

07 FEBRUARY 2025

# NEWSLETTER

Dear families,

We enjoyed a fantastic week at school, celebrating many student achievements and a very positive parent forum on Wednesday. Thank you to all the parents who attended and contributed to the valuable discussions.

## Key Dates:

- 13 February 2025 - Year 10 Parents Evening
- 14 February 2025 - Term 3 Ends
- 24 February 2025 - Term 4 Starts
- 26 February 2025 – Parent Forum KS4

## Update

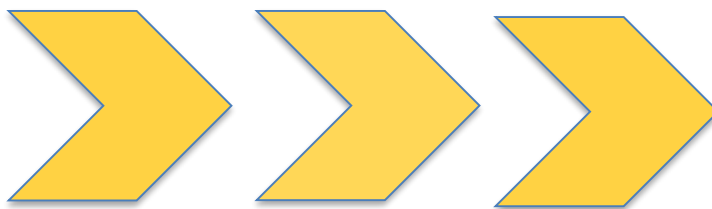
**\*\* PARENT FORUM \*\***

**Year 10 and 11 Parent Forum  
26th Feb, 5:00 PM.**

Registration is compulsory for attendance. Please fill in the registration form by clicking on the link below:

[Parent Forum Registration Form](#)

Thank you for your support.



**NEXT WEEK IS  
WEEK A  
TIMETABLE**



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## REMINDERS

### \*\* Important Notice: Gas Network Upgrade Works & Parking Reminder \*\*



Please be aware that gas network upgrade works are currently underway on **Millstrood Road**, which will last for approximately **12 weeks**.

**Important Note:** During this period, **there will be no access to Bellevue Road from Millstrood Road.**

To minimize disruption, please plan your child's drop-off and pick-up times in advance, as these works may significantly impact access to the school.

We kindly request that parents park considerately during this time. We have received reports of double parking, which can create safety hazards and obstruct traffic flow.

To ensure the safety of all students and the smooth flow of traffic, we encourage parents to park further away from the school and walk with their child to the school entrance whenever possible.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### \*\* Engines Off \*\*

To help reduce air pollution, noise levels, and respect our neighbour's, please remember to turn off your engine while waiting to drop off or pick up your child. Thank you for your cooperation.

### \*\* Catch-Up Immunization Clinics This Half Term\*\*

The Immunisation Team would like to invite parents to book an appointment at one of their Community Clinics this half term if your child missed their vaccinations during the scheduled school visit.

Parents can book an appointment via the website on the link below:

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/imms>

This link also provides other useful information regarding vaccinations and our Immunisation Service.



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## **\*\* Key Points from the Parent Forum \*\***



Thank you once again to all parents who attended the Parents' Forum. It was an incredibly valuable discussion, and I appreciate your engagement and contributions. Below is a summary of the key points we covered:

I outlined the school's curriculum reform plans, particularly focusing on the Stage Academy, STEM Academy, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award as enrichment opportunities. As we move into the second and third academic years, we aim to expand these opportunities across different year groups. A key aspect of our curriculum development is reviewing the GCSE offer. We are considering a model where not every single qualification has to be a GCSE. Instead, enrichment activities could become part of the Key Stage 4 offer, allowing students to develop leadership skills and subject-specific expertise without necessarily having an examined outcome at the end of Year 11. This approach is highly regarded by top sixth forms, as they focus on students achieving quality GCSE grades (typically around eight) alongside a strong enrichment portfolio. Leadership skills, extracurricular participation, and

personal development are becoming increasingly valuable in post-16 applications, and we want to ensure our students benefit from these additional opportunities at Whitstable.

## **Homework Policy & Implementation**

We also discussed the school's homework strategy. Homework remains an emerging focus, particularly in terms of developing offline homework alongside the already well-established online homework through Google Classroom. We are encouraging consistent homework in English, Maths, Science, History, and Geography, with students expected to receive homework twice a term in these subjects.

- This will include short retrieval questions and longer written responses towards the end.
- We are working on formalising this approach to ensure a balanced and structured homework schedule.
- Students now have blue folders to store their homework in their bags, supporting organisation and accountability.

