



Waddesdon C of E School | Parent Newsletter – March, 2025



What would you like us to include in your newsletter?

This month’s round-up of events, advice and feedback includes a focus on careers, apprenticeships, exam support and how to talk to your child about their mobile phone use.

Each month, we include articles, as well as information, which we think will help you navigate not just the coming weeks, but also guidance on issues that might be affecting you and your child. If there are any areas that you would like to know more about, I’d be happy to hear from you.

Finally, on a separate note, thank you to all parents who have sponsored-a-seat in our new Sixth Form building which opens in April. Look out for the final chance to do so, if you’ve not already managed it!

Mr Abbott

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Although it might not seem to be a lot, even one day off school can impact on the progress of a child in the context of a week's learning.

Using your child's most recent report, work out how to maintain, or improve, your child's school attendance:

Above 97%: Less than 6 days' absence a year - 30 Hours of Learning Lost

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best levels/grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a **habit** of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days' absence a year - 50 Hours of Learning Lost

These pupils are less likely to achieve their target levels/grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a **habit** of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week holiday in term time only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days' absence a year - 95 Hours of Learning Lost

The Government classifies pupils in this group as "**Persistent Absentees**", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and achieve their target levels/grades. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Buckinghamshire Council, including the issuing of penalty notices and fines.

Holidays **must not** be taken during term time and will not be authorised by the school.

Unauthorised absences may result in the absence being reported to the County Attendance Team and a fine being issued, so we urge you to talk to us about how we can support any specific issues that you are facing at home.

Attendance in first half-term of 2025:

Year 7 - 95.53%	Year 11 - 91.82%
Year 8 - 95.38%	Year 12 - 93.97%
Year 9 - 94.47%	Year 13 - 92.82%
Year 10 - 92.31%	



How can I find out what my child is studying?

You will find information relating to your child's programmes of study via the following webpage: <https://www.waddesdonschool.com/curriculum-overview/>

This webpage provides links to our overall curriculum intent, as well as a half-termly breakdown of all the work covered in each subject for each year group.

If you would like more specific information, please contact the school via the office email address.



Sixth Form Exam Support

Following their mock results, we are encouraging Year 13 students to plan their independent revision and coursework time at home carefully, healthily balanced against time for rest and reward. We will be launching Predicted Grade Exams with Year 12 this term, so the following frequently asked questions by parents/carers will also support your child in their preparations:

Should I be seeing my son/daughter revising and/or completing coursework independently at home?

Absolutely! While students have study periods in school to complete homework/coursework and start revision, building in independent study time at home is important, especially in the run up to any exam season. Although it is hard to set specific amounts of time, we recommend at least a couple of hours after school from Monday to Thursday, with several hours on one day at the weekend. We also recommend students have a complete break from their studies for one full day at the weekend to have a well-deserved rest. Revision planners are available at school to help build a routine.

Where is it best for students to study at home?

Where possible, we recommend students study at a table in a more public space at home (e.g. kitchen, dining room, office) and not in their bedrooms. For optimum revision conditions and brain productivity, students know the following are important:

- A clear desk, with no clutter – minimises distractions and keeps the brain focused.
- A quiet space, with no distractions.
- Sitting up straight – if horizontal when revising, this tells the brain to go to sleep and it is much less receptive to information.
- Lots of light - straining your eyes is both draining and secondly, distracting.
- 60 second exercise breaks every 15-20 minutes when focus is waning – wakens up the brain and improves mental focus.

How do we best manage mobile phone and social media access?

Sometimes these are beneficial if being used productively to help with studying. However, as a general rule, we recommend students put their phones in another room and turn off messaging on their laptops while revising. Students have found the following apps useful:

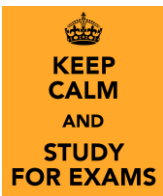
Cold Turkey: blocks selected apps and websites: <https://getcoldturkey.com/>

Forest or Flora: helps focus for a specified time: <https://www.forestapp.cc/> or <https://flora.appfinca.com/>

Sound Agency: music to aid concentration: <https://www.thesoundagency.com/blog/study-app/>



How can I help my son/daughter manage exam stress?



