



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

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# Introduction

Dear Students, Colleagues, Carers and Parents,

I feel fortunate to have been asked by Dr Evans to be a guest contributor to this week's Headmaster's Bulletin, in order to share some reminders about expectations, alongside ways in which we would ask parents to support both the school and the wider community.

Together with my Leadership Team colleagues, I enjoy starting the day by welcoming students at the school gates after their commute to School. As you can imagine, we see a wide variety of approaches: the early birds with a spring in their step; the amblers making late adjustments to their uniform; the last-minute phone-checkers and earphone-removers; the bleary-eyed, who may just manage a teenage grunt in reply to a cheery good morning; the sprinters cutting it fine to make the 8:20 tutor time deadline; and those whose perfected simian stroll risks earning them a detention as they approach a hat-trick of lates.

As a personal plea, I would be delighted not to succeed in my ongoing game of uniform infringement bingo. Your support in checking the following list would be greatly appreciated: white socks; no cycling helmet; blazers not being worn ("it's in my bag"); jewellery; non-regulation PE/Games kit; or the classic "triple T" of trainers, top buttons undone, and shirts untucked - all of which feature regularly on my virtual bingo board. Consistency around these factors creates a sense of pride among students, as it symbolises their affiliation with the school's values and identity. Our uniform cultivates belonging and unity within our community, while also contributing to the public image of the School.

Student safety and our impact on the wider community are equally important. Please do take a moment to read the reminders about expectations in the main section of today's Bulletin, which will help you support your child in flourishing while representing the School positively. I also ask vehicle users to review the section on considerate car use, as we have received concerns from neighbours and professionals about safety on the roads around the Reading School site.

Alongside responding to concerns raised by members of the public, we are also proud to hear so many positive accounts of how our students conduct themselves. These range from offering seats on the bus, being courteous on pavements, to assisting members of the public in need.

Exactly a year ago, two of our Year 10 boarding students provided first aid to a homeless man who had fallen unconscious in town. They rang 999, followed instructions, placed him in the recovery position, and stayed with him for 45 minutes until paramedics arrived. On another occasion, an elderly gentleman contacted the School to express gratitude to a student who carried his bag across the road at the station so that he did not miss his train. The student did not give his name but assured the gentleman that he would look out for him again the next day if needed.

Only this week, we received an email of thanks from a member of the public who had been taking his son to A&E following an accident before school. On arrival, noticing that the boy could not walk properly, two of our students helped carry him into the hospital. I was so pleased that Mr T Evans and Mrs L Clarke, on gate duty, were able to identify our humble, anonymous heroes so that we could pass on thanks.

Staff at Reading School strive to be positive role models for our students and time and again, we are left marvelling at how they shine, and how much we in turn learn from them.

With best wishes,

**Mr Dave McGall**  
**Deputy Head**

# Key information

## All Years

### Reminders of Expectations

Please click the following links in order to familiarise yourselves with the School's expectations and key areas we would like to promote:

[Behaviour Policy](#)

[School Uniform Policy](#)

[Home School Agreement Policy](#)

[Attendance Policy](#)

### Considerate car use, parental parking and dropping students to school

We have received several complaints from the school's neighbours or businesses regarding inconsiderate, and often illegal, parking by parents whilst dropping or to school.

We have also had complaints about students not crossing the road with due care and attention, putting themselves, other pedestrians and the drivers of any cars near the school in danger.

We do speak to the student about road safety and safe travel to school. However, please can you also help us to ensure students have a happy and safe journey into school each morning by considering one or more of the following:

#### *Walking wherever possible*

Not only is this a healthy way to get some exercise, but it supports the local community with congestion. In addition, it is much better for the environment. It is also very helpful to not drop your son directly outside the school gates as there is limited parking places. There are many more places a very short walk from the school which allow a more stress free drop off and have less of an impact on traffic flow.

#### *Cycling or scooting*

We have plenty of spaces to lock a bicycle or scooter inside the school gates. Please do **make sure they have a cycle helmet**, lights and reflective clothing.