Over time, more subjects will be included as we review and refine the implementation process. Our aim is to make homework an integral part of learning, providing students with opportunities to recall and apply knowledge from lessons.

## **Discussed Staffing & Recruitment**

We are fully staffed, which is a significant achievement, particularly during a national teacher recruitment crisis. All subjects are taught by specialists, ensuring high-quality teaching in every area. We do have trainee teachers, but they are fully supported by experienced staff members in the classroom. The need for external agency cover has been significantly reduced, marking an important shift from previous years.



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This stability has led to stronger teaching and learning outcomes. External visitors have observed lessons and provided positive feedback on the quality of teaching, student engagement, and overall learning environment.

## **Behaviour & Classroom Conduct**

Behaviour in lessons is good, and our new behaviour system – Warning, Warning, Referral – is proving to be effective. Any students who persistently disrupt learning are swiftly removed, ensuring that the learning environment remains focused. This structured approach helps maintain high standards of behaviour, allowing teachers to focus on delivering lessons effectively and ensuring that all students can learn without disruption.

We discussed the recent changes to the toilet system and the need to strike a balance between allowing students access when genuinely needed while ensuring it is not misused. Students can still access the toilet during lesson time in an emergency. Medical passes remain in place for those who require more frequent access. The system was initially working well, but we noticed an increase in students leaving lessons. On some days, almost 10% of students were using the toilet during Period 6, which was too high. We consulted with students through a Student Voice survey and gathered parental feedback to find a balanced solution. Toilet access during lessons is now limited to twice per week unless an individual exception is agreed upon with the Pastoral Support Manager.

Unlike some schools that ban toilet use in lessons completely, we still allow access when absolutely necessary. Lessons last 55 minutes, meaning the maximum time a student might go without toilet access is 1 hour 50 minutes (across a double lesson), which is a reasonable duration. Toilets remain fully open at break, lunch, before and after school. There are no significant queues at these times, but we will continue to monitor this.

We also discussed improvements to the way we communicate with parents, particularly regarding MCAS (My Child at School) and email notifications. Many important documents currently sit under the 'Reports' section on MCAS, but some parents have reported difficulties accessing them. We have now paid extra for a service that directly sends emails to parents' inboxes, ensuring that all key communication is received.

We want to increase the amount of positive communication with parents. Many great things happen at the school, and we want to ensure successes are celebrated and shared regularly.

We discussed achievement & Behaviour Tracking (TRACK Cards). Some parents raised that the achievement section on Track Cards is quite small. We will look into redesigning these cards to ensure a better balance between behaviour monitoring and reward recognition. Teachers primarily log achievement points on BromCom, which then appears instantly on the My Child at School (MCAS) app. Why BromCom? If teachers sign multiple track cards, someone must manually transfer that data into BromCom, which can lead to delays. Logging achievements directly into BromCom is faster and more efficient.

We discussed the school's ongoing work in expanding A-Level provision. As we grow, we are focused on enrichment opportunities that help students prepare for university applications, ensuring they are well-rounded and competitive candidates.



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Overall, the Parents' Forum was extremely productive. I took notes, and your feedback will help shape school improvements moving forward. If you have any queries or suggestions regarding school policies or improvements, you can always contact TWS Admin. This ensures you receive a direct reply, and we welcome any ideas on how we can enhance the school and strengthen our connection with the community.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mr Holmes, Headteacher

## SIXTH FORM UPDATE

### **\*\* Sixth Form Applications Now Open! \*\***

Interviews for Sixth Form places at The Whitstable School will be taking place throughout **January and February**.

All communication regarding applications and interviews will be made via Kent Choices. If you haven't already, please visit our website for more information.



