



# Headmaster's Weekly Bulletin

10 FEBRUARY 2023



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# Introduction

Everyone has mental health, just as they have physical health. Cultivating good, positive mental health helps us to cope with the inevitable ups and downs of life. It can help us to feel more comfortable asking for help from others when we need it. Unhappy, anxious children and young people find it more challenging to learn and feel themselves. According to the report, [The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England \(2022\)](#), in those aged 7 to 10, the prevalence of a probable mental disorder was nearly twice as high in boys (19.7%) as in girls (10.5%). Rates of a probable mental disorder were similar in boys (18.8%) and girls (22.0%) aged 11 to 16 and among 17 to 24 year olds, the prevalence was much higher in young women (31.2%) than young men (13.3%). At Reading School, by working closely with our students, their parents or carers and organisations, can lead to our community being part of the solution to improving our levels of mental health.

[Children's Mental Health Week](#) is being celebrated this week. The theme is 'Let's Connect' and we have sought to raise awareness and understanding of young people's mental health and to highlight the importance of early intervention to address issues before they become more serious. During December, our students were part of a mental health programme called OneGoal, led by Assistant Head, Mr D McCall and Boarding Housemaster and Head of West House, Mr J E Sanchez. The programme has enabled our student Mental Health Champions to develop the skills and qualities required to support the development of positive mental health habits in themselves and their peers.



Thank you to supportive and nurturing Heads of House, teachers and our strong Student Support Team, for ensuring that the 'Let's Connect' theme has emphasised the importance of making meaningful connections with others, to support the mental wellbeing of our young people all year round. At Reading School, we want to encourage our young people to connect with others in meaningful, healthy and rewarding ways and to consider the times when they may be at risk of 'othering' or excluding others from the school community.

Community is one of our core values. We know that people, especially young people, thrive in communities. Making positive, meaningful connections is vital for our personal wellbeing. Certainly, when we maximise healthy connections to our friends, to our family and to others, this can support our sense of wellbeing and our mental health. Thus, we encourage people to connect in healthy, meaningful and rewarding ways.

Furthermore, we are also aware that when our need for rewarding social connections is not met, it increases the possibility of sometimes feeling isolated and lonely. This, in turn, can have a negative impact on our mental health.

[Parents and carers](#) undoubtedly play a crucial role in your child's mental health. For instance:

- Through connections in everyday ways e.g., put your phone down, look up from your screens to really listen and talk with your child. Perhaps finding times such as a car journey to connect – but remember to drive safely.
- Talk to your child about important connections such as about family members, friends or people in the local community. Encourage your child by reminding them that expressing their feelings enables positive connections and may improve mental health.
- Talk to your child about the importance of healthy, positive friendships. Ask about your child's friends, their interests, what they have found enjoyable and rewarding while at school or at their out of school clubs. This can lead to further rich and rewarding conversations.
- Find time to connect as a family, especially over half-term if possible.
- Parents and carers can access further advice about starting conversations by [clicking here](#).

We are committed to driving a wellbeing culture where all our students and staff feel good, function well and have the ability to bounce back when adversity is experienced. In order to embed a culture that promotes positive mental health we need to focus on education, action and behaviour - change that emphasises connection rather than alienation.

Everyone at Reading School – staff, students and parents alike have a role to play in creating a sustainable wellbeing culture that promotes connection and communication.

**Mr A M Robson**

# Key information

## All years

### Road Safety – an appeal to parents



We would like to share important information with all parents and carers who drive to drop/pick up their children from Reading School following a rising number of complaints from members of the public who have been put at risk due to dangerous driving. We are concerned and have been prompted to share this information after previous communication shared in the Headmaster's Bulletin in relation to road safety which has not led to a decrease in incidents where other road users, members of the public and children have been put at risk.

#### Reminders

1) The Highway Code states: "You **MUST NOT wait or park, or stop to set down and pick up passengers, on school entrance markings.**" (Highway Code rule 238, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.) This is particularly important in relation to the 3 entrances and exits to the school located on Craven Road, Addington Road and Erleigh Road. Parents have been observed continuing to park on the yellow zig zag markings, parking against the flow of traffic and making 3 point turns during busy times of the day.

2) Furthermore, '[Rules for Pedestrians](#)' in the Highway Code states: "First find a safe place to cross and where there is space to reach the pavement on the other side. Where there is a crossing nearby, use it. Otherwise, choose a place where you can see clearly in all directions. Try to avoid crossing between parked cars." Students have been witnessed being dropped off across the road from the school and then attempting to cross from behind parked cars, putting themselves at risk.

