



Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

14 MAY 2021

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

How do we build purpose, belonging and mental health? As a consequence of the pandemic we need to increase our focus on the purpose of Reading School as an organisation – to develop academic excellence and build good men so that their future stories are shaped in a positive way through an emphasis on opportunity.

We have a significant capacity for survival in adversity. But surviving is not good enough. We need to constantly nurture understanding of our purpose as a place of education and belonging. It is right and proper that we reflect on the continuing consequences of the pandemic and seek develop a model of school improvement that ensures both organisational purpose and positive mental health. The current crisis provides us with an opportunity to emphasise that work can be productive and positive for mental health. We are committed to building personal resilience and peer support. We are committed to providing the provision of a mentally healthy place to work and study and tackle negative, destructive behaviours.

At Reading School, we seek to provide a sense of identity, for instance through the House System, and a sense of achievement. This impacts positively in developing a sense of pride and belonging in being a member of the Reading School Community.

Whilst the pandemic exposes mental health it can also inspire the way forward. All of us have gone through isolation and real fear, for self, fear for families and friends, and fear of failure. The fears and isolation engendered by the pandemic have had direct impacts on mental health.

We want to develop a culture of openness around mental health. Firstly, we should recognise that we all have mental health – which exists on a continuum and can change on a daily basis. Secondly, we should ensure that every member of the Reading School community has someone that they can talk to – experts in listening, ready to signpost for support if needed.

We will endeavour to work with parents in the delivery of the shared responsibility of nurturing the wellbeing of our young people by signposting resources and organisations than can support. Thus, working together, we can go beyond survival, and thrive and ultimately flourish.

At Reading School, we strive to be an organisation that is outward facing, that seeks to build community through compassion, commitment and character. This is exemplified in two recent instances of generosity from members of our school community. Clearly evidence of working together to ensure positive impact.

We have raised £7568.50 (£6419 plus £1149.50 gift aid) for the Charity Medicins Sans Frontieres. In addition, Milan G (9E) has recently raised £1040 linked to 'Young Leaders in Cricket' and supporting the development of sport in the community, including at Reading School.

We wholeheartedly support our students in their commitment to service and volunteering. Indeed, we are inspired by all members of the Reading School Community in their endeavours to enable good causes to flourish. Undoubtedly, compassion, character and generosity are characteristics of people of substance and character.

Mr AM Robson
Headmaster

Excellence

Year 11 and Year 13 only

Summer Assessments Schedule

By way of reminder, Year 11 and 13 summer assessment timetables can be found here:

[Year 11 Summer Assessments May 2021](#)

[Year 13 Summer Assessments May 2021](#)

In addition, we are pleased to highlight Ofqual's updated student guide for summer 2021 which can be found here:

[Student guide to awarding: summer 2021](#)

Years 7-10 & 12

End of Year Assessments

All students in Years 7-10 and in Year 12 will have a week of assessments from Monday 21st June to Friday 26th June. We do not want any students to feel stressed or anxious preparing for these assessments and will publish the timetable for these on Friday June 11th at the latest. Learning to revise, and preparing for assessments is an important part of this process, but we don't want any student to feel overwhelmed as we come towards the end of this challenging year. For Year 7-9 students the primary purpose of these assessments remains diagnostic: helping us to identify areas of strength and weakness across the cohort. For Years 10 and 12, these assessments will contribute to initial predicted grades for GCSE and for A Level. Teaching staff will inform all students of areas that they should consider reviewing and revising in good time – with Microsoft Teams the primary mechanism for disseminating this information.

All Years

The Ruin – Poem

Our Poet Laureate George has been experimenting with form; please find his latest poem below:

The Ruin

Ancient arches its own windows A stone monument listed in law.	frame augmented glass; lost way back. to seventh century life, Lone survivor trapped by the tech-age.
of the war of time,	
City centre's graveyard under church under	sorry sight: grotesque, grand high-rises; colossal corporations.
an absent abbot, their work weak,	Missing monks, all abroad in Heaven; wailing, wobbling, falling, falling,

fallen.

