
 - G11 Jasper Gilchrist
 - G12 Ryan Vickery
 - G13 Arjun Sandhu and Kez Mehmet

ROSEHILL HOUSE

- 
- A red diamond-shaped crest featuring a red kite in flight, facing left. The words "RED KITES" are written in a stylized font at the bottom. A large, faint "S" is visible in the background.
- R1 Valentina Robinson
 - R2 Harry Friday
 - R3 Saurav Joshi
 - R4 Béa Culetto
 - R5 Malek Istathia
 - R6 Nathan Davies
 - R7 Isabelle Bucksey
 - R8 James Bridge
 - R9 Yonatan Girdler
 - R10 Ethan Yim
 - R11 Ella Werts
 - R12 Lilian Moore
 - R13 Eason Wu

MAPLEDURHAM HOUSE

- 
- A blue diamond-shaped crest featuring a dragon standing on its hind legs, facing left. The word "DRAGONS" is written in a stylized font at the bottom. A large, faint "S" is visible in the background.
- M1 Ruby Bonnett
 - M2 Maisie Hackett
 - M3 Matti Edlind
 - M4 Sushanth Vangala
 - M5 Nicola Nadworna-Jada
 - M6 Jerome Jones
 - M7 Arthur King
 - M8 William Newbury
 - M9 Ashis Tamang
 - M10 Iryna Parickuk
 - M11 Phoebe Linthwaite-Fone
 - M12 Ben Attwood-Brown
 - M13 Connor James



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 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](#).

Leisure Attendant

Casual/part-time positions. Evenings and weekends.

Up to £10.18ph dependent on experience and qualifications.

We are seeking to appoint Leisure Attendants to join our dedicated team. You will have responsibility for supervising the use of the sports centre facilities whilst maintaining high standards of cleanliness and customer service. No previous experience is necessary as training will be provided, but an interest in fitness is an advantage.

Applications will be considered on receipt.

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.



Get your FREE university guide for parents and carers.

Success at School's University Guide 2023/24 is packed full of advice to help support your child in making the best choices for them.

Download your free copy here: [Get Your Downloadable 2023/24 Parents' University Guide \(successatschool.org\)](https://successatschool.org)

UCAS Conferences for students interested in becoming Doctors

The Get into Medicine UCAS Conference is a comprehensive guide to the medical application process for students in Years 10-12. The doctors and medical students will cover:

- Application Timelines
- How to Tactically Choose Medical Schools
- CV Building
- Personal Statements
- Medical School Interviews
- UCAT—Entrance Exams to Medical School
- Medical Leadership and Awards Programmes
- Accessing Work Experience
- Accessing Scholarships

Upcoming dates:

Saturday, 28 October

Saturday 29, October

Sunday 4 November

Format for the day:

- 9:30-10.00 Registration
- 10.00-11:00 Quick introduction to Medic Mentor, overview of the day, competition ratios, application timeline, Awards and Scholarships
- 11:00-11:15 Break
- 11.15-11.45 Introduction to the UCAS application form and entry requirements
- 11.45-12.15 Interactive CV building exercise and exclusive access to leadership, research, presentation, publication, prizes and scholarship opportunities
- 12.15-12.30 Top tips from a successful applicant (medical student)
- 12:30-12:45 Break
- 12.45-13.30 How to write the perfect personal statement
- 13.30-13.45 Break
- 13.45-14.10 Entrance exams - how to ace the UCAT
- 14.10-14.30 How to prepare for Medical School interviews
- 14.30-15.00 Top tips from a successful applicant (medical student) and next steps

Conference registration form: <https://airtable.com/appgXnyzN5ZD9lw6/shry7MZYttMGPjvO>

One booking = one booking for a student + their parent/carer.

Students will be awarded a certificate of attendance which can be listed on their Medical School UCAS applications for 'activities that support higher education'.

Please click the link below to read our student reviews:

<https://medicmentor.org/successful-student-journeys-reviews/>

Answer to Numeracy Puzzle

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| A) 12,14,16 - Even numbers | E) O, Q - Miss every other letter |
| B) 32, 63 - Doubling | F) Q, U - Miss 3 letters |
| C) 21,34- Add the last two | G) A, S - Months of year |
| D) 49, 6 - Square Numbers | H) N, T - First letters of counting numbers |



READING ROCKS™

OCT 2023

HALF TERM INSPIRATION

READING ROCKS IS THE ULTIMATE WHAT'S ON GUIDE FOR FAMILIES TO FIND THINGS TO DO IN THE LOCAL AREA

WWW.READING-ROCKS.CO.UK

FIND HALF TERM FUN AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON



HALF TERM INSPIRATION

With the October half term holiday not far away visit Reading Rocks to discover local events, places to visit, playgrounds, day trip ideas, children's classes, kids parties, holiday clubs and outdoor spaces - it's a one stop shop for things to do in the local area! Our Halloween Guide, Half Term Button and Holiday Guides are out NOW!

[Visit the website and see for yourself!](http://WWW.READING-ROCKS.CO.UK)

HALLOWEEN EVENTS

There are lots of local events happening in Reading this October Half Term. Here are some we recommend:

- Wasing Pumpkin Event (pumpkin picking, woodland trail and NEW maize maze)
- Reading town centre Halloween Trail (get your map from Broad Street Mall)
- Halloween fun at Beale Wildlife Park

For all the details and many more events click [here](#).



FOLLOW US AND JOIN THE COMMUNITY!

There are thousands of local parents following us Social Media and we'd love for you to join in! Just search Reading Rocks and like our page!

www.reading-rocks.co.uk





READING ROCKS™

OCT 2023

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WWW.READING-ROCKS.CO.UK

SHINFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

INVITES YOU TO

FRIDAY FUNDAY

FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2023

SCHOOL GREEN CENTRE



POP-UP SOFT PLAY & OTHER ACTIVITIES

Parents/careers need to supervise their own children at all times

WWW.SHINFIELDPARISH.COUNCIL

FRIDAY FUNDAY

The Friday Funday was an absolute hit this summer hols and for one Friday only its back this October half term! Hosted at School Green in Shinfield. This event is totally FREE and there is lots of different activities ranging from inflatables, arts and craft and face painting. Lots of fun for all the family.

[Visit the website and see for yourself!](http://WWW.SHINFIELDPARISH.COUNCIL)



There is a lot of spooky fun happening at GolfPlex this October half term. Head out on to a spooky Bear Mountain dress up to be in with a chance of winning a prize. There are also two spooky parties taking place one for children and one for adults. Click [here](#) for all the info.

FOLLOW US AND JOIN THE COMMUNITY!

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www.reading-rocks.co.uk