#### *Car sharing*

Does anybody else live near you? Could you take it in turns to drive in to collect your children to ease the congestion outside the school at key times during the day?

#### *Parking responsibly*

As with the majority of schools in the country, we do not have a 'parent' car park. If you do need to drive to drop off or collect your child please park considerately and ensure you are not obstructing drives, private car parks, garages or access to roads. Please be respectful of our neighbours and remember that parking in restricted zones at any time of the day is prohibited.

Please use the roundabout at the end of Erleigh road and not turn in the private driveway opposite the main gate. It is important that parents/carers do not stop in areas which are near to pedestrian crossings or block the flow of traffic.

Our student's safety is our main priority and this includes their journey to and from school.

We appreciate your support in this matter.

We have included a useful link to the West Berkshire [Considerate car use](#) flyer which is a useful reference document.

## **Attendance and Holidays During Term Time**

Good attendance at school is vital for so many reasons; we know from analysis of examination results that when we compare attendance with exam grades, the higher the student's attendance the higher their grades were overall. The following articles are good reads [Why school attendance matters, and what we're doing to improve it – The Education Hub](#) , [Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? – The Education Hub](#) with particular stark reminders such as:

“Year 11 pupils with near-perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar pupils attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, missing just **10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%.**”

“Missing school doesn't just affect exam results and a child's time in education – it can **impact future earnings too.**”

Persistently absent pupils in secondary school **could earn £10,000 less** at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance.”

Any student whose attendance is below 90% is considered as a “persistent absentee”.

Good attendance is also key for social development, mental health and wellbeing and helps give children structure and a sense of community daily. As a school, we work tirelessly to help students maintain good attendance, however it is the parents that play the biggest role in making sure their children attend school. Creating good routines, such as:

- Ensure bedtime is at a sensible time each night (teenage children need between 8-10 hours' sleep a night to be healthy according to research).
- Uniform is ready the night before so there are no barriers in the morning.
- Alarm clocks are set to foster independence in the morning.
- Limit mobile phone and social media use late at night. With the best practice being not allowing devices in the bedroom at night.

We all know that when we have a cough, cold, mild virus/bug that the mornings feel worse, however after an hour we normally feel a lot better. Supporting your child to get into school, even when they're not feeling 100% is a key role that parents play. As previously shared the NHS [“is my child too ill for school”](#) document is a useful reference point.

We highlighted the Expectation Evenings last year that the government has outlined a much tougher stance on unauthorised absence, whereby a period of 5 days of unauthorised absence (this can be an accumulation of days, not just a single week of unauthorised absence) can lead to a fixed penalty

fine. This can increase further when 10 days of unauthorised absence has been recorded. Please see link below to the latest policy that has been released by the [Department of Education and the subsequent poster for an easy reference](#).

## **Uniform**

Wearing the correct school uniform is really important to the school, as it fosters a multitude of benefits that extend far beyond mere dress code adherence. Firstly, wearing the uniform consistently creates a sense of pride among students, as it symbolises their affiliation with the school's values and identity. Our uniform cultivates a strong sense of belonging, instilling a feeling of unity and camaraderie among our school community. Moreover, adhering to the uniform policy demonstrates a readiness to learn and contribute positively to the school community.

Please support us by checking your child wears the correct uniform each day. Students uniform is checked at gates and during the main door in the morning. A note in the student planner is useful to inform us of any short-term issues with uniform. House Tutors will also be checking uniform each day and following up any uniform infringements throughout the year.

I would also like to draw attention to the point around jewellery and clarity that none should be worn. In particular the points around earrings. We have asked our tutors last week to have discuss any issues with their tutees and outlined the following:

Students should not be wearing earrings or jewellery when in school in line with the [School uniform](#) policy. From talking with Hindu students/parents and research around wearing earrings, the evidence is that within some castes there is an obligation to get their ears pierced as the Karnavedha-saṃskāra (ear-piercing rite) is listed among the 16 compulsory saṃskāras. There is however, no obligation that they must wear ear-piercings in school once the piercing has become permanent. Should a student be worried about the healing of the ear from a piercing they can wear a clear plastic spacer during the school day.