The build-up to the exam period can be a stressful time and a certain amount of stress is normal. The following websites provide excellent sources of information for parents to support students with lots of different aspects of their mental health:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-exam-stress/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

As well as encouraging students to take regular breaks, we also urge them to get outdoors, go to the gym, socialise with friends and family, and so on.



Psychology Revision Conference 2025

We are excited to announce that on **Tuesday, 22nd April (INSET day)**, our Year 12 and 13 Psychology students are invited to attend the annual Psychology Revision Conference. This year, the conference will be led by **Jean-Marc Lawton**, a highly experienced AQA Lead Examiner with over twenty years of expertise. He is also the author of several key textbooks, including the Hodder Education AQA-approved textbook.

This event provides an exceptional opportunity for students to:

- Learn directly from an AQA Lead Examiner with unparalleled insight into the exam process.
- Gain essential exam tips and strategies to boost their performance.
- Access a range of high-quality resources to support their revision for both A Level and Predicted Grade Examinations.
- If your child studies Psychology, please keep an eye on ParentPay for further details and payment information.

Thank you for your continued support,

Mrs George

Subject Leader for Psychology and Sociology

Sixth Form Careers/Pathways Focus



Year 12 and 13 have been completing further work on their post-18 research and applications. We post lots of useful resources on ClassCharts for students following presentations and workshops at school. The following might be of interest to parents/carers for discussions at home:

Supporting your son/daughter with a University Application:

<https://www.ucas.com/discover/advice-parents-guardians-and-carers>

Brilliant 8-minute clip to bust the myths surrounding University Student Finance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FiErJEQop4>

Advice on creating a LinkedIn Profile:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrDMndHKe_8&t=65s

Degree Apprenticeship Resources aimed at Sixth Form Students

This [45 minute video](#) explains how degree apprenticeships offer a debt-free route to a university degree or professional qualification, as well as providing expert advice and guidance on which degree apprenticeships are available in 2025 and how to apply.

- [Accounting](#) - Read how the UK's top accounting and professional services firms offer masters-level degree apprenticeships that lead to becoming a chartered accountant in just 4 or 5 years.
- [Banking & Finance](#) - See how to become a fully-qualified financial services professional at one of the country's top banking groups.
- [Business & Management](#) - Find out about degree apprenticeships in project management at a global e-commerce company and store management at one of the best-known high-street retailers.
- [Engineering](#) - Hear how engineering degree apprenticeships can lead to careers many different industries, including defence, nuclear, and motor manufacturing.
- [Law](#) - Discover the top law firms that offer solicitor degree apprenticeships, which enable Sixth Form school-leavers to become a fully qualified solicitor in 5 years, with no university or law school fees.
- [Technology](#) - Read about the latest opportunities that technology degree apprenticeships offer in a wide range of business sectors



For Year 11 families applying to Waddesdon Sixth Form for September 2025:

Thank you to all Year 11 students who applied to our Sixth Form by the deadline of Monday 24th February.

From March to the middle of May, the Sixth Form team meet with each student for a consultation. Students do not need to prepare in advance or be worried about the consultation; it is usually a 5-10 minute conversation about the student's subject choices, any future career plans and their Waddesdon Points, along with an opportunity for them to ask us questions.

For more information, please see here: <https://www.waddesdonschool.com/joining-our-sixth-form/>

We are looking forward to showing our Year 11 applicants our new Sixth Form Building which is due to open after Easter. For a preview, see here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgwcouDqX5M>

Year 11 Mock Exams – w.c. 10th March

The final set of mock exams for Year 11 will begin on Monday 10th March. They are being sat in English, Maths, Science and, for those who study it, Creative iMedia.

