



The Howard School

Newsletter

Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Communication

welcome



On behalf of The Howard School I would just like to congratulate you on making it to the end of our first term

Although new to the Senior Leadership Team with a focus on attendance from September some of you may remember me from a couple of years ago having been in a similar position elsewhere. Having started initially at The Howard in 2014 the school has always been a very special place for me, mostly because it is part of the community in which I grew up in and have worked with for so long. It was therefore with great pleasure I jumped at the opportunity to return albeit in a different role to the one in which I left.

As with my two boys, where I see them everyday I often do not notice how much they change until someone who has not seen them for a while points it out. It is much the same with The Howard. Although some things are still the same as when I left (and even when I first joined) there have been many noticeable improvements and changes. The culture around learning, independence and respect has been wonderful to see and I can honestly say that I have not had such a productive, focussed and calm start to an academic year in teaching. This does not just apply to the classes I currently teach (which is still my favourite part of the job) but from walking around the school.

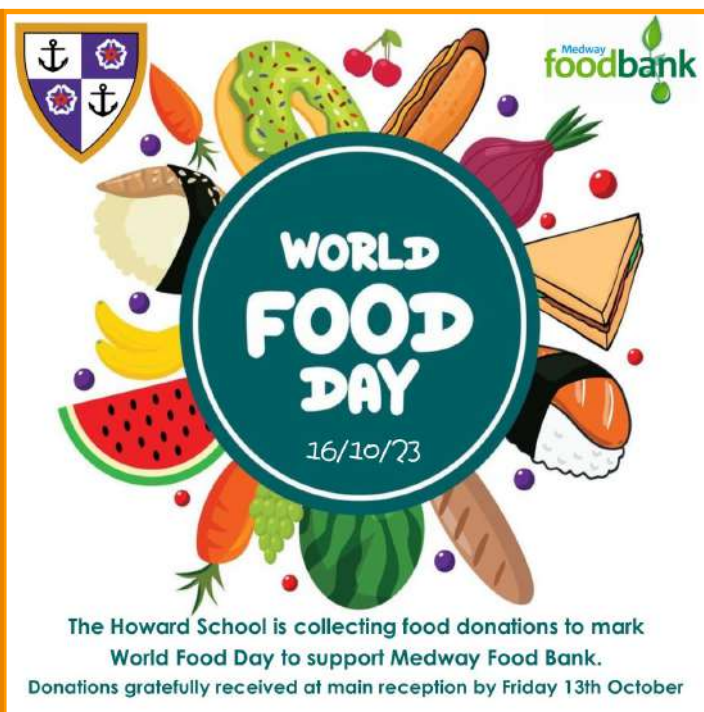
It has not just been lovely to see my old students but it has been a pleasure to see so many staff that I have worked with for years. Their dedication and hard work to ensure the students at The Howard get the best possible education and kick start to their future careers is evident

I wish you all a very well earned, relaxing half term and look forward to seeing the boys all returning, eager to learn in November.



This term our GCSE Drama students took part in a Blood Brothers workshop led by the incredible team at [@stage ed](#). Blood Brothers is the Drama set text and students explored the story, characters, themes and setting through practical work led by the brilliant Michael and Stephen who played Mickey and Sammy in Blood Brothers in the West End during its 24 year-long run! Well done to all of our students for their hard work and thank you to [@stage ed](#)!





Our community of parents, students and staff have been helping The Howard School mark 'World Food Day' by donating food to those less fortunate than ourselves. We were overwhelmed with the sheer volume of donations received and cannot thank our community enough. Earlier in the term, some of our Year 8 students visited Gillingham Street Angels to deliver our donations whilst money continues to be raised for Medway Food Bank.



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.



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
Email enquiries@tgtsh.org.uk to register your place at an Open Day



The Howard
School



KMT

QUALITY
TEACHER
TRAINING



The Paris 2023 tour had a great start as our students took the ferry across the Channel. Upon their arrival, students were able to discover Paris from the 58th floor of the Montparnasse Tower giving them panoramic views of the French capital.

The boys loved visiting Le Parc des Princes, and shooting a few goals in the ground! Students then saw the Sacré-Coeur Basilica in Montmartre up close and stood under L'Arc de Triomphe and paid respects to the unnamed soldier.

The Paris residential concluded and our students were delighted to discover all monuments from the river Seine.



5 Y10 students attended The Big Mental Health Conversation at Detling Exhibition Centre on Mental Health Awareness Day. They attended workshops and visited stalls of different companies to find out about the local offer from NHS stands to the BeYou Project.

They met Councillor Dan McDonald who sat with us for the opening activities. They also got to meet some therapy dogs, alpacas and attend a cricket workshop!





