



# The Howard School

## Newsletter

*Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Communication*

# Welcome



**Mr. Hillier**  
**Assistant Head Teacher**

Welcome all to another edition of The Howard School newsletter.

Since our last newsletter, the verified performance tables have been released by the DfE and as a school, we could not be more proud of the results achieved by our students last year. As a school, we were the top performing all boys non-selective school in Kent and Medway. Our results even surpassed many grammar schools in our area. The progress our students made is +0.24, where the average progress made across Kent is -0.12, whilst across England it is -0.03.

These incredible results are the culmination of all the hard work and effort our students place into their education on a daily basis, as well as the constant support we receive from parents. This outstanding achievement is also of course thanks to the unwavering dedication and commitment from the staff here at The Howard.

This all said, for me The Howard School has always been more than a collection of outstanding results. For me, The Howard School impresses me with how the community comes together for an array of incredible worthwhile and different causes. The sheer volume of donations that we received for Gillingham Street Angels to mark 'World Food Day', for example, was incredible! As a community of students, parents and staff, we have raised nearly £700 for Pancreatic Cancer UK in memory of our friend and colleague, Mr. Mark Humphrys which is remarkable! And of course, we are just starting our collection of donations for Christmas items for the homeless adults and children within our community.

Our results are brilliant, but these issues we continue to support make me proud beyond comparison to work here!



### A review of our trip to Iceland by JH in Year 10

I really liked the Iceland trip, it is an experience not everyone gets to enjoy. I found the Sky Lagoon (a geothermal spa) the best part of the trip as you get an amazing view and it's very relaxing. I really enjoyed the places we went to such as the geysers, waterfalls and especially the glacier as it is a once in a lifetime experience and when you get to the top the view is amazing. Not everyone will be able to go onto the glacier because it is expected to melt due to the release of greenhouse gases and global warming. Also, the black sand beaches were good for geological reasons as it shows how erosion has happened as there is a cave and a stack which was really interesting to see. When we went to Reykjavik, I enjoyed it as you could go inside the Hallgrímskirkja, which is a church, or you could walk around and get souvenirs. It was a shame that we couldn't go to the Reykjanes peninsula and the blue lagoon as there was a volcano that could have erupted at any time (the local residents were evacuated for their safety) and there were small ground tremors in Grindavík, for safety reasons these were all closed. We had a tour guide called Odin, he was really friendly and knowledgeable about Iceland considering he was from Spain, and he really made this trip better. But the most fantastic thing about this trip was our Howard School teachers who made the trip possible against all odds as they treated us well and were fun to be with. Overall, I would highly recommend visiting Iceland to anyone.







As part of our ongoing STEM programme of activities, some students from Years 7 and 8 engaged in a Giant Tetrahedron Challenge.

Our students enjoyed the challenge and collaborated to build the biggest and strongest tetrahedron going!

Our STEM activities are always such a big hit with our students, and we very much look forward to our future projects.



## The Howard School Yr 7 and 8 Choir



Do you enjoy singing and performing? If so, the music department would like you to join our school choir!

I know what you're thinking, choirs just sing boring classical music. Not the case! We will be covering a variety of genres including rock and roll, pop and musical theatre.

All levels of ability are welcome.

Mr Mellish will be holding choir rehearsal for Year 7s and 8s **EVERY MONDAY AFTER SCHOOL** in M2.2 until 4pm.





# CAREERS FAYRE 2024

Spend the day talking to students about their future and possible pathways into your industry, promote your company and inspire your future workforce.



Wednesday 7th February

The Howard School  
Derwent Way  
Rainham, ME8 0BX

**Get in contact now**

[masonk@thehowardschool.co.uk](mailto:masonk@thehowardschool.co.uk)



## House Art Christmas Card Design

*Represent your House and compete to design The Howard Academy Trust's annual Christmas card and be in with a chance of winning a £25 Bluewater Voucher!*





# Interested in a career in teaching?

At The Howard School, we are committed to teacher training and want to support those considering a career in teaching to make informed decisions.