Please ensure that all Year 11 students arrive prepared for their exams, including having the correct equipment such as calculators and black pens.



Preparing for your RS GCSE – 5 steps to success

As we approach the Easter break, the Religious Studies Department would like to take a moment to recognise the hard work and dedication shown by our Year 11 and Year 13 students during their GCSE and A Level mock examinations. Congratulations to all those who achieved excellent results – your consistent effort is evident and we are incredibly proud of you!

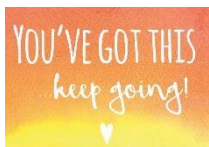
We also want to remind those who feel they could improve that there is still time to make a significant difference before the summer exams. With focused revision and consistent effort over the next few weeks, we believe every student has the potential to achieve outstanding results in their Religious Studies GCSE or A Level. As a **compulsory full-course GCSE**, it is important to allocate time for it just like any other subject. Whether it's revisiting key themes in Christianity and Buddhism, revising quotes or ethical teachings or mastering exam-style questions, every bit of effort will pay off.

Here are five effective revision techniques to help boost your grades for both Years 11 and 13:

- **Active Recall:** Test yourself on key concepts and vocabulary. Use flashcards or quiz apps to reinforce what you've learned.
- **Past Papers:** Practise past exam questions to familiarise yourself with the structure and timing of the exam. Review model answers to understand what examiners are looking for.
- **Mind Maps:** Create visual representations of complex topics. This helps in connecting key themes and remembering important details.
- **Group Study:** Sometimes discussing topics with peers can deepen your understanding. Join or form a study group to tackle tough topics together.
- **Time Management:** Break down your revision into manageable chunks, setting specific times for each topic. Stick to a timetable and make sure to give yourself regular breaks.

Religious Studies is a subject that rewards consistent effort. If you give it the attention it deserves, you can achieve high marks. Remember, there is still plenty of time to refine your knowledge and we are here to support you every step of the way.

We wish all Year 11 and Year 13 students the very best of luck in their revision. Keep up the hard work, stay focused, and use the resources available to you – success is within reach!

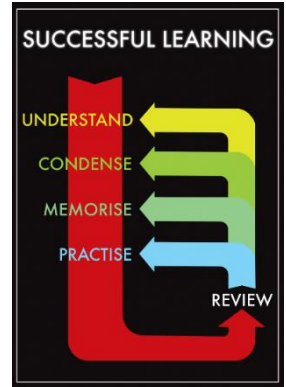


Mrs M Khan
The Religious Studies Department

Supporting your Child with Revision at Home

At Waddesdon, our successful revision programme follows four steps: **plan; understand; condense; memorise/review; practise.**

We have been asked by various parents/carers about how they can support with revision at home, for example, with focus and/or motivation, overcoming challenges, and managing exam stress. Each student is different, but we hope the following information is a helpful summary of general principles so you can support from home as needed.



Where possible, we recommend students study at a table in a shared space at home (e.g. kitchen, dining room, office) and not in their bedrooms. For optimum revision conditions and brain productivity, students know the following are important:

- A clear desk, with no clutter: minimises distractions and keeps the brain focused.
- A quiet space, with no distractions.
- Sitting up straight: if horizontal when revising, this tells the brain to go to sleep and it is much less receptive to information.
- Lots of light: straining your eyes is both draining and distracting.
- 60 second exercise breaks every 15-20 minutes when focus is waning: wakes up the brain and improves mental focus.



Year 11 Food Practical Assessments

Our food students will be producing their menus in the week commencing 3rd March for their 3 hour practical assessments.

Year 8 Options Process

March is an exciting time for Year 8 as they begin their journey towards the next stage of their education. The Options Conference will be taking place on Thursday 20th March, during which Year 8 students will receive short presentations from the new subjects available to them. We will also have a presentation to parents/carers that evening.

During this exciting phase, please take time to speak with your son/daughter in Year 8 and help them to navigate the different options available.