George 12AC

Reading School Book Award 2021

The Reading School Book Award is an annual award recognising excellent, exciting and engaging YA fiction published between the 1st of May and the 30th of April. We would like to invite students to nominate books for this year's award, using this form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QKRT3Wr9XkC75lKx5h6C2wChu-XfAilGohLXizarqYVUM1ZRu0Q4RVISTVM2SUhDRFAzMkc5UVpaRC4u>

Students can make one nomination per form. Students may nominate more than one book. Please see our [Book List](#) of recently published books for titles that meet our criteria (see attached). You can nominate books not on this list as long as they are first published in the UK between 1st May 2020 and 30th April 2021.

The deadline for nominations is the **Monday 17th of May**. The shortlist will be revealed on the 24th of May together with details of a poster competition.

The winning book last year was *Nightshade* by Anthony Horowitz.

Integrity

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Mental Health Awareness Week

We are always proud of our students, who openly and readily talk about mental health and its importance in ensuring our overall health.

Along with the 5 ways to wellbeing, we asked our Reading School students to do three things:

- Experience nature
- Share nature
- Talk about nature

KS3 tutor groups were invited to take a walk around the school site with their tutor during this week to spot nature on the school site. This wellbeing walk will be facilitated within tutor groups on a day suited to their and their tutors timetable to experience and talk about the nature they observe. KS4 and KS5 had access to resources to support them during exams, readily available in the LRC.



Y7 have been doing some beautiful flower dissections in their Reading Way sessions too, to connect with [nature](#).

We also continue to encourage open conversations within peer groups, as well as finding time to sit with each other to notice nature around them.

At home, families can try making a [hedgehog home](#) or a [wildlife pond](#)

Parents, carers and families are invited to share any of their nature experiences this week by tweeting Reading School.



Domestic Violence

FLAG DV, a free legal advice group for domestic abuse victims, now has a dedicated phone line. The number is 01635 015854.

FLAG DV provide a free appointment with a Family Law Solicitor to any victim of domestic abuse in the Thames Valley. All referrals come through the website, www.flagdv.org.uk, however the lack of a phone line has meant that victims of domestic abuse who didn't have access to the internet have been left with limited options of reaching out for support. The phone number has limited hours, but victims are encouraged to leave a message for our team to get in touch if they call outside opening times.

e-safety

Please see the [Parents Guide To Support - Gaming \(youngminds.org.uk\)](http://youngminds.org.uk)

CEOP have developed some guidance for parents:

- [In-game chat: a guide for parents and carers](#) .
- [nude selfies: a parents guide](#).
- [having a conversation with your child](#).
- [Supporting your child with reporting unwanted content online](#)
- [Is your child ready for social media?](#)
- [Teens and the sexual content on social media](#).

Wellbeing Wednesdays

Make sure you follow us on Twitter to get weekly updates and inspiration for a healthy dose of wellbeing, for students as well as parents.

Additional Guidance and Useful links

- [Childline | Childline](#) Offers 1:1 support and a guide to staying safe online for adults and children.
- www.refuge.org.uk Help for women & children – for support against domestic violence
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> Referring concerns over online communication including sexual abuse
- [Find help - for parents \(youngminds.org.uk\)](http://youngminds.org.uk) Guidance on how to support a young person's mental health

If you are concerned about a young person, talk to their tutor, Head of House, Mr D McGall (Assistant Head) or Mrs L Ayres (Assistant Head)

Students also have access to a safeguarding flowchart on the student channel on Microsoft Teams, to talk them through options for disclosures about themselves or a friend or classmate, and what the outcomes and support possibilities might be.

Medicins Sans Frontieres Appeal Update

I would like to thank all those students, parents and staff who have contributed to our most recent charity appeal. We have raised £7568.50 (£6419 plus £1149.50 gift aid) for the Charity Medicins Sans Frontieres. It is not too late to contribute, and as a reminder the following links may be used if you are able to support this cause, please make your contribution via:

[Reading School is fundraising for Medecins Sans Frontieres / Doctors Without Borders \(MSF\) \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Reading-School-is-fundraising-for-Medecins-Sans-Frontieres-Doctors-Without-Borders)

Leadership

School Captaincy Team

Following a rigorous application and interview process, we would like to extend our congratulations to the new School Captaincy Team, who will lead a very impressive prefect team over the upcoming academic year. The full prefect list will be published once all of the students have been informed of their new roles.