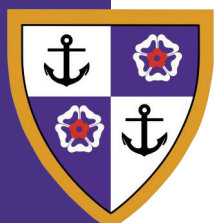
Our Open Events were a huge success as we hosted hundreds of families to our school.

"I just wanted to thank you for hosting us this evening. We have made the decision that The Howard School definitely works for our son and are hoping he is accepted for a place. We thoroughly enjoyed the tour and it was lovely to see the fantastic relationships between teachers and pupils." - Prospective Parent

"It has been the most organised tour of the schools we have visited, there is such a lovely 'school vibe' still that we got walking around unlike other schools that have felt institutional." - Prospective Parent

"From the moment we step foot into the Howard School we was blown away. This is the 4th and final school we viewed and we definitely saved the best till last. My son was engaged and excited and full of beans the entire tour which was so nice to see, his smiles said it all." - Prospective Parent

"Thank you for making the evening such a wonderful and exciting experience, the Howard is our clear favourite for my son to attend in 2024. Many congratulations to you, all of the staff and most importantly, the students for making us so welcome and giving such a positive impression of the school." - Prospective Parent



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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 SHOEBOX APPEAL

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

1

FIND AN EMPTY SHOEBOX

2

WRAP IN CHRISTMAS PAPER

Please wrap the box and lid separately and 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, razors, tissues, wet wipes, torch (pref wind up type), note pad, pens, pencils, playing cards, chocolate, sweets, cereal bars, toys, teddy

4

DROP OFF YOUR BOX TO MAIN RECEPTION

Please arrange for drop off by Friday, 15th December





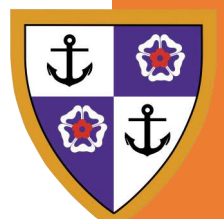
Students at The Howard are now recognised for their service to the school. Students pictured above are some of the students who were recently awarded with a Service Tie for three years' worth of service to the school.

We recognise their commitment, resilience and determination in representing their school for three years and the positive impact this has on their school community. The selfless act of putting the school first speaks volumes about their character and we strive to reward such behaviour.

Well done and congratulations to all students and we look forward to awarding future students for their service to the school.

These new ties, which are provided free of charge, become a compulsory part of their school uniform which we know they will wear with immense pride. Students are encouraged to donate their old ties to the school where possible so that we can in turn donate them to those that may be in need of them.

If you have any questions regarding Service Ties, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Knights who will gladly answer any questions that you may have.





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

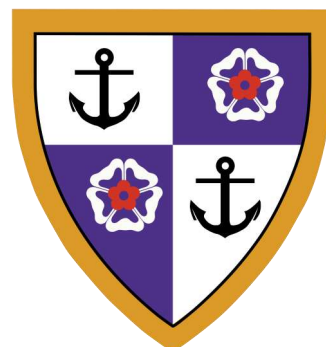
Safeguarding Officer

Have a concern you would like to raise or discuss?

Visitors: please email greens@thehowardschool.co.uk

Howard School Staff: report on our internal reporting system

Students: contact any member of the safeguarding team



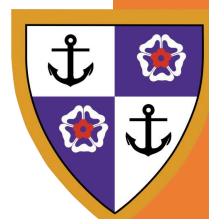
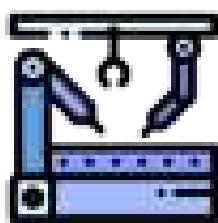
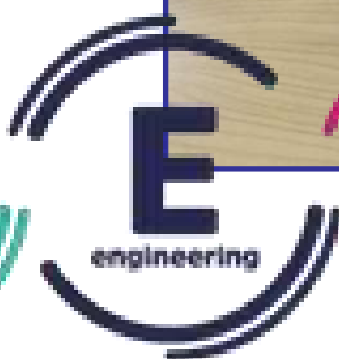
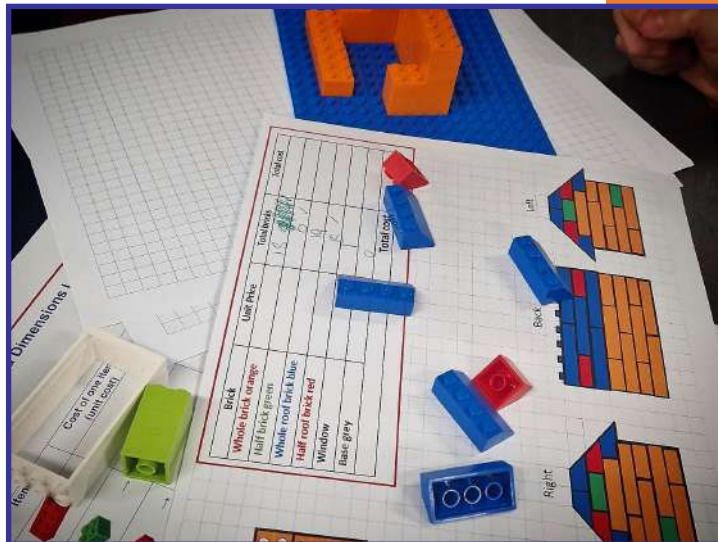
01634 388765 | www.thehoward-that.org.uk | office@thehowardschool.co.uk