## Is teaching for me?

Teaching is a highly rewarding and enjoyable career but it is not all holidays and early finishes! To be a successful teacher, you need to have a passion for supporting young people to reach their potential; a drive to challenge thinking and ideas; and an enthusiasm to bring learning to life!

## Teacher Open Day Events

As part of our commitment, we are offering "Teacher Open Days" where individuals will be able to come to the school and experience what it's like to be a teacher!

Events run from 9am-3pm and you will:

- Experience subject specific lessons
- Meet with leaders of ITT at THS
- Learn about the training routes available and how to apply



## Upcoming Teacher Open Days

Thursday 23 November 2023 | Thursday 21 March 2024 | Wednesday 3 July 2024

For more information, visit: [www.thehoward-that.org.uk/itt](http://www.thehoward-that.org.uk/itt)  
Email [enquiries@tgtsh.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tgtsh.org.uk) to register your place at an Open Day



**The Howard**  
School



**KMT**

QUALITY  
TEACHER  
TRAINING

## For the Fallen - Poem by Laurence Binyon

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

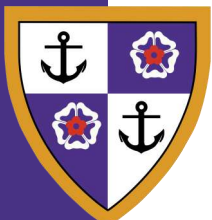
But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.



Photo credit: HG, Year 9

Ms. Bassant has started a Photography Ambassadors group that will be attending many of our school events to take photos as well as mark many of the school's special occasions such as the photos above for 'Remembrance'. Well done to these boys and we look forward to their excellent work in coming newsletters.





Mr Webb, Mr Murphy, Mr Cooper, Mr Julian, Mr Hillier, Mr Halsey, Mr Knights, Mr Flack, Mr Barker, Mr Doe and Mr Loftus will be doing 'Movember' to raise money and awareness for Pancreatic Cancer UK. Our colleague Mr Humphrys passed away a year ago due to pancreatic Cancer, and we wanted to do this in memory of Mark, as well as to try and help as many others who are suffering at the cruel hands of Cancer.

Any money given will be going directly to the Pancreatic Cancer UK charity, so please donate what you can.

It's unacceptable that more than half of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer die within 3 months. Survival rates have improved enormously for most cancers, yet for pancreatic cancer, this is not the case.

Pancreatic Cancer UK is dedicated to taking on this injustice using every possible means. They're supporting people with pancreatic cancer now, campaigning, and funding vital research to transform the future. Help them to make the breakthroughs that people with pancreatic cancer so desperately need.



[https://www.justgiving.com/page/howardstaffmovember-1698840141041?utm\\_medium=fundraising&utm\\_content=page%2Fhowardstaffmovember-1698840141041&utm\\_source=copyLink&utm\\_campaign=pfp-share](https://www.justgiving.com/page/howardstaffmovember-1698840141041?utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=page%2Fhowardstaffmovember-1698840141041&utm_source=copyLink&utm_campaign=pfp-share)



We are asking for a £1 donation that will be given to the school's chosen charities

CHRISTMAS  
JUMPER DAY

Wednesday, 20th December



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this 'virtual friend' functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

## Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



**NOS** National Online Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday





# CHRISTMAS GIFTBAG APPEAL

Help us make Christmas a little brighter for those who need it most  
Fill a giftbag with useful items and small gifts for the homeless

1

FIND AN EMPTY GIFTBAG

2

MAKE YOUR BAG LOOK CHRISTMASSY

Please label clearly whether for a man or woman, adult or child.