## **Punctuality**

As a school, we recognise the importance of maximising learning time for students to achieve their best. Students who arrive late to school, tutor time and/or lessons miss out on key content and instructions, disrupt the learning for peers and the teacher, and it disrupts the flow of the lesson. Even missing a few minutes can add up to a significant amount of time and increase learning gaps. We encourage you to support us in reiterating the importance of good punctuality to your child. We will not accept persistent lateness from our students.

## **Mobile Phones and Electronic devices (this includes earphones)**

Mobile phones and any electronic devices must not be visible in school at any time.

They should be turned off and stored in school bags as soon as students walk on site for the duration of the day, this includes lesson times, transition times, and social times. Students can ask a member of staff if they can turn on their phone in the case of an emergency or visit student services to make contact with home.

Year 7 students are not allowed smart phones or any smart device in school.

Sixth Form students are permitted to use their phone in the sixth form area, refectory and LRC.

## A time of reflection

Yesterday a terrible attack took place at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Crumpsall, Manchester during Yom Kippur where two worshippers were killed and others injured; the incident is being treated as a terrorist attack and communities across the country have been left deeply upset.

Religious and community leaders have rightly called for solidarity and reflection. As Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis urged, this is a moment for “national soul-searching” about the hatred that has been allowed to grow and for all of us to confront antisemitism wherever it appears. Likewise, Bishop John Arnold of Salford spoke of standing “united in our prayers” with Manchester’s Jewish community and the need to strengthen community solidarity in the face of those who would sow division.

Here at Reading School those values, compassion, courage and community, are ones we promote and live out every day. You will already have seen examples in this Bulletin of our students stepping forward to help others; it is that same kindness and moral courage we must show now. Please take time at home to talk with your children about what happened, to reassure them, and to remind them that our school stands against hatred and for the safety and dignity of every member of our community.

If any pupil or family is feeling worried or upset, our pastoral and safeguarding teams are here to help - please contact your child’s tutor, Head of Year or the Designated Safeguarding Lead so we can offer support. We will also continue to teach and model respectful, informed conversations about difficult world events and to work with local faith and community partners to promote understanding and safety.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our students to be the compassionate, responsible citizens and our thoughts are with all those who have been affected by yesterday's tragic events.

## Reading Week

The School’s annual Reading Week will take place from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November. The week represents an opportunity for students to focus on reading beyond the curriculum while using a framework provided by the School. Reading can take many forms; for academic development as well as for pleasure, and we would encourage students to use the guidance provided by the School to immerse yourselves in a rich and varied diet of subject matter in order to increase your appreciation for reading and learning at a high level.

To find out more and prepare for Reading Week, please [click this link](#). Guidance will be shared by staff with students throughout October.

## Ashley Robson Card and Collection

Thank you to those from the School Community who have contributed to former Headmaster, Ashley Robson’s retirement collection. A reminder that the [collection closes at midnight tonight](#) on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

## Online Safety Event for Parents

In partnership with Knowsley CLC, all parents and carers were invited to a virtual Online Safety Information Session on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 4:00pm – 4:45pm. The session covered all aspects of children’s online lives and the associated risks, latest trends and guidance on how you can support them to remain safe.

Please [click this link](#) to access the recorded session.

## Years 9 & 10 Only

### Duke Of Edinburgh Award 2025-2026 Sign Up

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a youth development program that helps develop life skills through a series of challenges and sections. The link below is for students to sign up to participate in either the Bronze or Silver award, and is open to Year 9 and 10 only. Please think carefully as to whether you would like to sign up, participating in the award is a big commitment.

