

28 MARCH 2025

NEWSLETTER

Dear Families,

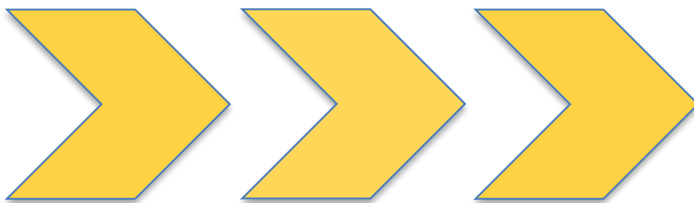
Our students had an amazing week at The Whitstable School! They celebrated sporting successes and embarked on a journey to the stars with a special visit from the National Space Academy. Read on for all the exciting details!

Key Dates:

- 04 April 2025 - Term 4 Ends
- 22 April 2025 - Term 5 Starts

Update

Key Date for KS4 Options



NEXT WEEK IS WEEK A TIMETABLE



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REMINDERS

** Respecting Accessible Parking Spaces **

We kindly remind all parents and visitors to respect our designated accessible parking spaces. These spaces are reserved for individuals with disabilities who require close proximity to the school entrance.

Please remember:

- **Not all disabilities are visible.** Some individuals may have valid permits that are not always displayed.
- **Permits must be displayed.** If you have a valid permit, please ensure it is clearly visible in your vehicle's windscreen.
- **Cooperation is key.** We rely on everyone's cooperation to ensure these spaces are available for those who need them.

We understand that parking can be challenging, but we ask that you be considerate of others and refrain from parking in accessible spaces unless you have a valid permit.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in making our school accessible for everyone.

** 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.

SIXTH FORM UPDATE

** Sporting Success and Sixth Form Opportunities! **



Our football teams had a strong showing this week! The National League squad secured an impressive 3-0 victory away at Ramsgate, with Year 12's Alex (Year 12) continuing his scoring streak. It was a dominant performance! Meanwhile, our SCL squad battled to a 2-2 draw at home against Volenti. We're proud to report that our academy has comfortably defeated all local academies this season, solidifying our position as the leading academy in the area.



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In other news, The Whitstable School **Sixth Form** is still accepting applications for September!

Don't miss the chance to explore our diverse curriculum and innovative sports pathways. Visit Kent Choices to view our offerings and apply – we only accept applications through this platform. Due to an unprecedented number of applications this year, we strongly advise any student hoping to join us to accept our offer and rank us as their first choice. For any questions or further information, please contact Ms. Simons, Head of Sixth Form.

- View [Prospectus](#)
- View [Sixth Forms Pathways](#)

Want to join our Sixth Form Pathways?

➔ Contact Ms. Simons, Head of Sixth Form.

☎ 01227931300

✉ tws_sixthform@swale.at



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:

Finley (Year 8) and Will (Year 10)

We've teamed up with local businesses for amazing rewards.

This week's prize is vouchers for local café **Revival**.



Students with their prizes in the TRACK Excellence raffle.



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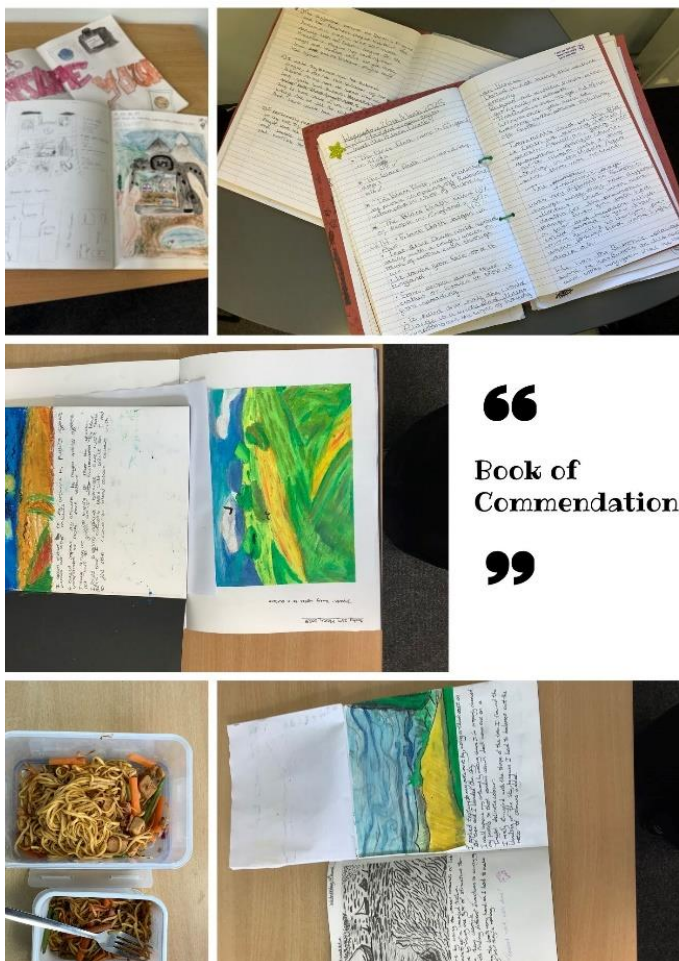
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**** Book of Commendation- Celebrating Student Success! ****

