



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

22 JANUARY 2021

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Introduction

Dear Parents, carers and students,

A reminder, as advised earlier, Monday 25th January is a normal school day instead of a staff day and online lessons will continue.

Martin Luther King Jr Day

This week, 18 January marked Martin Luther King Jr Day in the US – a day to remember and celebrate the life and legacy of the civil rights leader.

But almost 53 years after he was assassinated, we are frequently reminded of the inequities that still exist in society – and that we have a long way to go to achieve his dream of racial equality.

As an educational institution, we remain absolutely committed to being anti-racist. We have seen tremendous work to support our commitments to improve inclusivity and understanding of the diverse range of cultures that enrich Reading School. Including the '[I am Redingensians](#)' campaign that embraced all things that make us unique. Levi Tebbut (OR 2016) was invited to talk to our Year 13 students who candidly shared his experiences. We have had various debating motions led by our Debating Society and PSHE sessions to discuss these issues further. Central to this is having more honest, productive conversations about race – and ensuring everyone has the tools and understanding to create equity within our school and community.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day, commemorated on Wednesday 27 January, presents us in 2021 with the theme of 'Be the light in the darkness.' It is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution, and the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The theme 'Be the light in the darkness' encourages everyone to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but crucially, also the way individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide.

Thus, I would encourage all members of our community to consider the theme of 'Be the light in the darkness' has resonance and value for us all. Let us consider how we can be the light by undertaking acts of charity, love and solidarity that strengthen our community. We should think about how we can be the light in the darkness in a variety of ways and places – at home, in public and online. Undoubtedly our light is more powerful when we work together with others.

Holocaust Memorial Day enables us to remember, and remember with a purpose. We all have a responsibility to work for a safe society, a better society.

Reading can be a powerful tool to help us reflect and this year we have added the following ebooks to our VLeBooks platform (www.vlebooks.com), click Office 365)

- The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
- After the War by Tom Palmer
- The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne
- The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
- Night by Elie Wiesel
- Once and Then by Morris Gleitzman

Useful LRC Resources for Holocaust Research

<https://readingschoolco.sharepoint.com/SitePages/LRC%20E-Resources.aspx>

- Britannica (All ages)
- Gale World History in Context (All ages)
- Complete Issues (All ages)
- The Day (All ages)
- JSTOR (KS4+)
- Modern History Review Magazine accessed via the Hodder Magazine Archive (Aimed at A-level Students)

Here are some resources from the National Literacy Trust in partnership with award-winning author

Tom Palmer, funded by the Marks Family Charitable Trust

https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/holocaust-memorial-day/?mc_cid=a3536c86db&mc_eid=945d226030

Building character

Holocaust Memorial Day and Martin Luther King Jr Day remind us that our purpose for 2021 must be to build character, competencies and wellness that allows all our school community to make progress on a pathway not just to excellence but equity. We must work together to survive the current challenges and ensure that we are able to thrive in the future.

We want all members of our community to be enabled to build the civic character of belonging.

We want to equip all members of our community to be empowered to build the performance character of potential.

We want to empower and enable all members of our community to be empowered to nurture the moral character of doing what is right and good in the world.

All our students and staff belong to our community and deserve equity and fairness.

As a community, Reading School's collective strength comes from the qualities of our members – staff, students, governors, parents and Old Redingensians.

At this time of challenge, we want all members of our community to know they are valued and respected. Therefore, our priority in 2021 is to renew our commitment to aligning our culture so that Reading School is a place of belonging.

Student challenge

Currently many of us are spending many hours in front of the laptop or PC or even our gadgets. Too often persuading ourselves we are too busy to read. That we do not have enough time!

I challenge all students this week to engage in reading. Set time aside at least 30 minutes every evening to read. Reading allows us to be transported from our own world to another. Between the pages of a book, we can become immersed in the lives of fictional characters and learn about a culture entirely different from our own. We can also learn new words and phrases, experience a range of emotions, and acquire skills and knowledge.

Currently I am reading '*Thrive: how to cultivate character so your children can flourish online*' Dr Tom Harrison. Dr Harrison, who works for the Jubilee Centre for Character Education, University of Birmingham, poses the following questions:

- How can parents support young people navigating thorny digital-age issues?
- What more can they do?
- How can parents be proactive and preventative?

