



## Every Student Thriving

7 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write this at the end of **World Book Day** but at the beginning of **John Colet's World Book Month**. We're going large this year as we firmly believe that reading is a fundamental skill that can unlock opportunity, knowledge, understanding, new perspectives on the world and cultural appreciation... the list is endless!

On my way to work this morning I was sad to hear that **40% of adults do not complete reading one full book in a year**. That is staggering. Our young people are echoes of ourselves and our influence as adults, carers and parents has been proven, time and time again, to be critical to the early habits and development of our young people. Habits they carry with them into adulthood. I remember as a child that our weekly visits to the library opened up 'a window to the world'.

We could be forgiven in thinking that fiction reading is losing out to technology and the ever expanding digital world. However, there is hope as **physical book sales have increased significantly in recent years**. This may sound counterintuitive due to what we may perceive as the 'kindle' device culture of e-readers but this market has flattened out and a kindle doesn't have the visual splendour of a library or the tactile feel of paper bound into pages - equally it cannot be used to prop open a door or raise the height of a laptop!

As the Guardian reported last year in February : "**Last year in the UK 669m physical books were sold, the highest overall level ever recorded**. Research from Nielsen BookData highlights that it is print books that gen Z favour, accounting for 80% of purchases from November 2021 to 2022." This pattern has continued. It would seem that books of all shapes and sizes still hold an allure over us and younger generations are keeping the reading flame well and truly lit shining a light on all the riches that books have to offer us.

Many staff dressed up as literary characters on Thursday to kick off our book month, (See photo on next page), and we have a whole host of activities planned over the coming weeks for everyone to engage in. Please do talk to your child about these and remind them to have a reading book in their bag as part of their equipment.

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In this briefing you'll find support information on reading in the 'Tooled Up section' and the technology advice section. I would recommend you join in and perhaps have a 10 minute quiet reading session at home allowing yourself and your kin the opportunity to escape into the many worlds that our books have to offer. In the words of J.K.Rowling: "There's always room for a story that can transport people to another place."

Take care - Ian Brierly



### Opening Hours

Every day 8.15am - 8.45am

We have a good selection of second hand uniform items all at **no charge!**

blazers	jumpers
trousers	skirts
white shirts	PE kit items

If you **need** an item or want to **borrow** or **swap** something for a different size ease visit the shop during opening hours. For more information or to request an item please email [uniformshop@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:uniformshop@johncolet.co.uk)

We rely on donations so can't guarantee we will have all items in stock.

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### QUOTE QUILT - READING ...

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader." – Margaret Fuller

**"A word after a word after a word is power." – Margaret Atwood**

"One glance at a book and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for 1,000 years. To read is to voyage through time." – Carl Sagan

"Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world." – Napoleon Bonaparte

"A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counselor, a multitude of counselors." – Charles Baudelaire

"When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young." – Maya Angelou

"Books are a uniquely portable magic." – Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*

Think before you speak. Read before you think. – Fran Lebowitz

"Books and doors are the same thing. You open them, and you go through into another world." – Jeanette Winterson

***"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." - Frederick Douglass***

"Literature is the safe and traditional vehicle through which we learn about the world and pass on values from one generation to the next. Books save lives." – Laurie Anderson

"Reading fiction is important. It is a vital means of imagining a life other than our own, which in turn makes us more empathetic beings. Following complex story lines stretches our brains beyond the 140 characters of sound-bite thinking, and staying within the world of a novel gives us the ability to be quiet

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and alone, two skills that are disappearing faster than the polar icecaps." – Ann Patchett

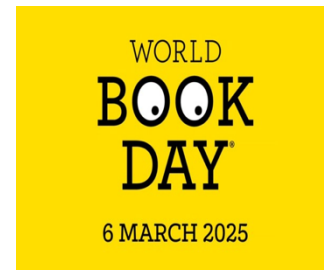
## REMINDERS & NOTICES

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

<b>GCSE Additional mocks</b>	-	10-13 March
<b>Year 9 Consultation Evening</b>	-	13 March
<b>Year 7 Consultation Evening</b>	-	27 March
<b>End of Spring Term</b>	-	4 April <b>(2.55 finish)</b>

### WORLD BOOK MONTH

**World book month** - We are very excited to be celebrating reading for pleasure as a school community for a full month. As part of the celebrations, all pupils will be given the first 10 minutes of every lesson across the curriculum to read for pleasure. Please remember that a reading book is an essential part of the school equipment, and every pupil should have a reading book with them at all times. They will definitely need it for the coming weeks!



### TRAIN DISRUPTION

Please be aware that in a couple of weeks there will be disruption to the train service from Aylesbury into Wendover during the school travel hours. We will post further information in due course.

### CURRENT VACANCIES

- Business Studies Teacher
- Cover Supervisor

Please check our website for further details [here](#).



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### SAFEGUARDING LEADS & INFORMATION



**Mr Crawford**  
Deputy Headteacher  
DSL



**Be Safe,  
Be Kind**



**Mrs Rowland**  
\*Operational Safeguarding Lead  
DDSL

If parents have any concerns about this practice or, believe that any young person at John Colet School might be at risk, then please do contact one of the members of our Safeguarding Team via

[safeguarding@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@johncolet.co.uk)

**READING SKILLS : Click [HERE](#) for practical tips**

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## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

### 1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

### 2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

### 3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user-friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

### 4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

### 5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

### 6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

### 7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

### 9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

### 8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

### 10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

### Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



The National College



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### ELGIVA THEATRE - ANNIE THE MUSICAL

A golden opportunity this week to support local theatre and a John Colet Student.

