



Ready - Respectful - Responsible

8 March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I had the pleasure of meeting with the **John Colet primary group of Head Teachers and representatives face-to-face this week** for the first time. There was a terrific sense of professional support and energy around the table and it was rewarding to feel and see a group of **educational leaders** all on the same page **battling ferociously with insanely strained budgets, building issues, human resources, challenging conversations and the terrain of an uncertain future**. However, at the centre of these challenges was a steely determination to do the **best for children** - a salient reminder that educational leaders have an incredible number of variables to balance, assess and act upon **in their pursuit of the best education they can provide**. Not easy when too much short-term thinking at a national level has led to a 'hand to mouth' culture across many of our public services.

Last week was awash with discussions surrounding education. **School holidays and attendance were 'hot potato' items in the media**. This was hard on the heels of the DFE's guidance on **mobile phone use in schools**. I have to say there is **much hot air around these issues but often very little substance** behind any form of guidance or policy. The general direction of travel also seems to be about pushing even more responsibility on to individual schools hence avoiding a commitment in full to an ideal or policy. This can create inconsistencies across schools which can be divisive. **At JCS we stand back a little from some of this hot air rhetoric** and try hard to focus on practical, partnership based policies that support our community in a 'common sense' fashion. (Not easy, but we try!).

A huge thank you to all staff who contributed to our first year 11 boost day on Tuesday during which we explored **active revision techniques, visualisation and memory techniques**. This was done through workshops, assemblies and presentations. It was topped off with **a very well attended parents evening where we shared the themes of the day** with parents and offered up some top tips that parent/carers could utilise in support of the revision process. **One of the strategies we gave parents was based on the 'protege' effect**. This is a very simple technique where you as parent or carer simply ask your child to teach you about some knowledge learnt in school. The very act of teaching strengthens memory and is an excellent form of revision. This does not need to wait until Year 11. I would recommend you start this now; perhaps whilst walking or over the family meal - Ask for your child to teach you something they have learned from the school day; by doing this you will be helping to consolidate their learning (you might also be increasing your own knowledge!)

Thank you to Year 8 students and parents for ensuring that the GCSE Options were submitted on time! **The allocation puzzle is now well underway and parents will shortly receive notification of the Options their child has selected**. Please ensure you check this information so there are no surprises in the summer term when allocations are finalised.

Next week I will be outlining changes to our school day for the next academic year, with the aim of canvassing your views on our new proposals. Not a briefing to miss!

Take care - Ian Brierly

Committed To Excellence

REMINDERS & NOTICES

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Additional mocks** - **11.03.24**
- **Science week** - **11.03.24**
- **Red Nose Day - Non Uniform** - **15.03.24**
- **Year 7 Consultation Evening** - **21.03.24**
- **Last day of term - non uniform - 12.15pm finish** - **28.03.24**

OPPORTUNITIES

COVER SUPERVISOR REQUIRED : An excellent opportunity for any person who has just finished education or any who may be considering a future career in education, or for anyone who would like a role which can fit around their family life. If interested please contact Mrs Perry:

cperry@johncolet.co.uk

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES VOLUNTEERS: If you speak French or Spanish and would like to support our MFL department please contact Mrs Simpson, our Head of MFL, directly:

isimpson@johncolet.co.uk

SAFEGUARDING SUBSTANCE AWARENESS - SNUS & Contaminated THC Vapes

SNUS

We are aware that some students have brought **nicotine pouches or SNUS to school**. Attached is an article to make you aware of the dangers and legality of these pouches. Students found with SNUS (including white SNUS) or nicotine pouches in school will have the item confiscated and will receive a consequence in line with the school behaviour policy. Our policy refers to smoking and vaping equipment - SNUS and nicotine pouches will be regarded in this category.

[Tooled up Snus Article](#)

Contaminated THC Vapes

Public Health Practitioner for Buckinghamshire Council, Josy Dyson, has recently alerted schools to reports of vape liquids & pens containing very strong synthetic cannabinoids 'spice' which are likely being sold as THC vapes in the local areas of Aylesbury. These are causing unintended effects in those who use them.

Here4YOUth, Buckinghamshire commissioned young people drug/alcohol harm reduction service, has prepared some harm reduction information about contaminated vapes.

[Drug Alert - Contaminated Vapes - Cranstoun](#). For all queries please contact the Public Health Team on phadmin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Social Media Group Chats

At JCS we continue to talk to children about their interactions with each other on social media and encrypted chat apps. We are definitely concerned about some of the language being used and the material being shared as well as chats including unknown members of



AI and Assessments

A quick guide for students



What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased



How can AI be misused in assessments?

AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

THIS IS CHEATING!



How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?



1 Know the rules

- You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
- Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
- Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work

2 Reference reference reference!

- If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly
- Name the AI tool you used
 - Add the date you generated the content
 - Explain how you used it
 - Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got

3 Declare it's all your own work

– When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references



What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

DON'T RISK IT!



REMEMBER
Misusing AI is cheating!

Know the rules
Talk to your teachers
Reference clearly



READ, READ, READ!

If you have a school-aged child then you're more than likely aware of World Book Day on March 7th. This annual event promotes books, authors and a love of reading to all children.

As parents it's essential that we do everything we can to develop reading for pleasure in our children. As English teacher Patrick Cragg reflected in a [Wednesday Wisdom](#) from last year, research highlights the enormous long-term benefits for children of a healthy reading diet, not just in academic performance across all subjects but in emotional wellbeing and social skills.

Begin with our [tips](#) and [video](#) on reading to your child, and learn about the importance of phonics for early readers in this [webinar](#) from Professor Kathy Rastle.