The relevant dates for those who successfully sign up are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> March - In school Training session for Silver and Bronze (9am - 4pm)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> May - Bronze Practical Training (6pm 2<sup>nd</sup> May - 4pm 3<sup>rd</sup> May)
- 18<sup>th</sup> June - Bronze two-day Expedition - (9am - 18<sup>th</sup> June - 4pm 19<sup>th</sup> June)
- 5<sup>th</sup> June - Silver practical training (6pm 5<sup>th</sup> June - 4pm 7<sup>th</sup> June)
- 17<sup>th</sup> July - Silver three-day Expedition (9am - 17<sup>th</sup> July - 4pm 19<sup>th</sup> July)

These are mandatory sessions which need to be attended in order to participate in the expedition during summer 2026, and in order to complete the award. Please ensure there are no clashes with any events at school or family holidays with the above dates before signing up, as these are set and will not change.

[Student sign up link](#)

Please email Mrs Smith – [msmith@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:msmith@reading-school.co.uk) or Ms Loft – [dloft@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:dloft@reading-school.co.uk) for all enquires.

# School Community News

## Poet Laureate 2025/26

Applications to become Reading School's Poet Laureate was advertised during last month and the English Department had the difficult task of judging and choosing this year's Poet Laureate from the submissions received from students on the theme, 'Hope'.

After much deliberation, the English Department is delighted to announce that Prithwish D (8E), pictured in the front cover, is Reading School's Poet Laureate for 2025/26. Please enjoy his winning entry titled by clicking this link - '[Skinless Jim](#)'.

## English Secondary Schools Swimming Championship



Reading School's Swimming Team, comprising three squads across all year groups, proudly represented the School in the South East Division qualifying round of the English Secondary Schools Swimming Championship. The Berkshire heats took place on Monday 29th September at St George's School, Ascot.

Last year, our Junior Team won both the freestyle and medley relays. This year, they once again demonstrated great determination, competing against Wellington College Prep, Edgbarrow School, The Forest School, and Reading Blue Coat School. The team finished comfortably ahead in the Freestyle Relay, while the Medley Relay proved a thrilling contest, with Edgbarrow School finishing just hundredths of a second behind.

The Intermediate Team showed commendable perseverance, while the Senior Team achieved strong results, finishing second in both of their races, with Reading Blue Coat School securing first place.

We are extremely proud of all our students who represented Reading School with commitment, teamwork, and resilience, regardless of the final standings.

Junior Team: Taksh C (7W), Eryk K (8E), Josh W (8C), Toby S (8C)

Intermediate Team: Aaron D (9S), Rutwik B (10E), Aditya P (10L), Shreyas K (10W)

Senior Team: Adi A (13MKa), Ji Ji W (13JTe), Kai T (13E), Aarav R (10W)

## Scholarship Programme

At Reading School, we expect our students to develop an academic curiosity and have a strong desire to read beyond the curriculum that is delivered in the classroom. We enthusiastically support the academic potential and scholarly approach of our students and during their time here, they will have many opportunities to stretch themselves in order to reach their potential.

Year 12s have now chosen and begun to study the subject areas that inspire them the most and that they are excited about exploring further. During the Sixth Form Transition Day in July, they were presented with an exciting challenge by Head of Classics & Scholarship Lead, Mr M Cooper, *to take the opportunity to explore further an aspect of at least one of their A level subjects beyond the curriculum.* Any area directly or indirectly relating to their chosen A level would be acceptable, as long as it sparked interest and curiosity.

Mr M Cooper shares, “Exploring subject areas of interest can often open doors to discovering deeper passions and further areas of interest. This journey of discovery can ignite deep-seated enthusiasm for a particular field while transforming students’ academic experience. As well as fuelling their love for the subjects, it has the additional benefit of the students understanding their A level courses better and allowing them to contribute in greater depth to class discussions. In short, the process will take their A level lessons to another level.”

Reading School students are also encouraged to be community-minded and to leave the school a better institution than the one they found on their arrival. With this community focus in mind, the format of the research is that students submit a video file (10 – 15 mins in length), and the best pieces of research will be made a part of a new Digital Research Library for all students (present and future) to access and be inspired by.

Students are invited to be as creative as they want in relation to their video through the use of images, graphs, text, stock videos and commentary. This considers any students who do not feel comfortable recording themselves. All presentations must contain a bibliography – a slide which outlines where they got their information from. This is to enable those that are interested in their scholarly work to read up on it in more detail later.