- View [Prospectus](#)
- View [Sixth Forms Pathways](#)
- View [Why Choose Our Sixth Form](#)
- Apply via [Kent Choices](#)

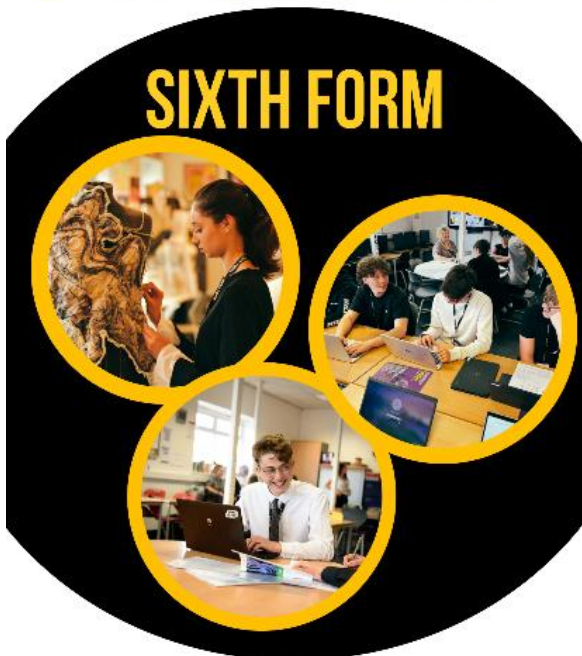
### **Want to join our Sixth Form Pathways?**

➔ Contact Ms. Simons, Head of Sixth Form.

☎ 01227931300

✉ [tws\\_sixthform@swale.at](mailto:tws_sixthform@swale.at)

**We look forward to receiving your application**



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## \*\* TWS Football Academy Update\*\*

What a game! Our National League Squad demonstrated incredible grit and determination yesterday, overcoming a 2-0 halftime deficit to snatch a 3-2 victory against Worthing FC Academy. **Alex (Year 12)** was the star of the show, netting two goals to bring his season total to over 10—an amazing feat for a midfielder! This exciting win keeps the team in top form as they prepare for a crucial top-of-the-table clash against Hollands & Blair next week.



## THIS WEEK SO FAR...

### \*\*TRACK Excellence Raffle Winners Announced! \*\*

Each Wednesday, the school will run a 'TRACK Excellence' raffle with two prizes for students. To enter, students just have to have seven or more positive signatures over the two weeks. Students with negative signatures are still able to participate.

This week's winners are:

**Lottie (Year 8) and Harry (Year 8)**



Students with their prizes in the TRACK Excellence raffle.



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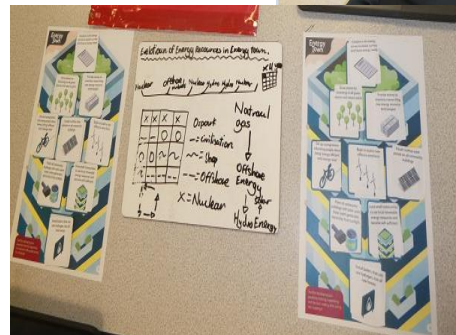
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**\*\* STEM Students Become City Planners for a Day! \*\***

STEM Academy students put their problem-solving skills and teamwork to the test, collaborating to build their own city during the Energy Town mission. Strategically adding buildings, housing, businesses, recreation, and community areas, the students faced the challenge of choosing sustainable energy resources. Making pivotal decisions to upgrade or replace infrastructure, they shaped their city's development all the way to 2050, demonstrating impressive innovation drawing on their knowledge across the four STEM disciplines.



**\*\*Unleash Your Inner Poet: "Poetry By Heart" Competition Coming Soon! \*\***

Get ready to ignite your passion for poetry! The English Department is thrilled to announce a new competition launching early next term: "Poetry By Heart."

**What is it?** It is a national poetry speaking competition for schools in England. It is open to young people in Key Stages 2-5. Pupils choose a poem, learn it by heart, and perform it. You may wish to perform solo or as a group. The competition revolves around students learning and reciting a poem. There are two different categories which offer pupils opportunities to either submit their own creations or innovative renditions on classics that they have learnt. Those who are successful get to visit the Globe Theatre!

**How can I get involved?** Get active in your English lessons and learn the poems you are studying. There will be an initial meeting/drop in next Thursday 13th at lunchtime in GZ21. Please see Miss Sunny if you are interested.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### \*\* Important Work Experience Dates for Year 10 \*\*



Week of: **June 30th - July 4th, 2025 (5 days)**

**Work experience is a valuable opportunity for you to:**

- Gain exposure to the professional world and explore different career paths.
- Develop essential skills desired by employers, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
- Boost your confidence and build your personal and social skills.