Despite the recent reminders, a small number of parents and/or carers continue to stop or park illegally and not driving in a way that increases the safety of other road users and pedestrians. This has led to consulting with Reading Borough Council in order to seek further advice which will be shared with the Reading School community in due course. In the meantime, we would encourage anyone affected or concerned to log their issue with Reading Borough Council's Roads, Streets and Traffic Team by [clicking here](#) while choosing 'Other' as the issue you want to report.

In closing, we as a school want to avoid exploring options where monitoring and/or enforcement is needed. We are a considerate and caring school community and it is 'The Reading Way' to inform and educate, while being mindful of our 4 pillars; Excellence, Integrity, Leadership and Community.

*We all want to keep children, young people and adults safe while using roads around the school and your considerate and safe driving can make a valuable difference.*

## Years 11, 12 & 13

### Exam Anxiety Support

Led by Mrs Ayres, three practical sessions over three weeks have been organised which will focus on strategies to reduce anxiety in the build up to exams. The sessions will run from 15:45 – 16:30 and will feature guided meditation which has a science-backed approach, talking to students through the para and sympathetic nervous system and sharing how each technique works.

If this is something you would be interested in attending, please [complete this form](#).



## Current Vacancies

Below is a list of our current opportunities at Reading School. Please circulate these to anyone you think might be interested in the roles.

### Teacher Vacancies

[Teacher of Computer Science](#) - deadline 9am, Monday 20 February

[Teacher of Chemistry](#) - deadline 9am, Monday 27 February

[Teacher of Physics](#) - deadline 9am, Friday 3 March

Pay scale dependent on experience with potential for TLR / responsibility allowance if combined with a leadership role.

### Associate Staff Vacancies

[Kitchen Porter](#) - deadline 12pm, Monday 20 February

[Site Controller](#) - deadline 12pm, Tuesday 21 February

[Attendance and Reporting Officer](#) - deadline 9am, Wednesday 1 March

# Excellence, Belonging & Community

## Excellence

### It started off as a joke on WhatsApp

During January 2023, Reading School's first speedcubing event was organised and launched by Seth B (9W) and Sumi S (9W). We are featuring them under excellence due to the event being wholly student-led, from the initial idea, through to sourcing support from staff and sponsors. We spoke with both Seth and Sumi this week to find out more:

#### ***For those of us that don't know what speedcubing is, can you help paint a picture?***

Seth: You solve a Rubik's Cube as fast as humanly possible, I guess. And it's interesting in that you can really improve with practice, it's something anyone can learn to solve. You might think it's difficult but it's not actually too challenging. You start off solving it in a couple of minutes and then you learn some easier methods or move-sets called algorithms. And it just builds up from there...it's like you're always competing with yourself, which is what I like about it."

#### ***Where did your interest in speedcubing come from?***

Sumi: My interest for speedcubing didn't really come from one place. I've always had a Rubik's Cube when I was little and never learned how to solve it. Then near the end of Year 8, quite a lot of people got into speedcubing so I just tried it with a new cube from Home Bargains. That's where it all started and it spiralled from there.

#### ***Whose idea was it to organise the inaugural speedcubing House Competition in December?***



Seth: It started out as a joke on WhatsApp! We'd started a 'twisty puzzles' club and then I was chatting with Sumi and said, 'wouldn't it be fun if we had house competition?' And then he went, 'Wait a minute, this actually could work'. It then sort of became a passion project from there. It started out as a bit of a joke, like this will never happen and then here we are now!

#### ***How did you organise the event?***

Seth: So we used rules from the [World Cube Association \(WCA\)](#) and we also asked for [KewbzUK](#) to provide us with some timers, which for Computer Science department kindly ordered for us, and after that it took a bit of after school planning...

Sumi: I guess in the early stages of planning, we started off with a Microsoft Teams community and asked 'Would anyone be interested in this?' And an overwhelming number of people said yes. From there, we took names, and it was like in the 50s or 60s. During the event, we ran the three by three, which is what you think of when I say Rubik's cube, and then there's one smaller than that, which is the two by two, a little bit quicker to do. We suggested more things, but people really wanted to focus on those two. So I guess we really took it from what the community of people wanted. And it started out as this joke! We thought no one wants to do this. And then we thought it could work.

#### ***How did it make you feel seeing so many people turn up for your event?***

Seth: Overwhelmed. We had a table at the end of Big School and the way it worked was everyone would hand in their cubes to be scrambled, mixed up. And there were 50 Rubik's cubes on this table and all of a sudden it felt so real that this joke on WhatsApp had become 50 people signing up after school, one Wednesday afternoon, when they could have been at home doing many other things. They turned up and it was surreal to see.

