



The weekly newsletter of
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre



ASPIRATION



RESPECT



EXCELLENCE

w/c 13 May 2024 Week A

And we are off! Year 11 students have now sat their first GCSE examination, and some already have two or three under their belt. We are really confident that their hard work, great readiness to learn, and preparation through their GCSEs will result in fantastic outcomes this Summer. We wish them well over the coming weeks. A reminder that students are expected to attend all lessons until their final exam in each subject.

Earlier in the week, it was time for our annual Year 11 Celebration Event, an opportunity for the entire year group to get together one more time, to sign each other's shirts, receive their yearbook and hoodies, and reflect on their time together as a community. The sun was out for us and our historic Walled Garden provided us with a splendid backdrop to the event. As I write, the Walled Garden gets prepared for its second important celebration of the week, this time for Year 13 students who are joining together for their Garden Party. We wish them well too, as their A-Level examinations start next week.



Our assemblies this week have been based on the theme of film and media, with some exploring social media. Parents/Carers can find a range of advice and guidance on our Online Safety page of the school website [HERE](#).

Parents/carers can also sign up, for free, to our National College portal to access a wide range of information, advice and guidance about managing online risks [HERE](#).

Wishing families a great weekend ahead.

M A Grantham
 Head of School

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Mon 13 May	A Level Exams Begin
Tues 14 May	HPV Vaccinations for Year 8
Weds 15 May	National Numeracy Day
Fri 17 May	Athletics Town Champs



HOUSE POINTS

Mapledurham	130,416
Grove	130,142
Rosehill	130,911
Caversham	133,370



Follow us

INFORMATION

Problems with Class Charts

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



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>.

Water Bottles / Pollen Season

Please ensure your students have a water bottle in school with them at all times.



Hay fever season is also underway. Please encourage your students to take their medication at home before they leave for school. We are not able to supply antihistamines at school.

[SEND Local Offer Newsletter Spring 2024](#)

Could you be entitled to Free School Meals? (FSM)

You can find more details about FSM and download an application form on our [website](#).

If you need any support with your application, please contact us at finance@highdown.reading.sch.uk or call 0118 9015 809.

When completed, please return your application to the email address above or to the school office for the attention of the Finance Department.



See what the Gallery are cooking up for us this term by viewing their menus on the school website [HERE](#)



Wellbeing

self-esteem underpins all that we do



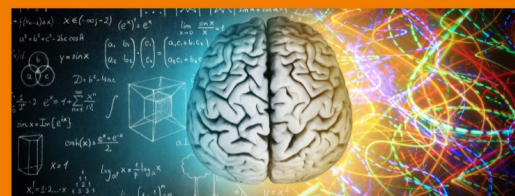
Raising Self-Esteem

Jane Keyworth gives a two-hour online talk

Tuesday 21st May 7-9pm

Book Online £24 facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Are you aware of teenage brain development and how it impacts on behaviour?



Understanding the Teenage Brain

"Every parent and teacher should hear this...."

Mr Mead, Headteacher at Lytchett Minster School, Dorset

Two-hour online talk **20th May 7-9pm**

Book Now £24

facefamilyadvice.co.uk

YEAR 11 CELEBRATORY ASSEMBLY



On Wednesday, we saw the Year 11s come together as a whole year group to take part in a celebratory assembly. Some students were presented trophies for awards, nominated by their peers, such as “Most likely to become Prime Minister”, they all enjoyed iced lollies, a display of old school photos and a heartfelt and fun send off from Head of Year, and event organiser, Miss Clark. This was also an opportunity for the traditional shirt-signing and students enjoyed looking through their yearbooks and trying on their new leavers hoodies for size.



The event, held in the walled garden, was really enjoyable with a lovely atmosphere, it is always great to see our young people enjoying themselves and it was particularly special as it was the last opportunity to relax as a year group before their GCSEs fully get underway.



Photos from the event can be accessed by Year 11 students via teams, a link has been sent out via classcharts, so any images can be downloaded for free as additional keepsakes.



“The Year 11s really have been a fantastic year group and I wish them all the best in their upcoming GCSEs.” - **Miss Clark**, Head of Year 11



RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Top tips for helping your child succeed in their learning

As the Year 11 and Year 13 summer exams approach, you may be wondering what you can do to help your child succeed.