### Finding Your Placement:

You are responsible for finding your own work experience placement. This allows you to explore your interests and connect with potential career fields. We will be providing support through Unifrog, a platform that helps you track and manage your placement search.

### Have Questions?

If you have any further questions about work experience, please don't hesitate to contact:

- Email: [tws-workexperience@swale.at](mailto:tws-workexperience@swale.at)



**Attention all business owners and employers**



Are you able to support a Year 10 or 12 student develop valuable employability skills?

We are seeking work experience placements for our students during the week of **Monday 30th June to Friday 4th July 2025.**

We manage our Work Experience program through Unifrog, which handles all the necessary administration, including risk assessments, health and safety policies, and parental/carer consent. If you can offer a placement during this week, we would be incredibly grateful.

Please complete the short form to express your interest or scan the QR code:

Form: [Work Experience Placement Form](#)

Alternatively, you can contact us directly at: [tws-workexperience@swale.at](mailto:tws-workexperience@swale.at)

We thank you in advance for any opportunities you are able to provide



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**\*\* Calling all local businesses! \*\***

Join The Whitstable School **Careers Fair on March 13th, 2025.**

The aim of the fair is to provide students with valuable career guidance through engaging discussions with local employers. Last year's event was a huge success, and we're aiming even higher this year!

Contact [tws\\_admin@swale.at](mailto:tws_admin@swale.at) or 01227 931300 to participate.




## Careers Fair

Date 13th March 2025  
Time 9:00-2:30pm

We would like to invite you to our Careers Fair 2025!!

**Aims of the event:**

- To engage the students through interactive displays and discussions
- To provide the students with information about different career paths
- To inform the students about a range of new careers and industries

For further information on how to get a stand at our event please contact us on 01227 931300 or [tws\\_careers@swale.at](mailto:tws_careers@swale.at)




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**\*\*Celebrate Our Amazing Staff! Nominate a Teacher of the Year! \*\***

A big thank you to the parents who have already nominated some of our staff for the Kent Teacher of the Year Awards. Your comments are so kind! If you wish to nominate a member of staff, there is still time to do so:

[Kent Teacher of the Year Nomination form](#)

Remember there are lots of different categories across all staff groups! Thank you for your support with this.

**Nominations close February 28th, 2025!**



**\*\*Calling Young Artists! \*\***

This free exhibition showcases the incredible talent of young artists aged 4-18 across the UK. Want to participate?

- **Students:** Speak to Miss Butler to learn how to submit your artwork through the school.
- **Teachers & Parents/Guardians:** You can also submit artwork on behalf of students. A panel of esteemed artists and arts professionals will judge the submissions.

Selected artworks will be displayed both online and at the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts.

**Don't miss this exciting opportunity!**

**Submission Deadline:** March 5th, 2025

## NOTICE BOARD

### \*\*Scholarship Trials \*\*

Upcoming scholarship trial for boys and girls will be held on:

**Date:** Friday, February 21st

**Time:** 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

**Location:** Whitstable Town FC Stadium, Grimshill Road, CT5 4LN

This is a fantastic opportunity for talented young players to showcase their skills and potentially earn a scholarship. We encourage all interested boys and girls to attend.



### \*\*Emotional Wellbeing/Support Workshops (Feb-Mar 2025) \*\*

Boost your family's emotional wellbeing! We've got a fantastic line-up of workshops designed to support parents and children. Check out the links to the posters for more information and registration details:

- [Less Stress Guide in Exams](#)
- [Understanding ADHD](#)
- [All online workshops](#)



EMOTIONAL WELLBEING TEAM KENT  
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM  
MEDWAY



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# The Whitstable School

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[www.thewhitstableschool.org.uk](http://www.thewhitstableschool.org.uk)

Headteacher: Mr A Holmes BA (Hons), MA, NPQH

All The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCAMS AND FAKE NEWS

"Fake news" refers to falsified or misleading material presented as a legitimate account of events. It's often used by malicious actors online to push an agenda, or even by criminals as a way of making scams more persuasive. Scammers can trick us into handing over personal information, security details and even our hard-earned cash.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

**"CLICKBAIT" PHISHING SCAMS**  
A message often saying "have you seen this video of your pet?" or "you might be won an award" grabbing attention about a celebrity that's been shared on social media. This kind of "bait" is prepared for scammers to drive us to click on an unsafe link, where malware could be downloaded to our devices. These scammers get our curiosity and our "need-to-know" instinct.