He argues that as parents, regarding the above, we should seek to be an advisor – *‘Advising is about working in partnership, not about being in power. It requires us to really listen, to enhance our own knowledge through learning, to try and show unlimited patience, to be understanding, and to be courageous. It is not easy work.’*

I agree that being a parent requires us to listen and show patience and be understanding.

Indeed, it is not easy work. But please be assured that as part of the Reading School, you are not alone. Working in partnership we can strive to survive the current challenges and thrive in the future. Online or in everyday life we will ensure that flourishing rather than floundering is the outcome.

Remote learning

It has been noticeable how students have settled into routines this week – much more confident and adept with technology, and up to speed with the amount of work expected. We know that many families have commented on the flexibility that our home learning system provides and are beginning to see that the children are covering a significant amount of material throughout the week.

I am grateful for all the positive and constructive comments made to me or to tutors, especially recognising the sterling efforts of all the teachers and staff over the last few weeks.

I wish you all a safe and well weekend.

Mr AM Robson
Headmaster

Excellence

All Years – Lent Term 2021

Please click the '[At A Glance](#)' document which outlines the timetable for all years during the Lent Term.

Year 9 only

Parents' evening

We apologise for the disruption caused yesterday evening to Year 9 Parents Evening. This was due to the *SchoolCloud's* Parents Evening system experiencing outages which affected access to the site. Unfortunately, this was not in the School or teacher's control and we apologise for the inconvenience caused.

Year 10 only – Target Oxbridge

This week Rare launched a Year 10 Target Oxbridge programme in partnership with Trinity College, Cambridge. To engage with Black students earlier to improve the representation of Black students at Oxbridge.

Please click the link for details on how to apply: <https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/access/outreach-during-covid-19/targetoxbridge/>

Applications are open until 7th February.



Application Deadline: Sunday 7th February 2021

Target Oxbridge is a free programme that aims to help Black African and Caribbean students and students of mixed race with Black African and Caribbean heritage increase their chances of getting into the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge (known collectively as Oxbridge). Since launching in 2012, Target Oxbridge has helped over 200 students to secure Oxbridge offers.

The programme is open to UK-based students in Year 10. The students accepted onto the programme will be predicted at least three GCSEs at grade 7, or will have the potential to achieve these grades but be in need of additional motivation and inspiration.

rare Reading School TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

Photos by: Graham CopeKoga and Sonum Sumaria

The graphic features two photographs: the top one shows a group of young Black women smiling and talking, and the bottom one shows a student sitting at a desk in a library.

Year 11 and 13 only

Year 11 and Year 13 Interim Assessments

Please find below links to Interim Assessment Schedules for your information:

[Year 11 Interim Assessments](#)

[Year 13 Interim Assessments](#)

Sixth Form Applications for 2021 Entry

A reminder that the deadline for both day and boarding applications to the Sixth Form is Friday 29th January 2021. All current Year 11 students will need to complete the application if they wish to progress into Year 12 September 2021. Please do not defer an application on the basis of waiting for any internal test results. There will be some flexibility for option changes providing they can be accommodated. To make an application please click on the following link: <http://www.reading-school-admissions.co.uk>.

For anyone considering weekly boarding in the Sixth Form please contact our Boarding Administrator, Mrs Hickman (phickman@reading-school.co.uk) for further details. We find that boarding in the Sixth Form provides students with the perfect opportunity to gain independence, self-motivation and academic discipline; skills which

Inspire Lectures

In partnership with Speakers for Schools here is next week's full [Live Broadcasts Schedule](#). Please encourage your son to tune in to these opportunities!

WEEK STARTING MONDAY 25th JANUARY 2021

Mon 25th January 2-3pm

Jason Spencer, Business Development Director, ITV for KS4-5

[LINK TO JOIN](#)

Join us here to hear Jason Spencer, Business Development Director at ITV share his perspective on how the world of media and marketing is changing and the impact of digital transformation. Jason has led the growth in revenue of ITV's commercial teams across the UK outside London and will be sharing career advice for those considering careers in TV and digital sectors.

Tues 26th January 10-11am

Brandie Deignan, Chief Executive Officer, Pier Health Group & Former Managing Director, Marco Pierre White Restaurants for KS4-5

[LINK TO JOIN](#)

Join us to hear Brandie Deignan, Chief Executive Officer at Pier Health Group and Former Managing Director at Marco Pierre White Restaurants discuss the importance of empowerment and what is it like to change your career path. A must watch for young aspiring leaders!