#### ***Will there be more speedcubing events in the future?***

Sumi: I think we definitely want to run it. We want to run it again next year. Definitely. And if possible, we might want to do two a year so like one closer to summer and one closer to the end of the year.



***If you have some advice for other students about organising a successful event, whatever that event may look like for them, what advice would you share?***



Sumi: You should try not to get stressed about it and just try to split the event planning up into smaller pieces and deal with the smaller subproblems at a time. So for example, you could first find out how much interest there is by doing a student survey. Then you could slowly start getting into choosing the venue and finding staff to help.

Seth: An don't see it as unrealistic. Because what started out as a joke, ended up as 50 people in a room after school one Wednesday afternoon. Voice your ideas, talk to your Head of House or your Form Tutor.

***Is there anyone you would like to thank?***

Sumi: I'd like to thank Mr. Ling Winston from the Computer Science department for supplying us with timers for the competition out of the Computer Science budget. I'd also like to thank Mr. Sanchez and the rest of the PE department, especially Mr. Tet, for staying after-school for the whole of the House Speed cubing competition and for organising the venue and helping us with planning and giving us stopwatches. Lastly I want to thank [KewbzUK](#) for giving us a good discount on the timer's and sponsoring the competition.

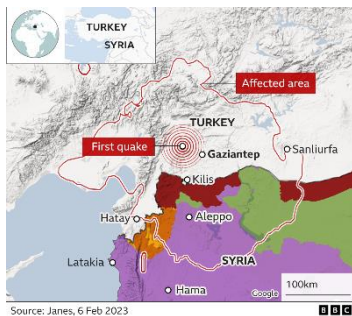
Seth: I think Sumi has covered all the thanks there!

*Well done to Seth and Sumi and the school community is looking forward to your next event.*



# Community

## Crisis in Turkey & Syria – supporting humanitarian relief



Two powerful earthquakes have devastated southern Turkey and north-western Syria, killing thousands of people and injuring countless more. Authorities have been racing to rescue victims trapped in the rubble and provide food and shelter to survivors. Their efforts have been hampered by damaged roads, bad weather and disrupted communications.

In light of this crisis, the Reading School Charity Committee, led by Jai G (13W) and Yaman E (12S), held a bake sale to fundraise for Action for Humanity, who are providing an immediate emergency response. The Charity Committee hopes to hold more activities to support this appeal after half-term and we thank them for organising this response.

We are shocked and saddened by the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, which has left behind indescribable and widespread destruction and loss of life. Many of our Reading School community have friends and family in the area and you are all in our thoughts and prayers.

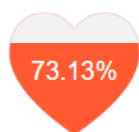
A Just Giving page has been set up and if you are able to support our student appeal, please click the link here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/reading-school-actionforhumanity>

It is heartening to see the sense of community support led by our students and parents who have recently contacted the school.

## Physics Equipment Appeal 2023 – an update

Target:

£13,500.00



We have now reached **over £11,000** (including gift aid) with the generous contributions from our community. If you have not yet had a chance to contribute and would like to support the Physics equipment appeal, please do via the link - <https://alumni.reading-school.co.uk/supportus>

To ensure our Physics Labs are equipped with kit and crucial resources used for experiments throughout every year group, we invite you to support our campaign to raise £13,500 for equipment such as:

- Additional electric circuit components and cables
- Boyle's law demonstration equipment
- Motor-generator demonstration device
- Jolly's Bulb sets
- Black out blinds
- New signal generator
- Hydraulic press demonstration system

As we reach the end of this appeal, if you have been meaning to donate, but not had a chance and would like to contribute, please click the link above to make a minimum donation of £27.00 to support our students with the necessary equipment.

*A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of our school community who has committed to supporting our students, your children. Your donations will make a huge difference to all students at Reading School and this would not be possible without your invaluable support. If we reach over our target, any funds exceeding the limit will go towards the Building for the Future campaign, which creates opportunities for our students.*

## MiSAC Microbiology competition



An annual nationwide competition was introduced in 1985 by the Microbiology in Schools Advisory Committee to enhance student interest in microbiology. It became an annual event in 1994 and the MiSAC Annual Competition for Key Stages 3 and 4 now attracts up to 2,000 student entries each year.

Each year, the topic chosen for the competition is linked to the National Curriculum. Special sponsorship provides money prizes totalling £1,000 for students and their schools and each student entrant receives a certificate.