**SALES, DEALS & DISCOUNTS**  
Some scammers appear as adverts, offering a chance to buy something – such as designer products, expensive gadgets or travel. Such offers are popular above – at a reduced price. Such offers often include a time limit or countdown timer, pushing us to hurry so we don't miss out on the deal. This pressure encourages us to pay before checking details or payment information before paying to check if it's legitimate.

**YOU'RE A WINNER!**  
This kind of scam involves fake giveaways, opportunities or prizes. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and so on. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting, and these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, leading to more things being gained by doing so.

**HAPPENS NOW!**

**FALSE FRIENDSHIPS**  
Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not to gain their victims' trust. They might pretend to be someone you know or connect with that they're a child of similar age with shared interests. Warning signs include a high volume of messages (often with an intense tone), secrecy, inappropriate levels of intimacy, guilt tripping, emotional manipulation, threats or blackmail.

**PANIC MODE**  
To trigger a sense of panic, scammers may claim that a child's account has been hacked, or a virus has been installed on their device, or any number of other scary scenarios. They may claim to be able to fix the problem or offer a solution. If the child has no control of the device or sensitive information, scammers involve impersonating a friend or relative, claiming that they're in trouble and need help.

**FAKE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS**  
Impersonating influential people online is a common tactic for scammers, who can use technology to create fake photos, audio and even videos that look authentic. These can be used to convince us, for example, to buy products, sign up for an online "franchise opportunity" or invest in cryptocurrency schemes – all of which are fake or otherwise malicious. Many scams also involve the impersonation of popular companies' social media accounts, as well as those of individuals.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

**STAY INFORMED**  
Stay up to date with the latest information and best practice on cyber-security. See what scam stories are reported in the news and make sure you're aware of what's going on. Use parental controls and make sure you're doing better and use parental controls to limit what kids can see and do on their devices.

**TALK TOGETHER**  
Chat often and openly with young people about fake news, online scams and how they look work. Encourage them to talk to you about anything they're unsure of or worried about online. If a child claims to have been scammed, don't panic! Judgment blaming the victim may deter young people from asking you for help. Remember: adults are responsible for the safety of children, if not more.

**ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SCEPTICISM**  
Most scams rely on emotional or psychological manipulation, tapping into our human instincts. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and so on. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting, and these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, leading to more things being gained by doing so.

**BE PROACTIVE**  
Children increasingly use digital devices for education, socialising, shopping and play. Don't wait for a problem to arise before you discuss the risks of scams, false information and fake news. Highlight what to look out for and clearly communicate what you can do to help. The child might be open to an adult. Finally, ensure that young people are aware of the support services that are available to them (such as Childline).

**Meet Our Expert**  
Dr Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading expert in digital safety, media law and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of fake online news. She provides expert advice on the criminal, legal and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit [online-media-law.co.uk](http://online-media-law.co.uk) for more.

Source: <https://www.nationalcollege.com/guides/fake-news-and-scams>

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Swale ACADEMIES TRUST



Want to know more?



Scan the QR code to check out our website now!

We believe that effective governance is best delivered when school leaders are held to account and challenged on pupil outcomes as well as the quality of education provided.



Now considering becoming a school governor? Get in touch!

You do not need to be from an education background - we value what people from outside the sector can offer!



We'd love to hear from you.

[hello@swale.at](mailto:hello@swale.at)  
01795 905989

For more updates and events, please visit our website and follow us on X and Facebook.

- <https://www.thewhitstableschool.org.uk/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/TheWhitstableSchool>
- <https://x.com/TheWhitSchool>

Best Wishes  
The Whitstable School Team



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