Wed 27th January 2-3pm

Col Russell Lewis, Head of Youth Engagement, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for KS3-5

[LINK TO JOIN](#)

Join us to watch a broadcast with Lieutenant Colonel Lewis from The Royal Military Sandhurst. Lieutenant Colonel Lewis left regular service in 2013 and now delivers strategy, leadership and team building training. He will discuss how values and standards benefit great teamwork and leadership. He will also reflect on how young people can build their confidence and resilience.

Thurs 28th January 2-3pm

Toby Jones, Actor for KS4-5

[LINK TO JOIN](#)

Tune in to hear from Actor, Toby Jones. Toby has starred in films such as the Hunger Games, Harry Potter and Snow White and the Huntsman. Toby will be sharing his insights into his career and discussing the importance of the creative industries. There will be an opportunity for students to submit their own questions.

HOW TO JOIN THE LIVE BROADCASTS

- Join 10 minutes before the broadcast to be ready.
- You can join without needing an account – [Watch how here](#)

LIVE BROADCASTS LIBRARY & MORE

- Watch pre-recorded broadcasts from our library [here](#)
- Please see our [Schools Guide here](#).

Book Week 2021



CHRIS BRADFORD

THE SOUL HUNTERS

DEATH IS ONLY THE BEGINNING...

Sponsored by the Old Redingensians Association

READING SCHOOL BOOK FESTIVAL WITH CHRIS BRADFORD

Virtual Talk on Friday 26th February
2.30pm - 3.30pm on Zoom
Reserve your place by scanning the QR Code or by following the link
<http://bit.ly/ChrisBradfordTalk2021>



Chris Bradford Virtual Author Talk to Launch Book Week 2021

Author, Chris Bradford, will be giving a virtual talk to pupils at Reading School on **Friday 26th of February at 2.30pm**. The talk is open to all years, but places are limited and must be booked using this form: <http://bit.ly/ChrisBradfordTalk2021>. Chris will be talking about his brand-new book, The Soul Hunters.

Chris Bradford's best-selling books are published in over 20 languages and have received more than 30 children's book award nominations, winning among others the Northern Ireland Book Award 2011, Hampshire Book Award 2014, the Brilliant Book Award 2014, and the Quick Read 2017. Young Samurai: The Way of the Warrior was deemed one of Puffin's 70 Best Ever Books, alongside Treasure Island and Robin Hood.

For his award-winning Young Samurai series, he trained in iaido (samurai swordmanship), karate, ninjutsu and earned his black belt in Zen Kyu Shin Taijutsu. Previously he has trained in judo, muay thai and kickboxing. For his Bodyguard series, Chris embarked on an intensive close protection course to become a qualified professional bodyguard. During his training, he acquired skills in unarmed combat, defensive driving, tactical firearms, threat assessments, surveillance, and even anti-ambush exercises.

The LRC Book Club interviewed Chris last year in connection with The Return of the Warrior which was nominated and shortlisted for the Reading School Book Award 2020. You can watch our interview here: <https://readingschool.planetestream.com/View.aspx?id=5441~4o~osjWKry3>

Other events for Book Week 2021, which incorporates World Book Day on **Thursday 4th of March**, include a Short Story Writing Competition, a Readathon, quizzes and a photo competition. We hope to include other author events later in the year when it is possible to host the authors on site.

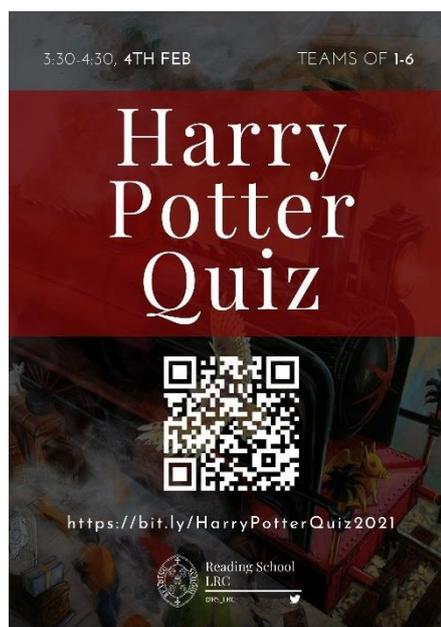
We would like to thank the Old Redingensians Association for sponsoring these events.