## Objectives and criteria:

The 35th edition of [MiSAC's microbiology competition](#) aims to challenge students to explore and appreciate the role of microbes in the water cycle. The criteria of the competition is as follows:

- Produce an *illustrated*, web-page (that would fit an A3 page) report explaining to teenagers the importance of microbial activities in the water cycle and processes involved in reusing water supplies. This can be done by hand or online.

There are three main areas the poster should cover:

1. Briefly outline the main features of the natural water cycle.
2. How do the activities of microbes involved in the cycling of water have a helpful or harmful effect?
3. Give the identity of these microbes (ie, protozoa, bacteria, algae, etc) and where they are found in different stages of the water cycle and associated water treatments. Where possible, give their scientific names

## Who can enter:

Any student from Years 7 - 11 can enter the competition. You can enter as a group of friends (a maximum number of 4 per group) or individually.

## Prizes:

The competition aims to reward students who can effectively present their research in microbiology, which is sure to be a rewarding experience in of itself. The top 3 groups will have the following prizes:

Schools:	Students:
1st - £250	1st £100
2nd - £125	2nd £50
3rd - £70	3rd £25

A certificate will be awarded to each student submitting an entry of scientific merit. The results, winning entries and a report of the competition will be published on the MiSAC web site competition pages at [www.misac.org.uk](http://www.misac.org.uk)

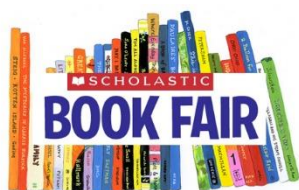
## How to take part:

Everyone is welcome to take part and please be mindful of the deadline. Email [s00133@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:s00133@reading-school.co.uk) to register yourself or your group. You will need to submit your work in the form of an A3 page (or 2 A4 pages stuck together), and the deadline is **3 April 2023**.

To download the entry form, [please click here](#).

## LRC

### Scholastic Book Fair 22 - 24 of February



Our 10th annual Book Festival starts with the arrival of the Scholastic Book Fair on Wednesday 22 of February. The Scholastic Book Fair is a pop-up book shop that we set up in the LRC. The experts from Scholastic choose a range of over 200 of the newest and best books spanning classics to award winners. Prices start from £2:99 and the more books we sell the more we earn in vouchers. These vouchers are used to buy new books for the LRC.

Year 7 and 8 will be invited to the LRC to visit the Fair during English lessons. The Fair will be open at break and lunch for the rest of the school community. The new digital World Book Day vouchers will be made available from 20th of

February and pupils can use these at the Book Fair. The World Book Day vouchers can be used to get £1 off of the cost of a book that is £2.99 or more.

Please ensure your child has cash if they would like to buy a book from the Book Fair. Alternatively, if your child sees a good book, they can ask Mrs Kesteven to consider buying a copy for the LRC. This is a fantastic opportunity to discover new authors and to try new genres.

## Chris Bradford Creative Writing Competition



Chris Bradford has a challenge for pupils at Reading School! He has chosen 14 words from his book *Bodyguard: Hostage* (found below). He would like your child to write a short story using at least 10 of them. You are allowed to use the words more than once and the target word count is 500-1000 words. This competition is open to all ages.

<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Surfer</i>
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Silhouette</i>	<i>Disintegrate</i>
<i>Obscured</i>	<i>Confidential</i>	<i>Rescue</i>
<i>Glare</i>	<i>Soundproof</i>	<i>Exchange</i>
<i>Surveillance</i>	<i>Overt</i>	

Entries should be emailed to [ikesteven@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:ikesteven@reading-school.co.uk) by Monday 20 of February.

# RSPA

## Committee Meeting - Wednesday 1 March 2023, 7:00pm – 8:30pm



READING SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The RSPA Committee Meetings are an open invite to anyone who would like to become involved in the Reading School Parents' Association, see what we are doing or even just input ideas. We are grateful for any amount of help parents and carers can offer and, with more parental help, we can obviously help the school and boys in so many more ways. Please do come along and join us. You can [join the meeting by clicking this link](#).

**Meeting ID:** 334 949 999 784

**Passcode:** 9kYz5q

## Reading School Hoodies – how to order

Thank you so much to everyone who has ordered an official school hoodie which are available to order by [clicking this link](#). After ordering, you will receive a notification as to when your child may collect their hoodie from Student Services. Please can we reiterate the importance of labelling these hoodies as soon as you receive them. They are lost on a regular basis and it is impossible to reunite them if we don't know to whom they belong.