For the avoidance of doubt, the term ‘Scholarship’ is used in relation to the pursuit of knowledge through study and research, and not in relation to financial aid awarded to students.

Reading School prides itself on striving for excellence in all that it does, and the new student-led Digital Research Library is one step in allowing bright minds to explore, showcase and share their knowledge and passion with others.

To view an example from the Digital Research Library, please [click this link](#) or image below.



# Reading School Events

## Faith and Reason Lecture Series



The Reading School Chaplaincy Team is delighted to host the first termly Faith and Reason Lecture, exploring the relationship between science and religion. This lecture will be presented by Dr William J Wilkinson, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and Lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Brighton, whose academic interests span physics and cosmology.

Dr Wilkinson will consider modern cosmological insights into the origins of the universe and reflect on their wider philosophical and theological implications, offering an engaging perspective on how science and faith intersect in addressing some of life's most profound questions. Light refreshments will be served after the lecture and all students and staff are welcome.

### The Origins of the Universe: Philosophical Implications from Modern Cosmology

**Date:** Thursday 16th October 2025

**Room:** Lecture Theatre

**Time:** 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Click here to RSVP: [The Origins of the Universe: Philosophical Implications from Modern Cosmology - Thursday 16th October 2025 | Events | Reading School Alumni Society](https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/orchestra-soloists)


## Reading School Orchestra & Solo Showcase 2025





Organised by Mr O Griffin (Director of Music) and the Music Department, we are delighted to invite you to a concert showcasing the exceptional musical talent of our students.


### Programme Highlights:

- Tchaikovsky** – Piano Concerto No. 1, Movement II. Soloist - Zi Han Zhang (13W)
- Strauss** – Radetzky March
- Plus** soloists from throughout the school

 **Date:** Monday, 13th October

 **Venue:** Big School, Reading School

 **Time:** 18:00 – 19:00

 **Tickets:** £5 adults | £3 concessions



**RSVP:** <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/events/view/orchestra-soloists>

*Please use the email address we have on record for you at the school when registering.*

We warmly encourage families to join us for this celebration of music and student achievement. For any questions, please contact the Events Team at [events@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:events@reading-school.co.uk).

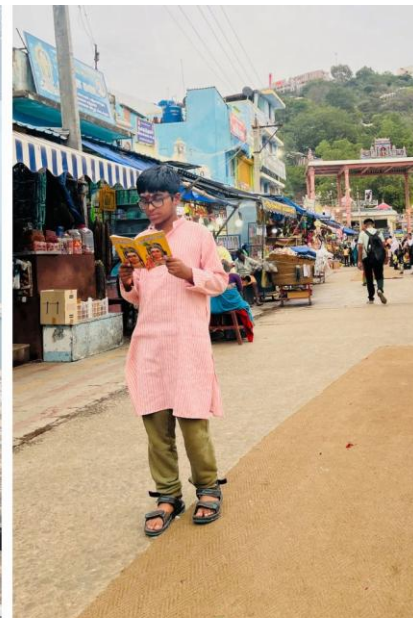
# Highlights of the week: Michaelmas Term Week 4

To keep up to date with student life at Reading School, click the icons below to follow, be part of, and stay connected with the Reading School community.