3

FILL IT WITH USEFUL GIFTS

**Suggested items to include:**

Hat, gloves, scarf, boxers, socks (thermal if poss), shampoo, comb, shower gel/body wash, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, tissues, wet wipes, torch (pref wind up type), note pad, pens, pencils, playing cards, chocolate, sweets, cereal bars, toys, teddy

4

DROP OFF YOUR BAG TO MAIN RECEPTION

Please arrange for drop off by Friday, 15th December







Some of our Year 12 students received their Professional Development Leadership certificates this morning after successfully completing the

Congratulations to EW and EO who both received the Gold Award for their contribution to school life.

To mark anti-bullying week, students and staff were encouraged to express their individuality and remind people that it's ok to be different by wearing odd-socks!

## ANTI-BULLYING WEEK 2023

MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> TO FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

**Odd Socks Day** is typically observed on the second Monday in November each year. This year, it falls on **Monday November 13th**. It is a day when schools, workplaces, and individuals **join together** to show that it's **okay to be different** and to **stand up against bullying and discrimination**.





<p>1</p>  <p>DEFINITION OF A CHILD</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>MAKING RIGHTS REAL</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>NAME AND NATIONALITY</p>
<p>8</p>  <p>IDENTITY</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	<p>13</p>  <p>SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION</p>
<p>15</p>  <p>SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED</p>
<p>22</p>  <p>REFUGEE CHILDREN</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>
<p>29</p>  <p>AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	<p>32</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	<p>33</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p>	<p>34</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	<p>35</p>  <p>PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p>
<p>36</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	<p>37</p>  <p>CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p>	<p>38</p>  <p>PROTECTION IN WAR</p>	<p>39</p>  <p>RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p>	<p>40</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p>	<p>41</p>  <p>BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p>	<p>42</p>  <p>EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p>

43-54



HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS

# CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



# Have a concern about a student?

Need some help or advice? People you can talk to:



Pastoral Manager

**Ms. McComas**

Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Deputy Head Teacher

**Mr. Green**

Safeguarding Lead



Assistant Head Teacher SENCo

**Mrs. Deakin**

Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Senior Head of Year

**Ms. Ali**

Safeguarding Officer



**Mrs. Parish**

Safeguarding Officer



Senior Head of Year

**Mr. Longe**

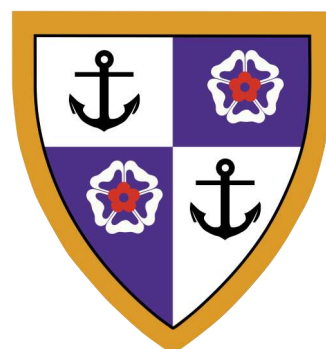
Safeguarding Officer

**Have a concern you would like to raise or discuss?**

**Visitors:** please email [greens@thehowardschool.co.uk](mailto:greens@thehowardschool.co.uk)

**Howard School Staff:** report on our internal reporting system

**Students:** contact any member of the safeguarding team



01634 388765 | [www.thehoward-that.org.uk](http://www.thehoward-that.org.uk) | [office@thehowardschool.co.uk](mailto:office@thehowardschool.co.uk)

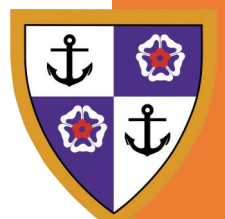


Exciting news!

We are running our first trip to Krakow for History students in Year 9, 10 and 12 in order to develop knowledge and understanding of Nazi racial ideology and the treatment of Eastern European Jews. We will have the opportunity to take part in a guided tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau as well

as a unique opportunity to meet a concentration camp survivor or relative at the Galicia Museum.

For further information on the trip, please do speak with anyone from the History department who will be able to share all of the information with you. Please do note that our residential trips do have a habit of selling out very quickly, so please do book your place sooner rather than later! Our trips are always sold on a first-come, first-served basis!







In preparation for part of their written exam, earlier in the term our GCSE Drama students watched 'The Ocean at the end of the Lane' at the Noël Coward theatre in London's West End. Our students were blown away by the story, performances and very clever staging of this fantastic adaption of Neil Gaiman's fantastical novel!





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