



Waddesdon C of E School | Parent Newsletter – March, 2026



Listening to you and working in partnership together

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, I include articles, as well as information, which I 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.

Headteachers across Buckinghamshire are working together to address the dangers associated with access to Social Media below the age of 16. The article on pages 2 & 3 gives a teen's eye view of how mobile phones can affect our children. I hope that it is useful in your conversations at home.

Please also take a moment to read the advice about how to make a complaint which has been attached to the email. It was compiled by Parent Kind, DfE and Ofsted amongst others and appears useful. On page 9, it gives some sensible advice about approaches adopted by parents that can make matters worse. As ever, we value open and respectful dialogue and welcome the chance to support you the best we can.

Mr Abbott

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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.



Attendance Matters

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.

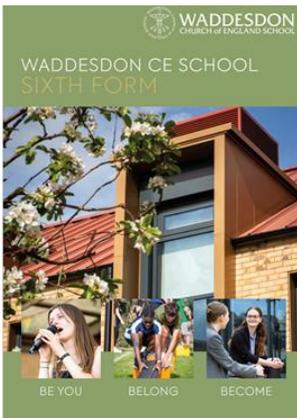


How can I find out what my child is studying?

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, 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

Sixth Form Exam Support

Following their mock results, and with only 9 school weeks to go until exams, 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 week, 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 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/>

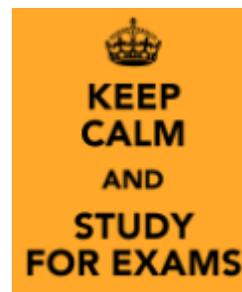
Forest or Flora: helps focus for a specified time: <https://flora.appfinca.com/>

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.

ENRICHMENT

What's Next?

Friday 6th March 8.45-9.45 am: SEND Coffee Morning

"Supporting your teenager with their avoidance and anxieties" BUCKS Specialist Inclusion Teachers

Please use the link/QR to register:

[Waddesdon Parents of SEND Coffee Morning Spring Term Coffee Morning](#)



Careers Week: 23rd to 27th March 2026

During Careers Week, all students will be able to participate in career-related assemblies, form time activities, PSHE lessons and subject specific information.

The Careers Fair is held on **Wednesday, 25th March 6-9pm**. Organisations unable to attend the Careers Fair have been invited in to deliver lunchtime presentations and workshops during Careers Week.

We normally have over 50+ stands at the Careers Fair, with many organisations booked to attend already. We will share the list in the next Parent Newsletter.



Year 12 Work Experience: Thursday 2nd July – Friday 3rd July

To complement our careers programme, after Year 12 Predicted Grade Exam week in the summer term, all Year 12 students will spend two days on work experience placements or carrying out career-related activities. Work experience brings significant benefits for young adults; students will be able to experience the realities of day-to-day working life, ideally in an area of work in which they have some real interest and linked to their post-18 applications. It will enhance the post-18 options and careers-related work we have been completing with Year 12 this year, and it will be of great benefit to students as they write the first draft of their personal statements just prior to the summer holidays. Teachers will also be able to recognise work experience in their academic references.

Aims of our Work Experience Programme: To introduce students to the world of work (beyond part-time employment), its demands and disciplines and to develop students' employability skills. It also brings the curriculum to life by demonstrating how subjects can be applied and valued in the workplace.

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 2026 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 in 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



Year 11 families applying to Waddesdon Sixth Form for September 2026

Thank you to all Year 11 students who applied to our Sixth Form by the deadline of Monday 23rd 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/>

Year 11 Mock Exams – w.c. 2nd March

The final set of mock exams for Year 11 will begin on Monday 2nd March. They are being sat in English, Maths and Science.

Please ensure that all Year 11 students arrive prepared for their exams, including having the correct equipment such as calculators and black pens. They should also have their usual lesson resources for Period 5 each day.

The timetable for the exams is below:

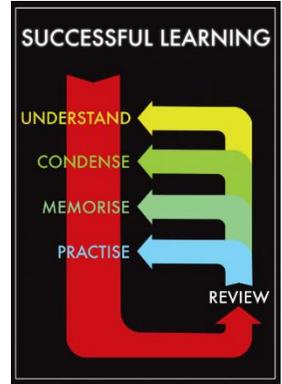
Date	Time	Subject	Duration
Monday 2 nd March	Period 1 & 2	Maths non-calc paper 1	1hr 30 mins
	Period 3 & 4	English Language	1 hr 45 mins
Tuesday 3 rd March	Period 1 & 2	Maths calc paper 2	1hr 30 mins
	Period 3 & 4	Physics Combined & Separate	1 hr 15 mins Comb. 1 hr 45 mins Sep.
Wednesday 4 th March	Period 1 & 2	Biology Combined & Separate	1 hr 15 mins Comb. 1 hr 45 mins Sep.
	Period 3 & 4	English Literature	2 hr 15 mins
Thursday 5 th March	Period 1 & 2	Maths calc paper 3	1hr 30 mins
	Period 3 & 4	Chemistry Combined & Separate	1 hr 15 mins Comb. 1 hr 45 mins Sep.

Supporting your Child with Revision at Home

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

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, 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 8 Options Process

March is an exciting time for Year 8 as they begin their journey towards the next stage of their education by selecting subjects that they would like to study for GCSE. The Options Conference will be taking place on Tuesday 3rd 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 at 6pm 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. It is important to give them agency in their choices, while supporting them with key questions such as:

- Why do you think you'll enjoy the subject?
- What options does each subject open up in the future?
- Is there any coursework or is it all exams? How do you feel about that?
- How would you feel if you weren't given that subject? (*This will help decide on their order of preference*)

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.



