



Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2020! The year has got off to a flying start and many year groups have big decisions ahead of them! Year 8 students are now exploring their subject preferences. Thank you to all who attended the very successful preferences evening last week. Year 10 are now finalising their Work Experience choices to ensure a really useful time exploring the world of work in March. Meanwhile year 11 are finalising their applications for 6th Form and/or other destinations whilst year 13 are now receiving offers for university places.

So as you can see, the majority of our students are busy making important choices and we look forward to supporting them and working in partnership with yourselves as they do so.

C Holmwood
Headteacher

DIARY DATES

DATE	EVENT
23, 24, 27 & 30 Jan	Y11 PE Leadership Diploma Placement
23 Jan	Y8 Parents' Evening
	Y9 - Y11 Lifeskills Knife Crime Presentation
24 Jan	GIV Project Fundraising Event
	Y7 - Y13 Music Syd Lawrence Orchestra
27 Jan	Deadline for 6F Applications
29 Jan	Y11 ICT Careers Workshop on Advertising
30 Jan	Y8 & Y9 Language Leaders Workshop
4 Feb	DofE Gold Presentations
	Y7 - Y10 PE Cricket Competition
5 - 8 Feb	MFL Residential Trip to Spain
6 Feb	Y7 - Y13 Music Young Musician of The Year
	Y9 - Y11 Intermediate Maths Challenge



Enrichment Project



During the winter term some of our Year 12 students were working on their enrichment project with Milton Keynes Hospital Charity, designing their own greeting cards for the charity. On 18th December students in the group attended a trip to Milton Keynes Hospital to raise money for the charity, where they sold their handmade cards and held a raffle for patients, family members and staff. At the hospital the students engaged with members of the public and showcased some of the great work they have been doing over the last term. As well as putting together two care packages for patients in the Stroke Unit, the students raised a fantastic £104.91 in less than two hours at the hospital, which will all go to the Milton Keynes Hospital Charity's Cancer Care Appeal, helping to make a difference to cancer care patients in and around Milton Keynes.

A huge well done to these students!

Mrs Sykes

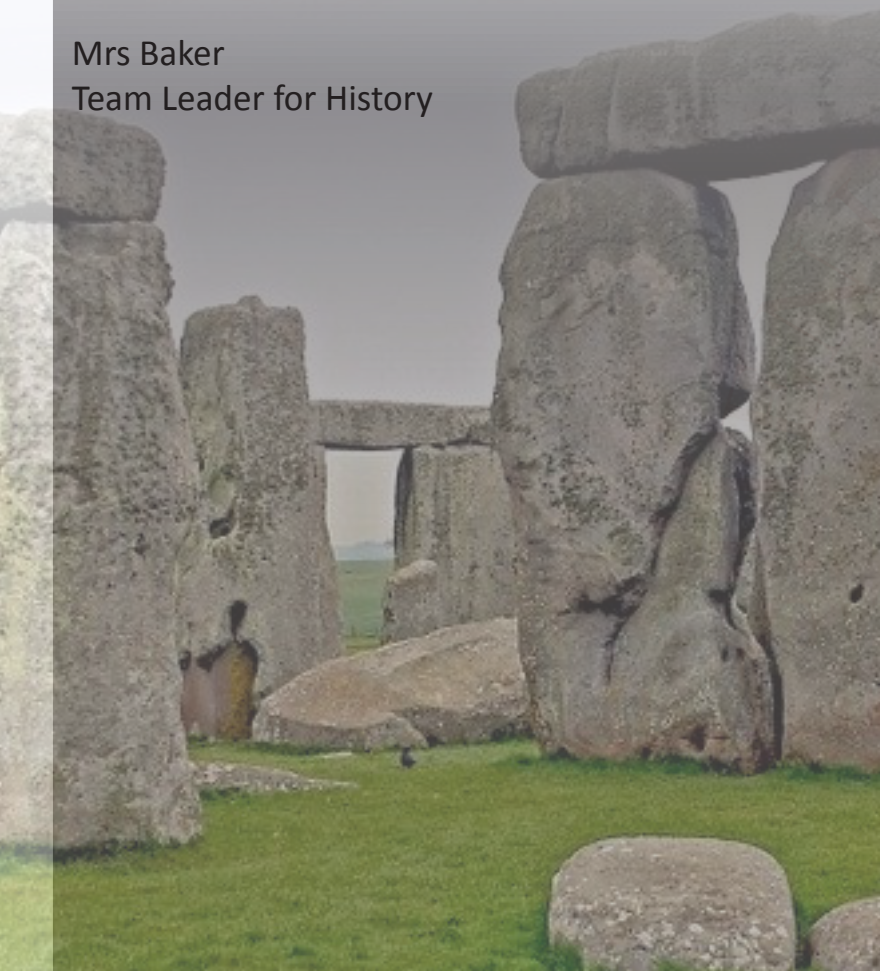


Year 7 Milton Keynes Museum Visits

The new term has seen two Year 7 form groups (7SEK and 7BKM) visit Milton Keynes Museum as a part of the History curriculum. This was no ordinary museum visit! In the morning, Year 7 students had the opportunity to handle a variety of objects dating from the Stone Age to the modern day and try to piece together the evidence to work out what they were; they also worked on condition reports for some artefacts under the instruction of the museum's collections team. Students discovered what it might be like to work in the museum and what some heritage related careers involved and even had privileged access to the museum's stores – members of the public can't visit these! The afternoon saw students visiting the communications and transport exhibitions in the museum. Lots of learning was done by all!