School Captain:	Adam Paterson
School Vice-captain:	Karan Baishkiyar
School Vice-captain:	Matthew Copeman
School Vice-captain:	Kalvin Gavrillov
School Vice-captain:	Daniel Vetsko

Adam has a very positive vision for the upcoming year, focused on generating connections between year groups to build the sense of community within the School. He will be ably supported by Karan, Matthew, Calvin and Daniel all of whom have a clear sense of what a Reading School student should be and they will work together to be the best possible role models and provide fantastic leadership for our student body.

This is also a good opportunity to celebrate the fantastic work done by our outgoing prefect team, led by School Captain, Dan Nicoll and the Vice-captains, Aditya Krishna, Ross Hickman, Suyash Singh and Charles Carter.

In a highly unusual year, they have managed to create new opportunities for the student body through the Student Empowerment Competition, piloted this year, as well as being a constant source of support for staff and students. Additionally, their work on improving mental health during lockdown was highly impressive and the leadership they, and the whole prefect team, showed throughout this challenging year has been exceptional.

We would like to thank all of the students in the School who show leadership in our life together and in the community.

Community

Wearing of Face Coverings at Reading School

Reading School introduced the wearing of face masks in advance of government regulations, with positive effects. It was the right thing to be cautious then, and I consider that it is the right thing to be cautious now.

The safety and wellbeing of our staff and students must always be our predominant concern. Indeed, protecting staff, students, parents and governors remains a priority. Fundamentally, the wearing of a face covering protects others, especially the vulnerable, not just the wearer. This is particularly important given that not everyone has received the COVID vaccine yet, or a second dose of the vaccine.

Therefore, until Monday 7 June the wearing of face masks in class and communal areas will be continued. This is in order to minimise the risk of infection and protect other members of the school community, including vulnerable staff, students and parents.

Social distancing and personal hygiene measure will remain key aspects of our approach to ensuring that the school site remains COVID free. The twice weekly lateral flow testing regime will also continue.

While data shows that infection rates are continuing to decrease and the government suggest that not wearing masks may lead to an improvement in terms of classroom interaction, we should be mindful of the fact that the removal of face coverings is not currently considered appropriate for enclosed spaces such as shops and on public transport.

Consequently, taking into account our specific context, including the size of the site and the student population of over 1100, students should continue to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas until Monday 7 June (after the May Half Term break). From Monday 7 June, when Year 11 and Year 13 students will no longer have summer assessments or lessons and there will be up to 230 fewer students on site every day, the compulsory wearing of masks will discontinue in classrooms. Students and staff are free to choose to wear face coverings in class and around the school site should they wish to after 7 June.

RSPA update

Face Masks – For Sale all profits to the RSPA

We wanted to remind you that Kerry Kingston, a Year 8 parent, has been making hundreds of face masks over the last year and has generously offered to make and sell them in support of the Reading School Parents Association.

These masks can be ordered in any of house colours or the Reading School Navy Blue. The reusable masks are made with 3 layers and a sewn in filter, a wire for close fit over the nose and have adjustable ear ties, they are all cotton and machine washable.

The cost is £4 per mask or 2 for £7. All profit from these is going to the RSPA to further support fundraising projects at the school.

Please e-mail Kerry at kerryobrien2004@yahoo.co.uk Payment would be by bank transfer or PayPal and the masks can be posted or it may be possible to arrange collection at the student reception. The RSPA thank Kerry for her wonderful support and for helping us drive a culture of sustainability within the school.

Second Hand Uniform Shop

In line with Government guidelines, the Second Hand Uniform Shop's next opening will be held on **Saturday 22nd May 2021 10:00am to 12:00pm** in the Walled Car Park.

However, depending on the weather forecast, we will not open if there is any chance of rain. This call will be made on the morning of Thursday 20th May so please check Facebook, ClassList and next week's HM's bulletin for any update.

All parents are asked to wear masks on school premises at all times and parking will be allowed on the school's grounds only on Saturdays.

We are also looking for a few more parents who would be willing to help out at a couple of future openings during the school year which are held on either a Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

If you would be happy to do so, please drop a message to Jacqui Follen via ClassList or email shop@readingschoolparents.co.uk

Thank you for your ongoing support - Reading School Parents' Association Committee

If you ever have any questions, want to offer your support to the RSPA or have some new ideas for the RSPA please reach out to Contactus@readingschoolparents.co.uk

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Website "www.readingschoolpa.org.uk"