Our platform contains [poems](#) you can read to your children, book lists for [11-13-year olds](#) and for [teenagers](#) with titles that will appeal to young people who just need that one, engaging book that will get their reading journey started. If you have any recommended titles to add, our [team](#) would love to hear from you.

March 8th marks International Women's Day and we have a wealth of resources and information for helping the girls and young women in your family feel empowered and inspired. Tune into our brilliant [podcast](#) on the importance of body knowledge for young women as well as the importance of exercise for mental fitness.

Families can read through our list of [50 Fantastic Female Sporting Role Models](#) with children and discuss which sporting stories inspire you the most! If you have children who enjoy sport and want to excel, consider watching our [Q&A](#) with England Women's Lacrosse captain Laura Merrifield.

Perhaps in this World Book Day Week with its focus on International Womens' achievements, it is the perfect time to introduce your children to this [list](#) of books featuring 'strong female characters'. Parents can derive some book inspiration from this [list](#) of recommended reads from the Tooled Up team.

Finally, this busy week also saw World Hearing Day on March 3rd. Explore Tooled Up's accessible and informative resources on deafness and hearing loss, beginning with our [20 Things to Know](#) about deafness, and this [webinar](#) with audiologist Dr Joy Rosenberg on building resilience in deaf children.

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



NEW ONLINE SUPPORT SERVICE FOR PARENTS

- Do you have an autistic child?
- Are you recognising difference in your child and you're exploring neurodivergence?

Our new service can help. We're a charity founded in Buckinghamshire in 2001 offering specialist education and support to children with sensory, communication and interaction differences.

We believe every child has the right to high quality education & support and that whole-family well-being is vital if a child is to achieve the best outcomes.

The Parent's Portal was created from having worked with parents and carers and listened to their needs. We can now offer an online solution to help parents to better understand their child's needs and differences and also navigate the SEN process.



For £10* per household per month, The Parent's Portal offers 24/7 access to:

- Information & guidance to help you support your child's journey through home, school and social life.
- Content curated by practitioners with 20+ years lived experience.
- Evolving library of videos, workshops, forums and webinars.
- Practical strategies and tactics to try at home & in school.
- Guidance on EHCPs & the SEN process.
- A non-judgmental peer support network, to exchange ideas, feel listened to and affirmed.

*No joining fee, cancel anytime



Scan to register

"The Portal is so easy to use and it's packed with helpful stuff. We just wish we had something like this when our little boy was growing up. We had nowhere to turn, so this would be a lifeline for our family."
Portal User, June 2023

Join today: www.portal.autismearlysupport.org.uk



Services for children & families

Circle Centre Nursery (formerly known as The Puzzle Centre) established in 2001, our specialist pre-school setting near Buckingham has had 4 consecutive 'Outstanding' Ofsted reports. We have a multi-disciplinary team who offer a needs-led, specialist curriculum for children age 2-5 years with sensory, communication and interaction differences.

Therapies & Assessments Our speech & language and occupational therapists can work directly with children to offer either one-off assessments or ongoing programmes of support. Our assessments and reports are often used to support EHCP applications.

Parent & Carer Support is integral to all of services as we believe whole family well-being is key to achieving the best outcomes for a child.

"Words can't quite describe how grateful we are for all the support and love you have given our family. You have taught our son so much. Helped him to express himself and how to experience different things - it means the world to us. Every day we thank our lucky stars that we are part of such a wonderful community."



Services for schools, local authorities, practitioners and healthcare professionals

Consultations with our specialist therapists or teachers who work with practitioners in their own classrooms/schools or with specific children.

Support & training from our specialist team to enable you to improve your autism practice in your school or local authority.

Bespoke, intensive intervention tailored on request to meet the needs of your setting or service.



W: autismearlysupport.org.uk
E: outreach@autismearlysupport.org.uk

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LOCAL UPDATES / EVENTS

AYLESBURY RUGBY WOMEN

ANY LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE
AMAZING FACILITIES INCLUDING
GYM AND PHYSIO
NC3 MIDLANDS (SOUTH) LEAGUE
WOMENSRUGBY@AYLESBURYRFC.CO.UK

TRAINING TIMES:
WEDNESDAY 19:30-21:00
SUNDAY 12:30-14:00



ARFC HP22 5RN

AYLESBURY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

WENDOVER SPARROWHAWKS NETBALL TEAM

Fancy joining us for some netball?

Everyone Welcome

- Friendly ladies club with a good mix of age and ability
- Training every Tuesday with experienced coach
- 7.30—9pm at Aylesbury High School
- £5 per week (or save money and block book)
- Lots of coached drills and game play at training

Opportunities to join one of our 3 ladies teams for the upcoming summer league and 24/25 ADNL winter league

- Youth training Tuesdays at 6.15-7.15pm (school years 8-11 welcome)
- Opportunities to join a team for the summer league or just come for training

Email wendoveryouthnetball@hotmail.com for info

Interested? Get in touch...

E: wendoverladiesnetball@hotmail.com
Insta: @wendoversparrowhawks



WENDOVER COMMUNITY AWARDS 2024

The Wendover Parish Council Community Awards are back for 2024, do you know someone who goes above and beyond to make a difference in Wendover? It's time to give them the recognition they deserve! Nominations are open now and close on the 21st March.

Please see more in the link below, I have attached a form for your convenience, there is also an online form available in the link below:

<https://www.wendover-pc.gov.uk/community-awards>

The winners will be honoured at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on the 18th of April 2024 at Wendover Youth Centre.