Harry Potter Book Night Quiz

The magic of Harry Potter is normally celebrated globally in schools, libraries and bookshops during February each year. This year, although the official date has changed to June, we have decided to go ahead with our first virtual Harry Potter Quiz. **The Quiz will be run on Teams from 3.30pm to 4.30pm on Thursday 4th of February.**

Booking is essential and pupils should form Teams of between one and six. They will be required to give the name of their Team Captain when they sign-up and all participants must complete this form <https://bit.ly/HarryPotterQuiz2021>.

The quiz questions this year have been written by previous winners Samuel J, Saikrishnan D, and Sidh G from 10S with technical support from Head Pupil Librarian Matthew G and Pupil Librarians Matthew C and Rajan D. This is always a much-loved event from the LRC calendar so we are delighted to be able to run it virtually.



3.30-4.30, 4TH FEB TEAMS OF 1-6

Harry Potter Quiz



<https://bit.ly/HarryPotterQuiz2021>

Reading School LRC

Integrity

NHS Test and Trace: Covid-19 testing for staff and students – action required.

Many thanks to all those who have completed the consent form. A reminder that we require the consent forms below to be completed for **all students** regardless of whether you consent or do not consent for your son (if under 16) or yourself (if a student over 16) to have the test. This is in order to plan for the return of students to school and to understand the numbers of students that will need to be tested when they first return.

Therefore, please complete the form below and submit no later than **Friday 22nd January 2021.**

Parents of students **under the age of 16** should complete the consent form below:

[Consent Form for COVID 19 testing in School \(Students under 16\)](#)

Students who are **aged 16 or over** should complete the consent form below:

[Consent Form for COVID 19 testing in School \(Students Over 16\)](#)

In addition, any staff member or student who has come into contact with positive cases in our school can be tested daily for seven days to allow them to remain in school.

[Reading School – COVID-19 Testing Privacy Statement](#)

Safeguarding

Now more than ever it is important we look after ourselves and other's mental and physical wellbeing. Please see below guidance during remote learning.

[Remote Safeguarding for Students](#)

[Remote Safeguarding for Parents](#)

Please also see some great webinars available for parents from Elevate, which support a lot of the material in the attached documents:

[Motivation Webinar \(recorded\)](#) - a summary sheet is available [here](#).

[Managing Student Stress and Wellbeing Webinar](#) – live on 9th Feb, 6-7pm

Leadership

Debating Society

Join us in discussions and debates on current and topical issues. Led by the Arvind A (President), Alex N (Vice President) and Malhar D (Committee member Year 12).

The committee will host a debate every Wednesday at 2.30pm via Microsoft Teams. Over the forthcoming weeks, the motions include:

- Wednesday 27th January - TH opposes political correctness - [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Wednesday 3rd February - THS protective legislation over individual freedom - [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Wednesday 10th February - THS the censorship of music lyrics (Drill music etc.) - [Click here to join the meeting](#)

All students are encouraged to participate in Debating Society gaining broad, multi-faceted knowledge, increasing confidence, poise and self-esteem and improving critical thinking skills.

Work Experience opportunities

Students are reminded that when applying for virtual work placements to please ensure you inform your tutor of the details of the opportunity you are applying for, in advance. So, tutors are aware that a personal reference may be required.

[Springpod Medicine Virtual Work Experience](#) - February 2021

Virtual Work Experience opportunities available via **Speakers for School** include:

[STEM powered Working in the Water Industry](#)

Dates: 15th February 2021.

Eligibility: 16-19 year old students keen to find out more about a career in management.

Application Deadline: 25th January 2021

[Insights into Infrastructure and the Built Environment](#)

Dates: 15th – 19th February 2021.

Eligibility: 15-19 year olds students interested in environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion.

Application Deadline: 15th January 2021

[Virtual Work Experience with a leading Construction/Engineering/Infrastructure/Design Company](#)

Dates: 15th -19th February 2021.

Eligibility: 14-19 year olds students interested in Smart Motorways sector & technology

Application Deadline: 29th January 2021

Green Skills in the Construction and Engineering Industry

Dates: 6th -9th April 2021.

Eligibility: 14-19 year olds interested in the 'green' plans for the construction and engineering industry.

Application Deadline: 7^h March 2021

VWEX: Construct your Career with Kier

Dates: 1st – 5th March 2021.

Eligibility: 14-19 year olds interested in design, finance, Health & Safety, Sustainability, Planning or Community Engagement

Application Deadline: 17^h February 2021

East West Railway Company - Building a New Railway

Dates: 6th -9th April 2021.