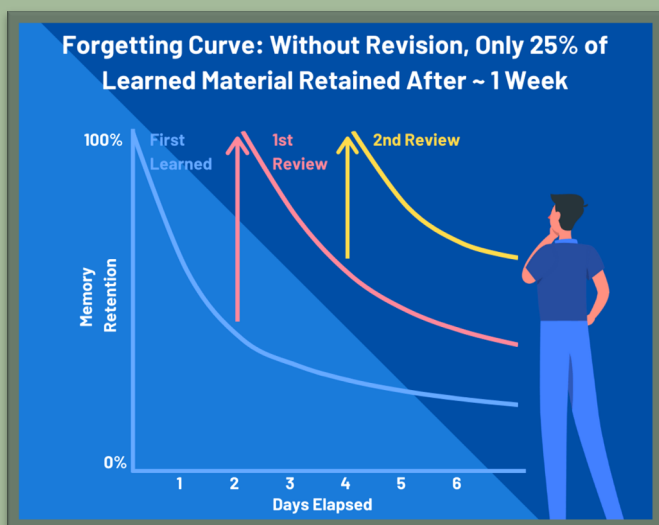
Last week's newsletter had links to advice and guidance about spacing and interleaving revision.

This week I'd like to share the scientific findings about the benefits of retrieval practice. Low stakes quizzing and quick testing to retrieve revised information ensures that there is continual exposure to information and that connections are made, learning is consolidated, and the information is less likely to be forgotten.

The image of the 'forgetting curve' highlights how you may forget something but a quick retrieval quiz at home or in school can ensure the thoughts and ideas are renewed. Each time you retrieve information, the long-term effect is that it takes longer to forget.

So why not quiz your young person at home about what they have been learning and help them keep that information in their long term memory.

Finally, here is a short series of study hacks you may be interested in so you can help your child with their revision and learning: [HERE](#).



COMPETITION!!

NO PLACE LIKE HOME – ART AND POETRY COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLS

LET'S BUILD EMPATHY

Sanctuary Foundation is proud to present an exciting new art and poetry competition that invites students from years 3-13 to reflect on what life is like for the 43.3 million children around the world who are displaced. Schools should digitally submit their top 3 pieces in each category.

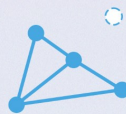
Students can create either a piece of artwork or a piece of poetry illustrating their empathy with or experience of being separated from the place they call home. These creations will be judged by a fantastic panel of celebrities, refugees, and journalists with the top 30 entries going on display in The British Library during National Refugee Week (17th-21st June 2024). They will also be featured in a special national online assembly, in the press and elsewhere. The prize ceremony will be at the British Library on Friday 21st June 2024.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

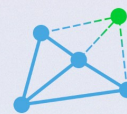
The Benefits of Retrieval Practice

by @Inner_Drive | innerdrive.co.uk

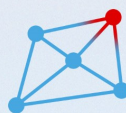
1. Identifies gaps in knowledge



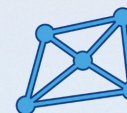
2. Makes connections



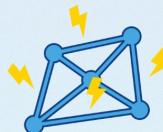
3. Checks for misunderstandings



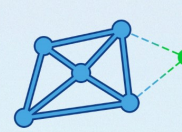
4. Strengthens connections



5. Makes connections robust under pressure and stress



6. Makes it easier to learn new things



LOCAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANNOUNCING OUR BRAND NEW CHRISTMAS SHOW - THE SNOW QUEEN

Following on from the sell out success of It's A Wonderful Life, Potted Panto and A Christmas Carol we can't wait to be able to welcome you back for a traditional Reading Rep Christmas!

SPLIT THE COST OF YOUR TICKET!

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our productions, and we don't want money to be a barrier to this. This year we're delighted to introduce a Split Ticket System, helping you pay for your Christmas tickets in two instalments.

If you would like to make use of our Split Ticketing System you must call our Box Office team on 0118 370 2620 or [complete this form](#) in order to receive a call back.

- Our Split Ticketing System will be available from Friday 3 May 2024.
- To take part in this offer you need to have contacted us by 31 July 2024. We will take a payment of 50% of the total of your tickets, with a total minimum spend of £30. Your second payment must be made in the w/c 30 September 2024, when we will contact all bookers to process the remaining balance.

If the remaining balance is not paid by 4 October 2024, your tickets will be released and we will credit your account to the sum of your first payment. Refunds will not be issued.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

YOUNG CARERS AT HIGHDOWN

YOUNG CARERS AT HIGHDOWN

WHO ARE YOUNG CARERS?