Mr Israr, Head of Year 7 reminds new parents:

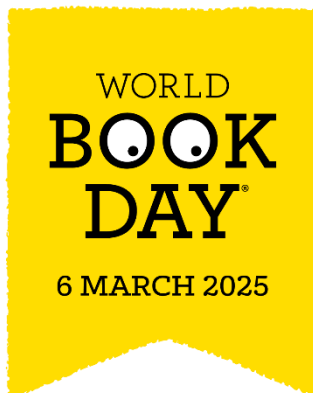
If your child wears earrings, please make sure that they are only studs (with no designs). Year 7 uniform, on the whole, has been in good order. Thank you!

News from the Library

We have had lots of book-related fun so far this term, including weekly visits from Little Oaks Pre-School to read with Year 7 and 8 students in Library lessons, an initiative that continues to benefit both sets of pupils and is a delight to watch. We also received a very generous donation of books from Waterstones Aylesbury, and we celebrated Valentine's week in the Library with 'Blind Date with a Book' and 'Love in Literature' quiz.



Books kindly donated by Waterstones Aylesbury
Waterstones.
www.waterstones.com



World Book Day takes place on Thursday 6th March this year. Students will receive their free World Book Day voucher w/c 24th February from their form tutor (one for each student). The vouchers are valid until 31st March.

Find out more at <https://www.worldbookday.com/books-and-tokens/>
Waterstones Aylesbury will also be stocking the £1 WBD books and accepting the vouchers.

There will also be other celebrations in school on Thursday 6th March to celebrate World Book Day, including a book-related assembly, fun book-related activities in the Library at lunch and break, and a visit from Little Oaks in the afternoon to read with some Year 7s.

Please remind your child that the Library is open for ALL students to access books, and they can come and ask the Librarian about any books they are keen to see in THEIR library!
#ReadingForPleasure

All Library-related news and reading lists can be found on the Library webpage:
<https://www.waddesdonschool.com/library/>



Opportunity to work as a Specialist Supply Teacher at Waddesdon

We are always looking to extend our pool of occasional specialist supply teachers at Waddesdon. We call on supply teachers when we need to cover illness (often at short notice) and sometimes to cover for staff who are accompanying students on educational visits. All of our supply teachers are qualified, with relevant experience and expertise in one or more subject areas. If you are interested, or know of someone who may be, please contact: kworland@waddesdonschool.com

S.T.O.P. Bullying

Dignity, kindness and respect are the key words that underpin our school's values. We strive to create a safe and happy environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable, and should not be tolerated.

Bullying is...

Several
Times
On
Purpose



Unsure? Tell an adult



Underpinning our bullying policy is the acronym S.T.O.P. (SEVERAL TIMES ON PURPOSE). Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can be: emotional, physical, verbal, written, cyber, sexual, prejudice-based and discriminatory.

For more information please look at our [policy](#) .



Supporting your Child's Health – Monthly Spotlight

Spring can herald joy ... but also symptoms of allergies.

Hayfever (or seasonal allergy/allergic rhinitis) usually happens when trees, grasses and other plants release tiny pollen particles into the air to fertilise other plants.

The immune systems of some people treat these pollen particles as invaders and release chemicals (e.g. histamine, our self-defence system) into the bloodstream to defend against them. It's these chemicals that cause the symptoms.

Skin tests can determine which allergens are the cause, so treatment can be targeted.

However, there are many ways to treat hayfever, depending on its severity. Reducing exposure if possible is best. There are a variety of over-the-counter medications, including oral antihistamine, nasal sprays and eye drops, and pharmacists are a valuable source of advice. If symptoms are severe, a doctor may recommend immunotherapy.

Below is a brief guide to the UK pollen season:

Tree pollens: March to April
Grass pollen: May to July (peaks in June & July)
Weed pollen: June to August
Mould spores: September to October

Please note: *many antihistamine tablets can be given once a day, so please ensure that your child has taken their antihistamine medication before arriving for the day as we do not stock any at school.*

Improve your child's mental health by talking with them about how they use their phones

Children's mental health can be significantly affected by excessive mobile phone use and the corrosive impact of the algorithms used by apps such as TikTok.