We are pleased to announce the following students have been recognised for their exceptional work and have been added to the Book of Commendation:

- **Indie and Sebastian (Year 8)** created a delicious and imaginative veggie stir fry in Food technology.
- **Aria, Imogen Grace, Isabel, and Evan (Year 7)** produced beautiful landscape artworks.
- **Rupert and Ellie (Year 7)** created positive and uplifting posters.
- **Lotte, Maxim, and Noah (Year 8)** also impressed with their creative and eye-catching posters.
- **Emy and Lottie (Year 7)** demonstrated excellent research and presentation skills with their work on the Black Death.

Congratulations to all our commended students!



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**** National Space Academy Inspires Students! ****

The National Space Academy delivered two first class masterclasses to students from Year 7 to Year 11. The aim was to show your students that what they are learning in Science Particularly Physics applies in space and that aiming for a "space job" is perfectly reasonable. Students held artefacts from the Moon, Mars, Meteorites and even the strap from an Astronaut on their landing back to Earth.

Thought provoking questions about Space were delivered in a 2-hour session.

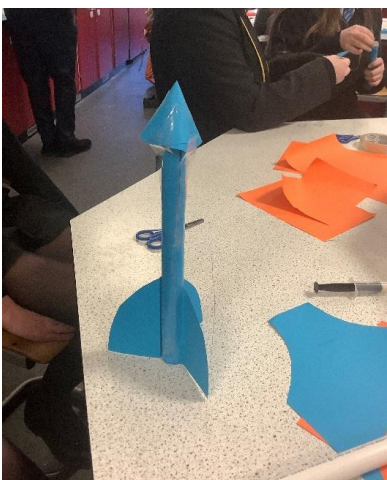
- What is going on in space at the moment?
- Why are so many missions going to the Moon this year?
- What is it like to be an astronaut?
- How does a spacesuit work?
- What sort of career could I have in the space industry - it's not just about astronauts?
- How do satellites work and why are they important?
- How do rockets work?

Student rockets travelled further than two tennis courts and a football field added together.

Budding students Astrophysicists and Engineers were in their element as their aspirations were raised to work in the UK Space Industry.



A huge thank you to Miss Dash for organizing this incredible opportunity and for her unwavering dedication to STEM education at The Whitstable School!



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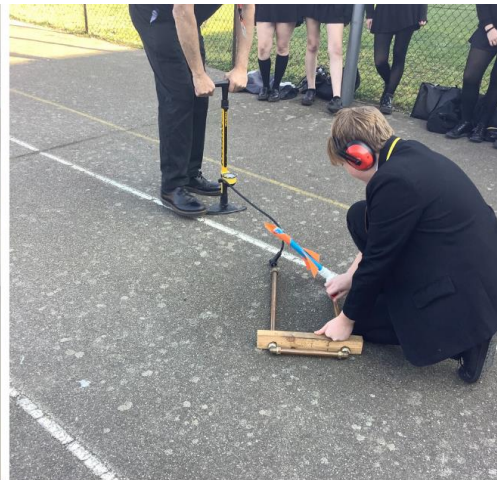
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**** "Grab a Listen": Bridging the Reading Gap with Audio ****

Despite national concerns about declining reading rates, our library is thriving, with students actively borrowing books and sharing their diverse reading on English department platforms.

However, acknowledging the rise of audio, particularly among boys (43.4%), as highlighted by the National Literacy Trust's poll, which found 42% of children enjoy listening to audio in their free time, we're introducing 'grab a listen' via QR audio codes, including 'A Christmas Carol.' This initiative aims to bridge the gap as reading for pleasure has fallen to 'crisis' levels with just over a third of children enjoying reading in their spare time, and encourage story enjoyment in all formats.