## Year 7 Extreme Reader Photo Competition Winners

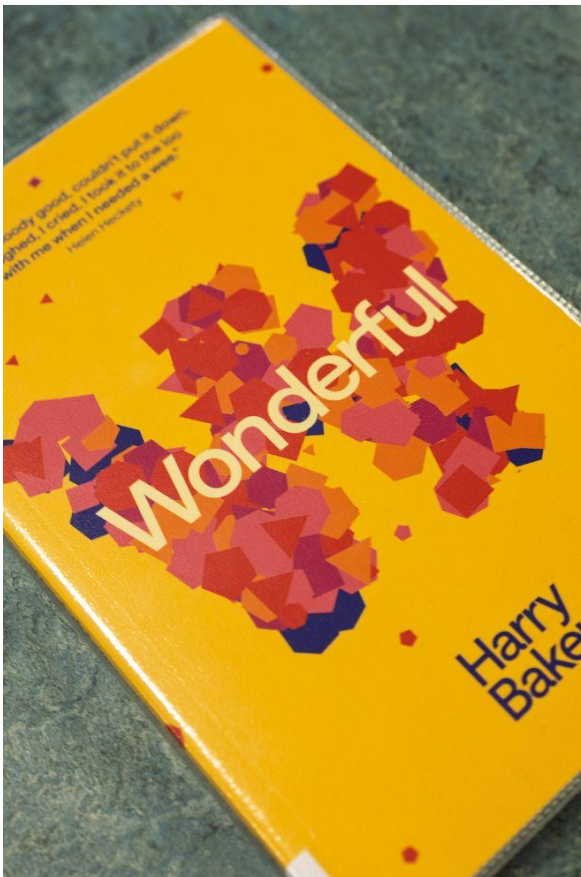
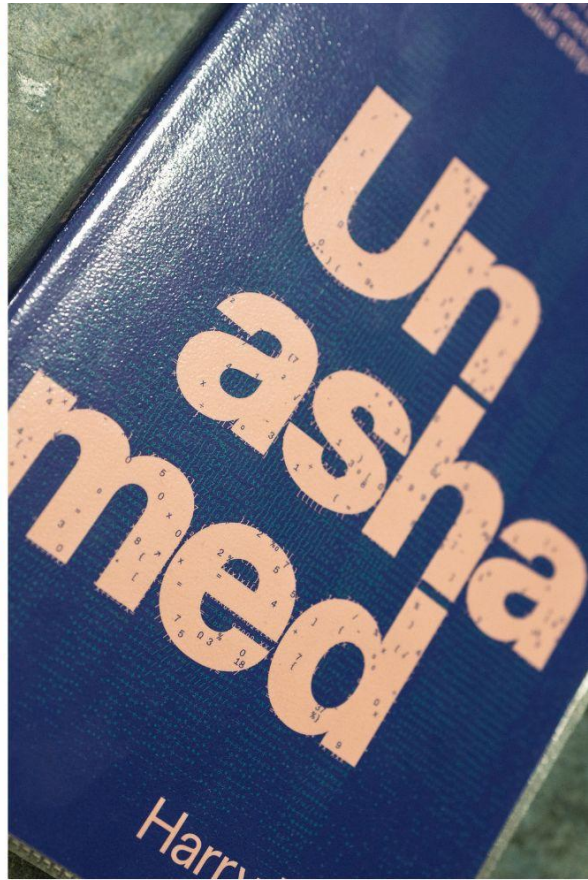
Year 7 were set the challenge to have a photo taken of themselves reading somewhere interesting or unusual over the summer for the annual Extreme Reader Photo Competition. Winners and all pupils who entered received a limited-edition Reading School Summer Reading Challenge pen and the winners received a £10 Amazon gift card.



Congratulations to: Lewis B (7W), Alexander T (7S), Anish T (7L), Aradhya R (7C), Kavin M (7E) and Cameron A (7C)

## Poetry under the Stairs 2025

National Poetry Day 2025 was celebrated in the LRC this week during our much-loved annual 'Poetry under the Stairs' event. Students across all years got an opportunity to perform poems, sonnets, limericks and raps of their choice.



The event was concluded with the announcement of Reading School’s new Poet Laureate, Prithwish D (8E) pictured receiving his prize from Head of English, Mr Baldock on front cover. Prizes were awarded to student poets by a student led judging panel.



**Judging Form for NPF**

Criteria for scoring

Emotion (passion vs monotone): /5

Clarity (how clear dictation is): /5

Creativity (how creative the selection/creation of the poem is):

Name	Form	Emotion	Clarity	Creativity









This year's event was organised by Deputy Head Pupil Librarian, Sid M (12ELa) with the support of the Pupil Librarian Team.



Feedback is important to us and if you have any positive news, comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Relations Office by emailing [communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:communityrelations@reading-school.co.uk)