An article on the [Discover Magazine website](#) raised the concerning issue of teenagers being overwhelmed by negative content:

“For teens and children, the TikTok algorithm may be too effective. Reading a teen's innermost thoughts — especially when their vulnerable minds are drawn to harmful content — can lead them to see more problematic content.

Researchers publishing in the 2021 edition of the [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#) found that TikTok contributed to depression and anxiety in teens and was positively correlated with memory loss. If a TikTok user tends toward sad and upsetting content, that's what they'll get, and for young kids and teens, this can motivate dangerous behaviour.”

More recently *The Saturday Times* magazine (24th Feb, 2024) interviewed teens about their use of mobile phones.

Like me, parents will be interested in the following comments:

“If I went an hour without my phone I would be really stressed...Every evening I scroll on TikTok all night...Every social media app is toxic. There are a lot of nasty people on there – and nasty stuff.” Charley, 17.

“Self-harm wasn't a big thing before, but since people started speaking on it on TikTok, people became more aware of it. There's also anorexia, bulimia and eating disorder content on TikTok and a new trend called 'starve maxxng'. People find a way around TikTok blocking these videos.” Jasmin, 15.

“I regret getting Snapchat at 12 – I wasn't prepared for what was coming. Random people would add me, then ask for nudes... A month ago I was really addicted to my phone. I couldn't live a second of the day without it. I would constantly be checking for messages and at night I'd sit there binge-watching TikTok...My brother's daily screen time was 12 hours. He's constantly up all night and then he complains he's had a bad night.” Tai, 14.

“If I didn't have my phone for a day, I would probably be really sad and I wouldn't know what to do...Social media can affect your mental health. I got social media at 11. I would tell younger kids not to get all the social media apps at once, because then you're exposed to everything.” Jess, 14.

“I feel like times before phones were a lot calmer...My parents take my phone away at 10pm every night. Deep down, I know that's what's best for me. I wish I didn't need to be on my phone.” George C, 16.

"Some aspects of social media heighten feelings of anxiety and insecurity. I get really down in the morning if I've spent last night scrolling and not doing anything. I wish I could stick to the limits I set on the apps..." George B, 16.

"I want my screen time to be lower. Sometimes after scrolling on TikTok, I get a headache and I feel a bit depressed." Calypso, 18.

The article states that, "almost half of British teenagers say that they feel addicted to social media, according to the Millennium Cohort Study [published January, 2024]".

Whatever the age of your son or daughter, having regular discussions about phone use, perhaps by sharing the quotations above, will help them see the risks associated with excessive use and their mental health.



Dear Waddesdon School...

"A while back I posted something on Facebook Waddesdon mums and dads site.

My reason for posting is that **I am trying to source second hand devices: phones or tablets etc.** for my clients. I work with vulnerable people who cannot afford smart devices and rely on donations. My clients are from the UK and other countries. I work for Migrant Help which is the regional organisation, contracted to the Salvation Army which has a national contract with the Home office to provide support and help victims who are referred to the NRM; supporting victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. I have clients who have phones so damaged and old they can't see who is calling or have to keep them on charge to make them work. They rely on these devices to communicate with me and other services to help them move on in life and recover.

My role is Modern Slavery Victim Care Adviser and I am often looking out for innovative ways to help my clients who are spread throughout the Thames Valley area.

Kind Regards

Lindsay Austin"
Modern Slavery and Victim Care Adviser
Lindsay.Austin@migranthelpuk.org



Wednesday Late Bus

We encourage our students to take advantage of our late bus so that they can take part in extra-curricular activities (see [website](#)) and also if they need to catch up on, or complete work.