**** Welcome Eddie to the Cuddle Club! ****

We're thrilled to introduce Eddie, our newest therapy dog, to The Whitstable School!

This adorable Cocker Spaniel is joining our Year 10 team and will be in school three days a week, ready for cuddles and walks.

Eddie will be providing 1:1 intervention sessions and is available for students to interact with during unstructured times.

Therapy dogs play a vital role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, and Eddie has already received a warm welcome from students and staff alike.



**** Year 9 Rugby Triumph at East Kent Emerging 7's Tournament! ****

The Whitstable School's Year 9 rugby team dominated at the East Kent Emerging 7's Tournament in Canterbury, showcasing impressive teamwork, sportsmanship, and individual skills. Led by their captain Max, the team adapted to rule changes and defeated strong opponents, including HBH, to claim victory. Congratulations to Max, Leo, Rogan, Danny, Harry, Bruce, Josh, Sam, and Logan on their outstanding performance. A huge congratulation to the entire team from everyone at TWS. We look forward to seeing their continued success next year!



**** Year 11 Food Tech Students Shine in Major Practical Exam! ****

A massive congratulations to our Year 11 GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition students who successfully completed their major practical session this week! They demonstrated incredible skill and organization, creating three complex and challenging dishes within a tight three-hour timeframe, all while adhering to their own meticulous time plans.

The variety and quality of dishes produced were truly outstanding, ranging from fresh homemade ravioli and delicate choux pastry to rustic rough puff pastry, flavourful pizzas, delicate cannoli, classic fish and chips, and beautifully crafted tarts and pies. While we can't share photos of this week's creations due to exam board regulations, we've included a selection of dishes from the past two years to showcase the students' talent.

A special thank you to the lower year groups whose practical lessons were disrupted to accommodate this important exam. We appreciate your understanding. Well done to all the Year 11 students! We're incredibly proud of your hard work and dedication.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

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: tw_s-workexperience@swale.at

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



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: tw_s-workexperience@swale.at



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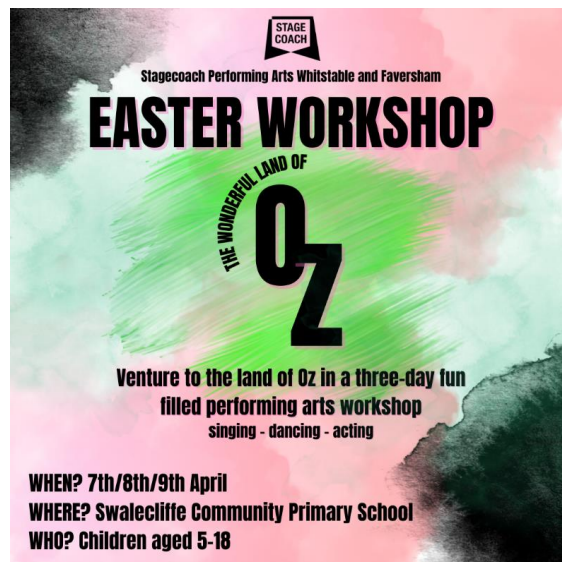
NOTICE BOARD

Canterbury City Council, in partnership with Canterbury RFC, is hosting a fantastic FREE event called 'Give It A Go!' This is a brilliant opportunity for everyone to try out a variety of sports and activities, from Football and Rugby to Dance and Judo. There will also be health and wellbeing stalls, plus visits from Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue Service. Stay tuned for more details on a free shuttle service from Canterbury City Centre!



** Timetable & Family Hub Information **

"Timetable information and details about our local Kent Family Hub can be found here: [Kent Family Hub](#)



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At 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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about BLUESKY SOCIAL APP

AGE RESTRICTION 13+
With an App Store rating of 4.7 & Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?
While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS
While most social networks allow accounts to be private, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS
Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond or can easily block people and mute, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being contacted by scammers, harassed by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING
While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, as persistent bullies could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION
Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a critical size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE
Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many general controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH
At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is less and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been added as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unseasoned users to harass and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER
Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'Advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further: hiding – by example – all theme content, extremist content, and even nude posts.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES
Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, impostors sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites, while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING
Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE
As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unsuitable. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Meet Our Expert
Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.

Source: See full reference on our guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/bluesky-social-app>

WakeUpWednesday The National College

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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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