Eligibility: 16-19 year olds interested in Technology, Engineering, Planning, Business Studies, Design and/or Customer Services

Application Deadline: 28^h February 2021.

Careers and additional opportunities

Students are reminded that careers and additional opportunities are posted to Teams. An example of these are set out below:

- ['Meet the Russell Group'](#) event on afternoon of Wednesday 10th February.
- Sign up to the virtual [UK university and apprenticeship fair](#) Wednesday 27th January 12noon to 18.00.
- [University of Leicester](#) - Short introductory videos explaining what studying a wide variety of subjects is like at University of Leicester. This could help with subject choice.
- [Lancaster University](#)- Series of webinars and an essay competition for anyone interested in studying Sport Science.
- [Barclays](#) are running a whole series of webinars and presentations for those interested in the finance sector. There is a focus on apprenticeships. Places are limited.
- [HSBC work experience programme](#). A great opportunity.
- [PWC Flying Start degree](#). This combines work and university and is an excellent opportunity.
- [National Apprenticeship Week](#) – Monday 8 Feb to Friday 12 Feb!
- [New College of the Humanities](#) – online taster lectures for a whole range of subjects.

RAF Humanitarian Engineering Online Course – Year 9 Only

Are any of your students in Year 9 (S3 Scotland, Year 10 NI) who are interested in engineering and how it is used in real life RAF humanitarian situations?

If so, please let them know that there are FREE places available on the following RAF supported Humanitarian Engineering online courses taking place in April 2021. Applicant criteria applies to these courses and the closing date for applications is 15 February 2021.

The courses also attract a British Science Association Bronze Crest Award and Industrial Cadet Bronze Award on successful completion.

To find out more and how to book please click the following links. The training is in Partnership with the Smallpeice Trust.

Course dates Saturday 6 to Tuesday 9 April 2021: 0900 hrs – 1300 hrs
This course is open to anyone and you can find out more details in this [link](#).

Course dates Monday 12 to Thursday 15 April 2021: 0900 hrs – 1300 hrs
This course is open to girls only and you can find out more details in this [link](#).

Community

Community and Collaboration

In the last week we have been thrilled to see hundreds of Year 7-10 students taking part in the new online electives program on a daily basis: there were over 600 participants in the top 10 live electives during afternoons this past week, with staff and students working together with energy and creativity.

In the cold, damp and dark January days, these sessions have felt like bursts of energy, providing warmth and connection, creating space for us all to do different things and building on one of our core leadership values; collaboration.

Some of the most popular activities this week past were: Animation and Coding 'What Three Words' challenges, Ed Roy's Fitness Bootcamp, the BBC Young Reporter club, Mr Sandiford's Perfume Making, Creative Writing with Dr Evans, Science Activities, Book Club and Art Club.

Many of these sessions had more participants than could ever take part in normal circumstances; over 50 students taking part in most of these activities and Mr Ling Winston's Animation Club attracting over 100 active users in its first week online.

In addition, asynchronous activities that ran in 2020 have relaunched and students have started logging their rides and runs again with Mr Stromdale and Mr Steadman.

The Debating Societies first online debate of the year had over 100 attendees on Wednesday and other stalwarts of Reading School life such as MiG25 and Chess Club continue to run.

Do please contribute and collaborate and play your role in our school community. This is not a time to hide talents and interests, but rather a time to encourage one another to bring our essential contributions to our lockdown lives.

I for one, am looking forward to another bootcamp on Monday - students, staff and parents are all welcome in our team, at 1400!

Thanks for your participation. Mr T Evans, Assistant Head

Motivation Webinar

Increasing and sustaining student motivation at the forefront during the pandemic, please see Elevate's free parent webinar held this week, now available to be watched on this link: <https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/replay>. You can also download a summary sheet of the main points [here](#).

Stress and Wellbeing Webinar

The next free webinar is on **Stress and Wellbeing**, focusing on how to establish and maintain good routines during lockdown, how to manage stress levels, and what to do when stress gets overwhelming. The details are below:

Managing Student Stress & Wellbeing

Date: Tuesday 9th February 2021

Time: 6:00 – 7:00pm

Registration link: <https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/register>

This webinar is suitable for parents of Years 7 to 13.

Future Webinars by Elevate Coaching

Tuesday 2nd March: Preparing for Assessments

Tuesday 23rd March: Managing Technology and Distractions

Wellbeing

<https://www.reading-school.co.uk/page/?title=Wellbeing&pid=90>