Route 1: Westcott, Ashendon, Upper Winchendon, Quainton (The Green), Pitchcott, Oving (Bowling Alley), North Marston (Pilgrim PH), Whitchurch (on request), Hardwick (on request)

Route 2: Kingswood, Grendon Underwood (all stops if required), Springhill (prison), Edgcott, Calvert (Green), Charndon (on request), Marsh Gibbon The Plough (on request), Ludgershall Village Hall (on request)

The buses will return to their depots in Aylesbury and so the bus company (Motts) have also indicated that they would be happy to drop students to a central point in Aylesbury, if required.

Both buses will leave school at 4.35pm, with the longest journey time taking approximately 45 minutes.



Planned Road Closures

Please see below details of upcoming overnight road closures due to HS2 between 28 February – 14 March.

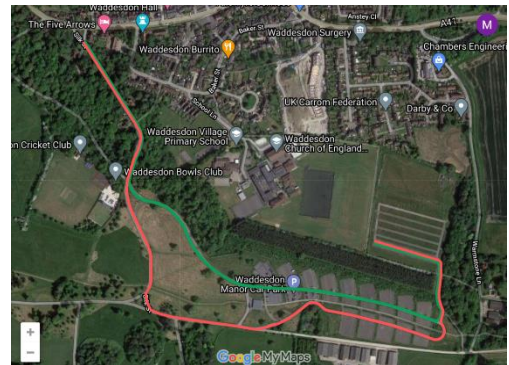
- Overnight road closures on the new A41 from 8:30pm, Thurs 6th March – 5:30am, Fri 7th March.
- The section of the new A41 between the two new roundabouts at Blackgrove Road and Waddesdon **will remain open in both directions** from 28 February – 14 March, except for during the 3 planned overnight closures.

Enjoy a light stroll on these lighter days

Waddesdon prides itself on the core values of dignity and respect, and this extends to the way in which we value our neighbours and the community we serve. Please can we ask all parents/carers to uphold these at pick-up time.

The **overflow carpark at Waddesdon Manor** is always available as a space to park while you collect your child, and is connected to the school by the Greenway path.

Thank you for your kindness and consideration of these issues.



What to do if you're not happy about something

If you're not happy about something, please let us know and we will work with you to resolve the issue.

Our [Complaints Policy](#) outlines the steps you can take, but the simple message is to **get in touch with us**. If you send your concern to office@waddesdonschool.com, it will be directed to the right person.

You should expect to hear back in 48 hours, so if you have no reply by then, please ring the school office to check the progress on your complaint.

Even in moments of high emotion, we ask that you consider how best to convey your complaint. If the issue cannot be resolved by email or a phone conversation, then it is usually best to arrange a face-to-face meeting as lengthy email exchanges tend to become counter-productive.

Key Future Events

<https://abclondon.org.uk/space-competition-2025/>

- Thurs, 27th Feb – **Careers Fair** (6pm – 9pm)
- Thurs, 6th March – **Year 12** Parents' Evening
- Mon, 10th March – **Year 11** Second Mocks – English, Maths and Science
- Weds, 19th March – **Year 8 Report** release
- Thurs, 20th March – **Year 8 Options** Conference & Parents' Information Eve (6pm)
- Thurs, 27th March – **Year 8** Parents' Evening
- Mon, 31st March – Eid al-Fitr (& Sunday, 30th March)
- Weds, 2nd April – **Year 8** GCSE Options **deadline**
- Thurs, 3rd April - Year **11 & 13 Report** release.
- Fri, 4th April - Last day before Easter break, finishing at 3.10pm
- Tues, 22nd April – Staff INSET (term starts on **Weds, 23rd April for students**)



Rotary Young Chefs – Aylesbury



Budding chefs, Joe and Vinnie, entered the Rotary Young Chef heats in January where both performed extremely well.

Vinnie took second place with his filleted sea bass fish and chips and lemon tart, while Joe was highly commended for his sea bass with pea puree and strawberry pannacotta.

Watch out Young Masterchef!

John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."



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