- Are you under the age of 18?
- Do you help look after someone?
- They could be ill, elderly, have a learning or physical disability, substance or alcohol misuse or a mental health condition.

WHAT MIGHT A YOUNG CARER DO?

- You may help with:
- Cleaning, cooking, shopping
 - Managing medicines or money
 - Providing personal care
 - Supporting someone emotionally or physically
 - Helping someone communicate

If you help look after someone, you may be a young carer. We are here to help. Please speak with your Head Of Achievement or contact:



JENNA HOLDER
YOUNG CARERS
CHAMPION



MR CLAWSON
ASSISTANT
HEADTEACHER

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

- One-to-One Mentoring
- Star Centre Drop In at break and lunch times
- Referrals to No.5 Counselling
- Referrals to School Nurse Service
- Referrals to Excellence Club (homework support)
- Young Carers Forum

CONTACT US

From your school email address ONLY, please email:
star@highdown.reading.sch.uk

VISIT US

Visit the Star Centre during break or lunch time for more information about being a young carer.

PROMWEAR SALES

Come and pick up a beautiful bargain

PROMWEAR Sale

at
Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge
Sonning Common, RG4 9LN

150 prom dresses in stock from £5-£70
Dress sizes 4-22 with 8 changing rooms
Plus shoes, accessories and suits
Cash and card accepted

SATURDAY 20 APRIL
SATURDAY 11 MAY
SATURDAY 08 JUNE
FROM 10AM-1PM

All funds raised go to Chiltern Edge School Association (CESA)

Sport In Mind

FUNDED BY **WIND**

16 OR 17? PASSIONATE ABOUT SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

WANT TO BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE, INDEPENDENCE AND LEARN NEW SKILLS TO GET YOU WORK READY?

ACCREDITED YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME
GAIN SKILLS THROUGH...

- COMPLETE AN ONLINE COACHING ACCREDITATION
- VOLUNTEER AT EVENTS, HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES AND WORKSHOPS
- SPORTS DEVELOPMENT, ADMIN AND OPERATIONS
- VOLUNTEERING AT SPORT IN MIND SESSIONS.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: YOUTH@SPORTINMIND.ORG
SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP TODAY!

Reading FREE!

Sport In Mind
Registered Charity 1161323

Youth Activities for Mental Wellbeing

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

Reading Sessions (Summer term)

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

Sessions restart from Monday 15th April and run weekly excluding school holidays

[@sportinmind](https://www.facebook.com/sportinmind) | info@sportinmind.org | www.sportinmind.org | 01189479762

Working in partnership with

READING CANOE CLUB

LEARN TO KAYAK WITH OUR JUNIOR BEGINNER COURSES

MAY BEGINNER COURSES BOOKING NOW

These 5-week courses, one session per week, are for 10-16 year olds. Each session is an hour long and children will get to try all sorts of boats and skills.

Choose from:

- Course 1: Tuesdays, 14th May, 21st May, 4th June, 11th June, 18th June, 4.30-5.30pm
- Course 2: Wednesdays, 15th May, 22nd May, 5th June, 12th June, 19th June, 4-6pm
- Course 3: Thursdays, 16th May, 23rd May, 6th June, 13th June, 20th June, 5.30-6.30pm

The cost of the course is £60 for the 5 sessions. Maximum 8 places per course.

Go to our website: reading-canoe.org.uk/beginners/junior-novice-introductory-courses

Reading Canoe Club, The Warren, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TH

Emmer Green 5 & 10k & Mini Oak Challenge 2024

Sunday 30th June 2024 - 10am

5k The 5 & 10k runs follow a multi-terrain course along quiet country lanes and footpaths with chip timing.

10k

Mini Oak

ENTRY

- 10k: £20 (£23 on day)
- 5k: £15 (£19 on day)
- Mini-Oak: £7.50 (includes race E-shirt)

Mini-Oak Challenge
Children run (or walk) the school playing field as many times as they like (up to 33 laps).

Scan the QR code for more information and to register or go to:

emmergreen10k.org.uk

Thank you to our proud sponsors

Raising funds for Emmer Green Primary School

Kayak on the River!
Come and try it out!

Reading Canoe Club

Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th May

reading-canoe.org.uk/taster

Taster Sessions
just £5 per child

Sessions times each day:
10-11.15am
11.45-1pm
1.45-3pm

Ages 9-16 years
10 places per session
Booking essential

To book a place, scan the QR code below or go to reading-canoe.org.uk/taster and fill in the form.