Every Y7 form group will have an opportunity to visit Milton Keynes Museum this academic year.


Mrs Baker
Team Leader for History





ANNOUNCEMENT

Inclement Weather/School Closure



Inclement weather affecting the opening of the school

During periods of inclement weather which may result in school closures, parents are encouraged to log on to the Local Authority website and sign up for school closure alerts as well as using the school website to see if the school is affected. An email will also be sent by ParentMail.

As the school is contained in one building it is sometimes possible to open (even when other schools are shut) although the start of school may be delayed. Unless there is clear indication that the school is shut, parents must assume that the school is open.

To prevent unauthorised absences, parents are expected to ensure their child attends school when the school is open, even if there is a delay to the opening times caused by inclement weather. Please check the time at which the school is set to open.

Emergency closure of the school during the school day

In the event of school closure, parents who are happy for their child to make their own way home during the school day have already given their permission, and will not be contacted individually. An email will be sent to parents or a text for those without email and a message will be placed on the school website.

If it is increasingly likely that snow may lead to an early closure of the school, having your mobile phone with you or access to the internet is helpful.

It is important to have spoken to your child regarding the procedure you want them to follow in the event of an enforced closure of the school during the school day.

If going to a relative or friend, ensure that everyone is in agreement and that your child can actually get into the relevant house if no-one is there. Remind your child to go straight home (or to the relative or friend). Anxious parents have previously contacted school about a 'missing' child, who, instead of going straight home, has stopped off to play in the snow, arriving home sometime later, wet through but without a care in the world! It is helpful if your child

ANNOUNCEMENT Cont.

Inclement Weather/School Closure

has a mobile phone with them. When there has been an emergency closure, the school has found that the mobile phone providers have not been able to keep up with the demand, although students will be encouraged to let their parents know they are going home.

Make sure your child knows in advance where in the school they will meet with siblings and friends with whom they normally walk home. Having a set place in school where they all know they are going to meet will save a lot of confusion on the day. If you have not given permission for your child to go home please come to reception to collect your child, as soon as possible, as closing due to inclement weather usually indicates that conditions will worsen. Members of staff who are waiting with your child also need to get home safely. Additionally, children often are anxious as they see other children going home but they are still waiting.

Please be aware that the school has a limited number of outside lines, making it challenging to contact parents who have not given permission for their child to leave the school in these circumstances. Please only ring the school if it is absolutely necessary; eg if you are returning a missed call from a member of staff. It is important that your telephone numbers are kept up-to-date.

Finally, each time there is an enforced closure during the day, some of the older students who are left in school tell us they are more than capable of going home on their own. We have to retain them, as the instruction you have given when starting school states that your child does not have permission to go home, and this lasts throughout their time in school.

If you therefore wish to change your instruction, please notify the school in writing and address the letter to Mrs Lannin, Headteacher's PA. A parental signature is required and so we cannot accept email requests.

Mrs Lannin - Headteacher's PA



Year 9 Parents' Evening / PE

The Year 9 Parents' evening is on Thursday 13 February in the Sports Hall from 4.30pm -7.30pm.

You will be receiving an invitation to make appointments through Parent Mail, so please ensure that we have an up to date email address, as this will be needed to access the system.

I look forward to seeing you on Thursday 13 February.

Mrs Sullivan - Head of Year 9



Careers Spotlight!

Human Resource Officer

We are delighted to place Human Resource Officers in the careers spotlight!

Did you know that there are 369,036 Human Resource Officers in the UK and 2054 jobs in Milton Keynes?

The average salary for a Human Resource Officer in the South East is £29,462

To become a Human Resource Officer you will need to gain GCSEs at grade 4 or above in English, Maths, and a qualification from the Chartered Institute of Professional Development would also be useful for career progression.

For further information about becoming a Human Resource Officer along with a variety of other careers visit www.unifrog.org.

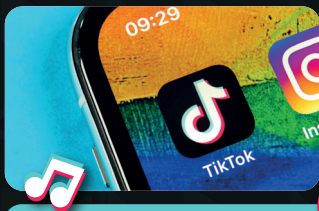


OTHER NEWS Cont.

'We thought you would find this poster informative. For information on other social networks, apps and games www.net-aware.org.uk also provides a helpful guide'.



TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos much in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity to become the iOS store's most downloaded app with over 33 million downloads. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide.



What parents need to know about

TIKTOK



MATURE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up for the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are lighthearted or funny takes on dance routines which are designed to make people laugh. However there has been a slew of videos which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content, including young teens dressing overtly sexually and behaving suggestively. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be quite common to come across explicit content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.



INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.



TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities - social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.



ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into 45-minute visit.



IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.



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Safety Tips For Parents



TALK ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use the app, make sure you also take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have a dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour for them. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding of them. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.



USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media stardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.



ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.



EXPLORE AND LEARN YOURSELF

Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with TikTok. You could then even use the app with your child and watch some videos with them. If you are the parent of a teen, even if it does not make you popular, keep a close eye on what they're viewing and sharing. That said, it's a brilliant chance to turn it into a bonding opportunity with your child also. You could even unleash your inner performer and make videos with them while (more importantly) keeping them safe online.



LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a safe space for your child to express themselves. However, just in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.



MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



SOURCES:

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