Thirty of our year 7 and year 8 students participated in the first MEBP STEM challenge of the year. Students had to build the best possible Lego House they could with a given budget. They had to design, build and calculate throughout the process and we now have our first six winners that will participate in the STEM County Challenge in July that The Howard School is the current champions of!

Ms. Crews, who leads on all things STEM related for the school, was immensely proud of the achievements of the students throughout the day and complimented them on their behaviour.

There are many future STEM related activities planned throughout the year that also includes a visit to Canterbury University which has always proved very popular with our students.

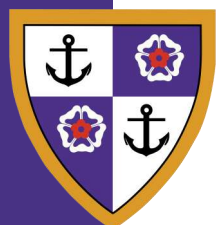
If you would like any further information with regards to the STEM activities here at The Howard School, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Crews who will gladly assist.

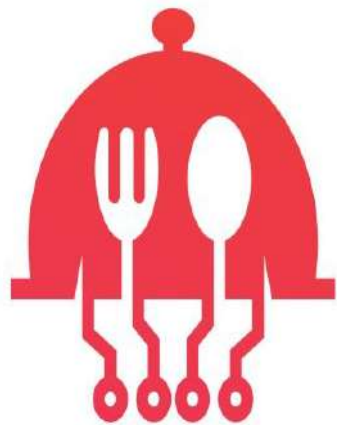




At the latest Rainham Community Awards, The Howard School was the very first recipient of the Environment and Sustainability Shield! But more impressively, our young eco-ambassadors also won their category taking home the Young Green Eco Hero award.

Huge, huge congratulations to all involved.