Stars of the Week

Year 8

8C - Tom Clark

8D - Simion Kacesov

8E - Holly Sarjeant

8F - Brandon Clark

8G - Giselle Kwok

8H - Leo Scanlan

8J - Lily Hunter

8K - Tula Matthews

8L - Harrison Sturk

Year 9

9C - Jonas Young

9D - Alvin Lionel

9E - Matteo Bellofatto

9F - Charlie Seymour

9G - Khyra Lenon

9H - Fletcher Bramley

9J - Hannah Drury

9K - Luke Haigh

9L - Olivia Adeyeba

Miss Robinson's Bonus - Lexi Godsell



Understanding Autism & Anxiety Workshop – 19/06/24, 9.30 - 12.00pm. Free online session via MS Teams. For parents/carers of Reading pupils ages 6 -16.

A 2.5 hour workshop targeted towards parents/carers of children with a diagnosis of autism or those who may be awaiting a diagnosis. It looks at common drivers for anxiety in those with autism, especially in relation to coping with uncertainty and not knowing what might happen. The workshop gives parents a chance to share their experiences and to learn strategies and approaches to manage anxious feelings.

To book or for more information email Wilma.Williams@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Helping your Child with Fears and Worries Workshop – 24/06/24. 9.30 – 12.00pm Free online session via MS Teams. Teaches parents and carers Cognitive Behavioural Strategies to help children to overcome their anxiety.

The approaches in the workshop are designed to help with “irrational” fears, for example, specific phobias (dogs, school phobia etc...), separation anxiety, generalised anxiety.


The workshop is not designed for children:

- With a diagnosis of autism or significant social communication difficulties
- Who are pre-verbal
- Whose anxiety is due to trauma (e.g.: domestic violence), PTSD, bereavement, sensory overload

To book or for more information email

Wilma.Williams@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Details of all our courses across this academic year for parents/carers can be found here: <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/schools/educational-psychology-service-pc/>



COFFEE EVENING FOR PARENTS AND CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

THURSDAY, 16TH MAY 2024

6.30 PM – 8.30 PM

Venue: RISC, 35-39 London St, Reading RG1 4PS

A chance to meet other parents and talk to service providers.



- Louise Mole, the Team Manager of the Learning Disabilities and Autism (LDA) Team in Adult Social Care and
- Claire Thomas, the Senior Educational Psychologist for Reading's Mental Health Support Team

will attend to hear your views on local services and answer any questions.


Booking is essential, fran@readingfamiliesforum.co.uk Mobile: 07516 185380.

A few car parking spaces at rear of the building subject to availability. Venue is walkable from most bus routes, nearest parking is Queens Road or Oracle, or metered parking on London Road.

An on-line link is available if you cannot attend in person.

www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Find us on Facebook 

GAMING



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HELLDIVERS 2

PEGI 18 RATING

FRUSTRATION TRIGGER

LACK OF ACCESS

VOICE CHAT AND MESSAGING

IN-GAME PURCHASES

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ADVICE FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS

- GIVE IT A GO FIRST**
- SET EXPECTATIONS**
- CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES**
- KEEP AN EYE ON PAYMENTS**
- MONITOR COMMUNICATION & ADJUST SETTINGS**

Meet Our Expert

Wake Up Wednesday

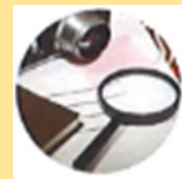
The National College

Use of this guide is at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 08.05.2024

LIBRARY RECOMMENDATIONS

To honour Sherlock Holmes Day which is actually Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's birthday, coming up on 22 May, we are looking at book recommendations from the Mystery & Crime section in the Hive.

Mystery & Crime books have this sticker on their spine



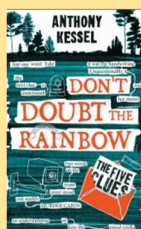
eBooks and Audiobooks are available to all Highdowners at:

<https://www.highdown.reading.sch.uk/library>

<https://highdown.eplatform.co/>

The Five Clues – Anthony Kessel

Walking back from her mother's grave, 13-year-old Edie Marble finds a note in a pocket of the coat that she hasn't worn since the day, a year ago, when she received the awful news of her mother's death. The note is from her mother, who had become fearful for her life after receiving death threats. She trusts only Edie - and has laid a trail of clues for Edie to find which will help her to shed light on the violation and uncover the mystery around her death.