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](#), or contact your Head of Year.

"If you're into it, read into it."

Into F1? Read into it!

Into music? Read into it!

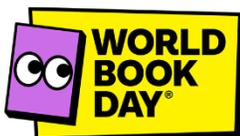
Into football? Read into it!

<https://goallin.org.uk/>

The National Year
of Reading 2026

GO
ALL
IN.

Although we might argue that every day/year is for reading (!), we are embracing the opportunities and inspiration that the national campaign brings. For example, Mrs Staiano is busy collating a staff 'Waddesdon (Reading for) Pleasure List' that will be shared with students to help inspire them with book choices!



If your son/daughter is in Year 7 - 11 they will have received their WBD voucher before half term. These are valid up until 15th March. More information about where they can be used here: <https://www.worldbookday.com/books/>

And in other library news...

The author of the *Ultimate Football Heroes* books, **Matt Oldfield**, is coming to visit the school on Monday 13th July to talk to Year 7 and 8 students - more info to follow nearer the time!



A highlight in the Library continues to be our regular visits from Little Oaks pre-school to read with our Year 7 and 8's in Library lessons. More planned throughout the rest of the term.

Don't forget to encourage you son/daughter to come and check out our new books! Every month we add to the Library stock so remember to come and ask Mrs Staiano if there are any books you would like to see, or in fact recommend we try and get for the Library!



Supporting your Child's Health – Monthly Spotlight

These winter months...

As we have moved into 2026, spring beckons with lighter and milder (and hopefully drier) days, but we are aware that there are many that find winter a challenging time.

There is advice for students and families and an example is on the Young Minds website (www.youngminds.org.uk). Making small changes is better than setting huge goals.

One thing we are aware of is screen time before bedtime that can affect us all. Setting a time of, for example just 5 minutes of no screen time before bedtime can be achievable, but also try and fill those minutes with something positive, maybe thinking about the day (what has been good) or listening to a favourite piece of music, reading a book or poem etc. Once this is a regular part of the bedtime routine, try to increase the time gradually.

Little changes can have big impacts.



WSA Spring Raffle

The WSA will be holding a Spring raffle with the winning tickets being drawn on Friday 20th March 2026.

For the raffle to be a success and to enable the WSA to raise vital funds for the school we are asking for donations.

Items required include:

- Food items
- Easter treats
- Alcohol/non-alcohol drinks
- Chocolates/sweets
- Gifts
- Leisure tickets
- Toiletries

Students can bring donations into school up until **Wednesday 18th March 2026** and items should be dropped off in the school Library for the attention of Miss Bridges/Mrs Staiano.

Raffle tickets will be available to purchase on Parent Pay until Thursday 19th March with the draw taking place on Friday 20th March 2026.

Thank you for your continued support.

The WSA Team



Out and about

We are sometimes contacted about opportunities outside the school. These are separate to the school, but may be of interest to some parents and families:

Nest Aylesbury Vale www.nestaylesburyvale.org.uk



Volunteer Recruitment Open Day

NEST SUPPORTS PARENTS THROUGH EARLY PARENTHOOD WITH COMPASSIONATE, ONE-TO-ONE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT.



13 March 2026
11 AM -1PM
Wendover Library
High Street, Wendover, HP22 6DX

Scan the QR code to register, or email us on info@nestaylesburyvale.org.uk



This is a limited-places event — we're excited to hear from you!

BUCKS SKILLS SHOW 2026



Find your future career...

Looking for career inspiration, career pathways or a career change? Meet with over 100 exhibitors at the Bucks Skills Show, Buckinghamshire's most exciting skills and careers event for people of all ages at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

Wed 4th March 2026

Time: 4pm - 8pm
Price: Free

Location: Stoke Mandeville Stadium
Guttmann Road
Aylesbury, HP21 8PP

Learn more here
BucksSkillsHub.org/the-skills-show

Why attend?

- Meet and be inspired by employers looking to find future talent.
- Find out about the career pathways for key industry sectors.
- Speak with Universities, Colleges, and Apprenticeship providers who can help to identify your best next steps.



Book here



SDSD
SCHOOL OF DANCE & STAGE DEVELOPMENT



18 months - Adults
Performance opportunities
Musical Theatre
Dance classes
Singing
LAMDA
Private Lessons
Exams
Trial classes
Multi class discount



Get in contact to book your trial classes



www.sdsd.dance | office@sdsd.dance
07548431512
Queens Park Arts Centre, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 7RT
Facebook SDSD - Public Page
Instagram sdsd.dance



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, Quanton (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.

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

Thurs, 26th Feb – **Year 12** Parents' Evening

Mon, 2nd March – **Year 11** Second Mocks – English, Maths and Science

Tues, 3rd March – **Year 8 Options** Conference & Parents' Information Eve (6pm)

Weds, 11th March – Year **8 Report** release

Thurs, 12th March – **Year 8** Parents' Evening

Thurs-Fri, 19th-20th March – Eid al-Fitr

Weds, 25th March – **Year 8** GCSE Options **deadline**

Weds, 25th March – **Careers Fair** (6pm – 9pm)

Thurs, 26th March - Year **11 & 13 Report** release.

Fri, 27th March - Last day before Easter break, finishing at 3.10pm

Mon, 13th April – Staff INSET (term starts on **Tues, 14th April for students**)

Easter Orchestra Concert Thursday 19th March, 6pm-7pm

Join us to celebrate the enormous range of talent our orchestral musicians have, very ably supported by a range of local professional musicians and guest soloists.

Tickets available on ParentPay from March onwards.



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."



Website:
www.waddesdonschool.com



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01296 651382



Email:
office@waddesdonschool.com