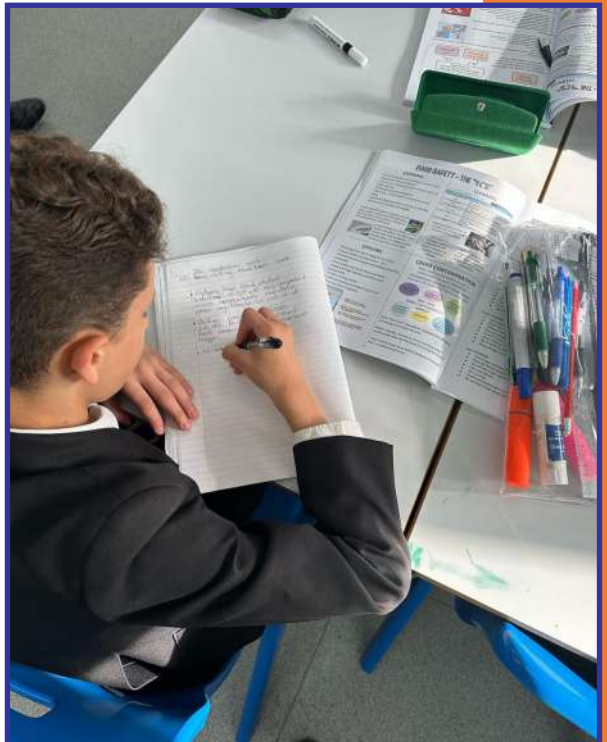


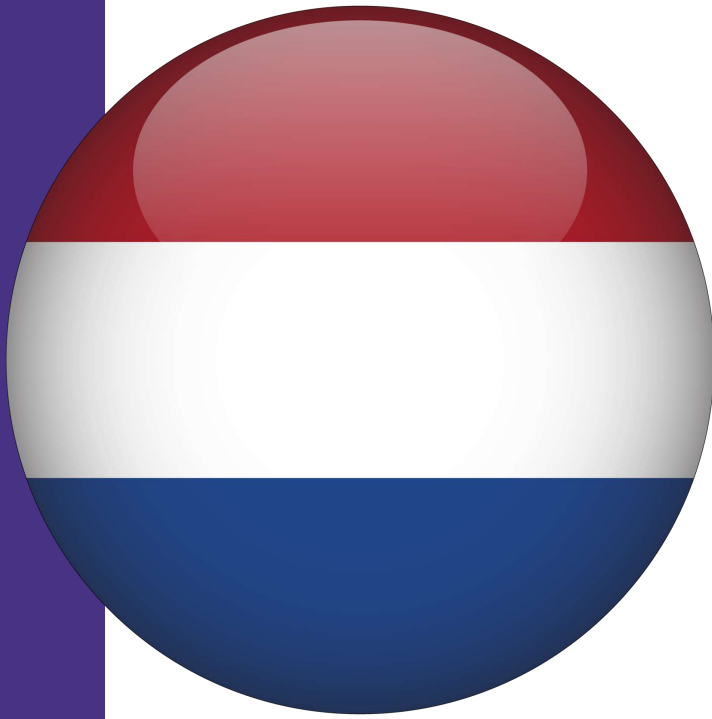


FOOD TECH

Our Year 9 GCSE Food Technology students have been busy this term so far. Tarte Tatin is the first practical dish of the GCSE. It is an opportunity for Students to learn how to work in the kitchen and to learn simple but important skills they will build on later - including how to safely use knives and the cooker - it is so popular with the students they can often be seen eating theirs at the bus stop on their way home!

During the first term of the GCSE students learn about Food Safety, including "the 4 Cs" - cooking, cleaning, chilling and cross contamination - which helps the students prepare, cook and store food safely. We often have interesting discussions on chilling as the students love to discuss how food is chilled in their own homes - and the well known debate about whether ketchup and eggs belong in the fridge or not!



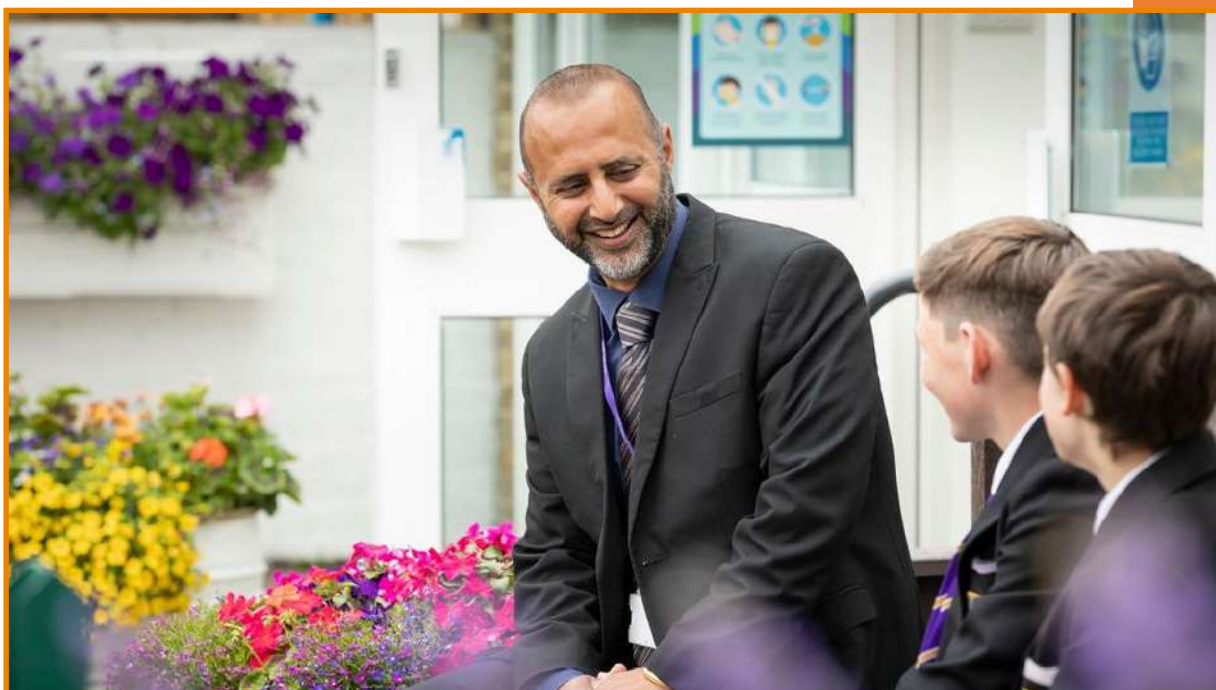


As part of our continued International project, we hosted 17 students and 2 staff from a school in The Netherlands. The students and their staff had the opportunity to experience a day as a 'Howard Student' and our students immediately bonded and made great friends.

During the visit, our students had lunch in the main hall, exchanged cultural gifts, and of course played the obligatory game of football; England vs. Holland.

We look forward to meeting again in the near future and creating new international partners.





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