## 2nd Hand Uniform Shop

Thank you to all who came and to everyone who helped at last weekend's 2nd Hand Uniform Shop Sale - another amazing total of **£794.50!**

The next opening will (hopefully) be on Friday 3 March and then on 24 - 25 March and we will make sure to update you nearer the time.

We would like to wish you all a very happy weekend and restful half-term break.

The RSPA Team



## Lent Term – Week 6

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



### United Kingdom Linguistics Olympiad 2023







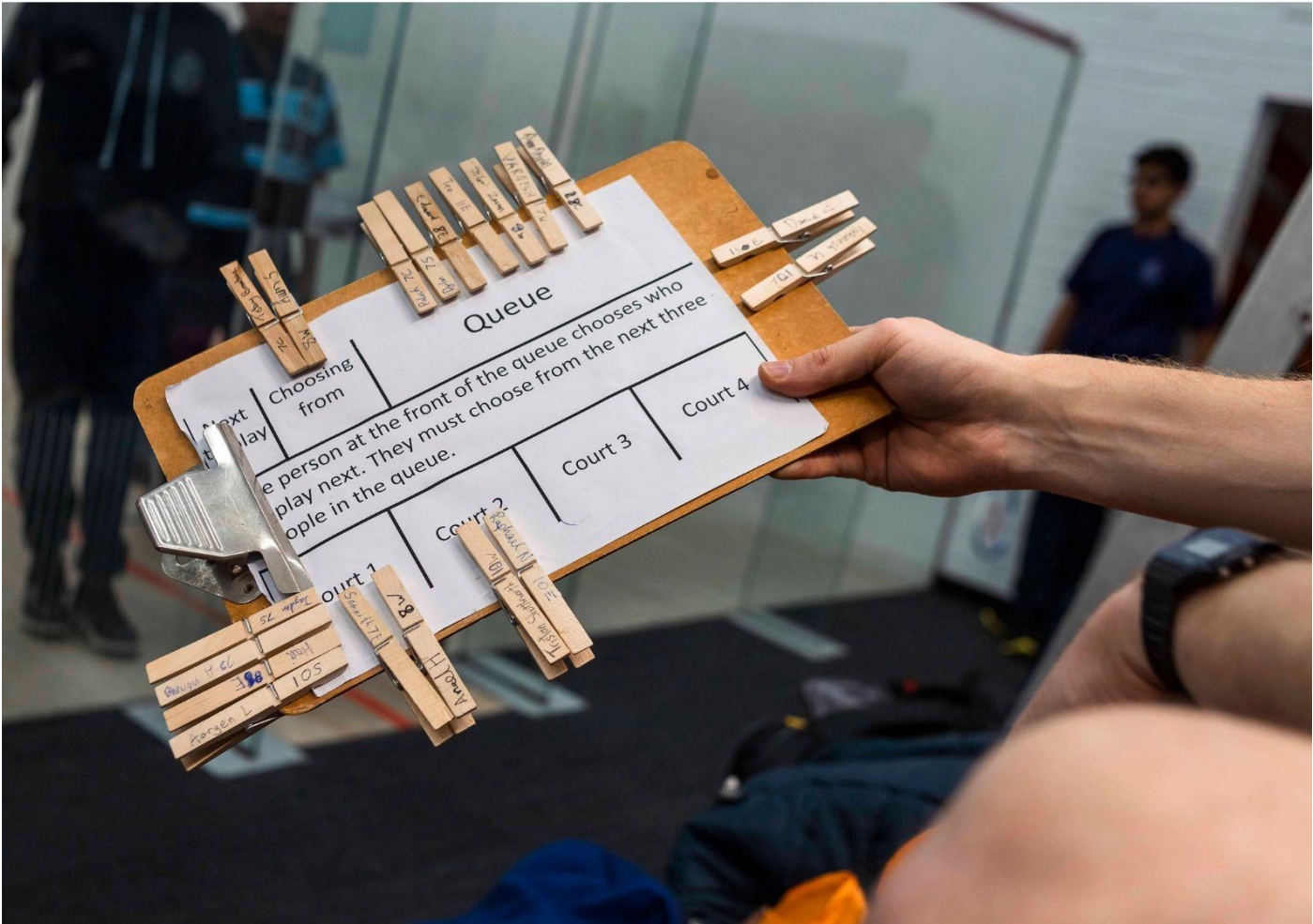


















Under 13 Table Tennis Team representing Reading School at the Regional Finals in Blackburn last week.

















Teamwork, enrichment, commitment, collaboration, friendship and memories were all built during Reading School's trip to Finland this week led by Mr D McGall and Mr T Evans