The Good Thieves – Katherine Rundell

Vita set her jaw, and nodded at New York City in greeting, as a boxer greets an opponent before a fight. Fresh off the boat from England, Vita Marlowe has a job to do. Her beloved grandfather Jack has been cheated out of his home and possessions by a notorious conman with Mafia connections. Seeing Jack's spirit is broken, Vita is desperate to make him happy again, so she devises a plan to outwit his enemies and recover his home.



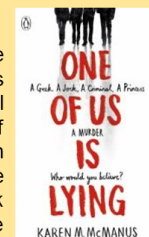
Thieves Gambit – Kayvion Lewis

Challenge: Join the Thieves' Gambit, a cut-throat competition to crown the world's greatest thief Rule 1: Never fall in love with your opponent Rule 2: The only thief you can trust is yourself Endgame: Win the heist to save your family - and yourself . . . Seventeen-year-old Rosalyn Quest was raised by a legendary family of thieves with one rule: trust no one.



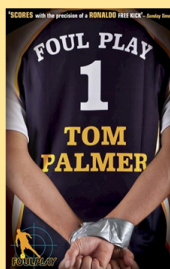
One of Us is Lying – Karen McManus

5 students walk into detention. Only 4 leave alive. Yale hopeful Bronwyn has never publicly broken a rule. Sports star Cooper only knows what he's doing in the baseball diamond. Bad boy Nate is one step away from a life of crime. Prom queen Andy is holding together the cracks in her perfect life. And outsider Simon, creator of the notorious gossip app at Bayview High, won't even talk about any of them again. He dies 24 hours before he could post their deepest secrets online. All of them are suspects. Everyone has secrets, right?



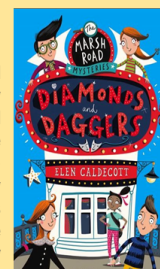
Foul Play – Tom Palmer - eBook

Danny is obsessed with two things: football – especially City Football Club – and investigating crimes. So when England and City footballing hero Sam Roberts is reported missing the day after Danny saw him being taken, blindfolded, into the bowels of the City FC stadium late at night, he's determined to get to the bottom of it. But is Danny getting into something he can't handle?



The Marsh Road Mysteries: Diamonds and Daggers – Elen Caldecott – eBook

Piotr, Minnie, Andrew, Flora and Sylvie – true friends and even better mystery-solvers! Hollywood sensation, Betty Massino, has come to star in the theatre down the road and Piotr and his friends Andrew and Minnie couldn't be more excited! But when the famous actress's hugely expensive diamond necklace goes missing, Piotr's dad, a security guard at the theatre, is a prime suspect. Soon, Piotr faces the very real threat of being sent 'home' to Poland. With the help of Sylvie and her twin sister Flora, can Piotr, Andrew and Minnie solve the crime or will they lose Piotr forever?



Agatha Oddly – Murder at the Museum – Audiobook

There's been a murder at the British Museum and, although the police are investigating, Agatha suspects that they're missing a wider plot going on below London – a plot involving a disused Tube station, a huge fireworks display, and five thousand tonnes of gold bullion...



Truly Devious – M. Johnson - Audiobook

Ellingham Academy is a private school in Vermont for the brightest thinkers, inventors, and artists. It was founded by Albert Ellingham, an early 20th century tycoon, who wanted to make a wonderful place full of riddles, twisting pathways, and gardens. "A place," he said, "where learning is a game" Shortly after the school opened, his wife and daughter were kidnapped. The only real clue was a mocking riddle listing methods of murder, signed with the frightening pseudonym "Truly, Devious."



We have a number of posts available at Highdown, please click on the job roles below for more information or visit our website [HERE](#) to view all vacancies, including teaching roles.



Examinations Invigilator

£11.79 per hour, Flexible hours

Cleaner/Housekeeping

15 hours per week, Monday to Friday 3pm to 6pm. Morning shifts also available. £11.79 per hour.

Junior Site Controller

37 hours a week, full-time (part time/term time will be considered)
NJC P2-5. Full time salary:
£23,114-£23,500 pa

“(Highdown) has supported my personal and professional growth. During my time as an LSA, I have had the privilege of working alongside dedicated colleagues and extraordinary students. The experiences and relationships I have made here will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on my career.”

Senior Leisure Attendant

Part-time position, evenings and weekends. Up to £11.50ph dependent on experience and qualifications.

Learning Support Assistant

Full time, term time only, plus 2 staff training days. (NJC P3-P4)
Actual Salary: £14,968pa 8.30am to 3.15pm