Alice Cockroft in year 9 will be playing Annie in Annie at The Elgiva next week. Her shows are Thursday night (13 March) and Saturday night (15 March) .

Tickets are still available here

<https://elgiva.com/annie-panda-players/>



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### TOOLED UP - PARENT SUPPORT - WORLD BOOK DAY



This week, many Tooled Up schools will celebrate World Book Day 2025. Whether dressing up as a favourite character, learning new words, enjoying online readings or taking extra time to share best loved books, this is a great opportunity for children to be excited about becoming enthusiastic readers.

Research shows that having a **wide reading habit** can bring many **benefits** for children. **Reading** for pleasure **is associated with better outcomes at school, improved wellbeing** and enhances skills such as **empathy**. So it's no surprise that here at Tooled Up we're passionate advocates for reading and literacy.

If you'd like some **inspiration for your next library or bookshop trip**, or you want help choosing up-to-date titles visit: [Brilliant New Fiction for World Book Day 2025](#). This resource **includes** book **suggestions for** children of **all ages from five years to older teens**.

**Some children need help** and encouragement **to become regular readers**. Find **advice** for making reading a more central part of family life in [Ten Tips to Promote Reading at Home](#).

For **younger children**, **set them on the path to becoming confident, proficient readers** with these [Tooled Up Resources on Developing Literacy](#).

RAMADAN

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ARE YOU FASTING  
FOR  
**Ramadan?**

**IFTAR BOXES ARE AVAILABLE!**

**FROM 3RD MARCH TO 29TH MARCH**

Our kitchen team is preparing Iftar boxes daily. Please place your order the day before (or earlier if possible) to ensure availability. These boxes will be ready for collection at the end of each day.

TO PLACE AN ORDER, KINDLY  
CONTACT YOUR CATERING TEAM!

BOXES ARE £2.70 EACH, OR **FREE OF CHARGE**, IF YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A FREE SCHOOL MEAL

by **culinera**

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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## sing out for mental health

**12th April 2025**  
**Aylesbury Waterside Theatre**

Hundreds of Buckinghamshire singers join forces **to raise awareness of the impact of singing on mental health** in a ground breaking concert.

With host  
Andy Collins

Scan the QR Code for tickets

[www.singoutfor.org](http://www.singoutfor.org)

## Buckinghamshire Family Learning

### Wellbeing Online Workshops Monday 7pm-9pm

For parents and carers with child/ren in Years 10 and 11. Help your child manage their wellbeing and mental health. To book your FREE place, contact our enrolment team on 01296 383582, scan the QR code or click on the link. For more information call/text Kathryn on 07770 641997

**24 February - Y10 and 11: Help your child build confidence, friendships, and manage stress workshop (FMWB022)**

**3 March - Support your ADHD child at home workshop (EMAC135)**

SCAN HERE

buckinghamshireadullearning
 BucksAdL Learning
 adultlearningbc.ac.uk
 Funded by UK Government

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## Mind Morning: Theme - ADHD

CREATING A **FREE SPACE** FOR ALL **PARENTS/CARERS** TO MEET, MINGLE AND NETWORK WITH OTHERS WHO CAN RELATE, WHILST ENGAGING WITH VARIED TOPICS, TO HELP LEARN NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT AND BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILDREN.

TO BOOK ON SCAN QR CODE BELOW  
LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

SCAN HERE

Monday 31st March 2025	9:30 am - 10.30 am	THE GATEWAY, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF ,
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## FRIDAY THE 21ST OF MARCH IS WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

PEOPLE WHO HAVE DOWN'S SYNDROME WILL HAVE SOME LEVEL OF LEARNING DISABILITY. THIS MEANS THEY'LL HAVE A RANGE OF ABILITIES. THEY MIGHT NEED MORE REGULAR CARE

ON 21 MARCH, CHOOSE SOME SOCKS THAT ARE GOING TO GET NOTICED!

THEY MIGHT BE MISMATCHED SOCKS OR YOUR BOLDEST AND MOST COLOURFUL SOCKS, WHATEVER TAKES YOUR FANCY!



## Every Student Thriving

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Aylesbury United FC will be hosting their annual Community Day on Saturday 22nd March 2025** when The Ducks play Kidlington FC in our Southern League fixture (3pm kick off). There will be some **family fun and child-friendly activities within** the ground from 1.30pm and at half time, as well as the football match itself.

It will be **free entry for all those who complete the registration form** (linked below).

**The venue is The Meadow, Amy Lane, Chesham, HP5 1NE**, which is where Aylesbury United FC currently play their home games, as we have been homeless and playing out of town for the last 19 years.

Please find below a link where more details about the Community Day can be found including how to register for free entry. **Registration will close at midnight on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

<https://aylesbury.football/events/register-now-for-free-entry-to-the-2025-aylesbury-united-community-day>



### Register now for FREE entry to the 2025 Aylesbury United Community Day

This season's Community Day will take place on Saturday 22 March 2025 (Non League Day) when we welcome Kidlington to The Meadow (Amy Lane, Chesham, HP5 1NE) for our Pitching In Southern League Division One Central match.