



# FIVE ACRES HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

30 April 2026

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Welcome to the April edition of our newsletter. Students and staff have made an excellent start to the term, and I am excited to see their progress over the coming weeks. Last week we held a Celebrations event for our Year 11 students, where we awarded trophies and certificates for Position 1 and Progress across the curriculum. You can see pictures on page 89 of the newsletter. Celebration is a key part of our school life, and throughout the newsletter you will see many of our students being recognised for their fantastic achievements in and out of school. We continue to prioritise this because we understand that success comes in many forms, and whilst a school should be a place where education is prioritised we enjoy supporting and developing students to flourish in every aspect of life.

This term brings with it the usual focus on Year 11 exams. We are delighted with the ambition shown by our Year 11 students and wish them well as they begin their final written exams. Students and staff continue to show real determination, working hard in school and we know that parents/carers at home play a huge part in preparing students to be ready for this important stage of their life.

Whilst there is a familiarity to the school calendar, it is also rewarding when students throw themselves into unexpected activities and events. Such events include the Mock Parliament and the Testimony 360 event. The Mock Parliament was the brainchild of our local MP Matt Bishop. It brought together students from local secondary schools who learned about how debating in parliament works and then presented their ideas as if they were MPs in a brilliantly planned session at the District Council offices in Coleford. The Testimony 360 event gave our students the opportunity to bring the past and the future together through looking at the events of World War Two via the medium of virtual reality. Students agreed that the creative and interactive event was both enjoyable and thought-provoking.

Modern technology is a wonderful thing when used for the right reasons at the right time. Many of you will be aware of recent Government announcements

and plans surrounding the use of AI, social media and smartphones by children under the age of 16. We want to reassure you that we will communicate with you once planned changes come into law. I am sure



that many of you will support the measures that the Government has suggested, but there will also be questions because social media and smartphones have become part of our normal way of living. Our policy currently states that smartphones should be in bags during the school day and turned off.

Uniform is another issue that has been raised by the present Government and many of you will be aware that schools will be restricted to require students to wear no more than four branded items of clothing as part of their uniform. We have reviewed our current policy and can confirm that no changes will be made to the uniform policy except for PE. Since these regulations do not come into effect until September, please continue to send your child in to school with the correct PE uniform as per the policy found, which can be found on the school website:

<https://www.5acreshighschool.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=1600&type=pdf>

Heading into the warmer months of the year, I would also like to remind parents/carers and students that the basic uniform is a blazer, shirt/blouse, tie, trousers/tartan shorts/tartan skirt, black socks and polishable black shoes. Many students choose to wear a jumper, however this is optional and should not be worn in place of the blazer.

Finally I would like to thank all of the parents/carers who took the time to complete our survey. I am pleased to report that this was again hugely positive. We will provide further details in due course, alongside details of the student survey. Your voice is always welcome, as is your continued commitment to supporting our brilliant community school.

## SILENT DISCO END OF TERM CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to last term's house winners who were rewarded with a silent disco. Students are already working hard to gain house points, so we can't wait to see who will be celebrating in July as we end the summer term.



## RACING AHEAD



Well done to Year 8 student Beth who passed her junior test in the Easter holidays. She completed two races and took part in a junior racing day.

Congratulations to Year 9 student Finley H, who was also taking part in the Autograss National qualifying event. Fin won his second heat, but narrowly missed out on a place in the final. He will be back out behind the wheel to compete this weekend.



Photo credit: Green Light Photography

## YEAR 11 - MACBETH THEATRE TRIP

On Friday 27 March 50 Year 11 students travelled to Bristol to see Macbeth at the Tobacco Factory. Students are studying the play as part of their English GCSE course, so it was a great opportunity to see the text brought to life.



## KEY DATES

**Monday 4 May**  
Bank Holiday  
**Tuesday 5 May**  
Governors Meeting  
**Friday 8 May -  
Sunday 10 May**  
TenTors final event  
**Monday 18 May**  
Y7-10 Girls Rugby Festival  
**Friday 22 May -  
Tuesday 26 May**  
Multisport trip to Belgium  
**Thursday 4 June**  
Year 10 Parents'  
Information Evening  
**Thursday 11 June**  
Year 9 DTP/MenACWY  
vaccination session  
**Week commencing 15 June**  
Year 7-10 Assessments  
**Week commencing 22 June**  
Year 7-10 Assessments  
**Tuesday 23 &  
Wednesday 24 June**  
Great Western Heartstarters  
**Wednesday 24 June**  
Governors Meeting  
**Week Commencing 29 June**  
Year 10 Work  
Experience Week  
**Week Commencing 29 June**  
Year 6 Welcome Days  
**Tuesday 30 June**  
New Year 7 Parents'  
Welcome Evening  
**Thursday 2 July**  
Monkhouse Schoolwear sizing  
event (2:30-6pm)  
**Friday 3 July**  
Year 11 Prom -  
Speech House Hotel  
**Week commencing 6 July**  
Year 5 Super  
Learning Days  
**Week commencing 6 July**  
School Musical  
**Thursday 9 July**  
Greenshaw Learning Trust  
Sports Day  
**Monday 13 July**  
Year 10 Parents' Evening  
**Wednesday 15 &  
Thursday 16 July**  
Sports Days  
**Thursday 16 July**  
Celebration Evening  
**Monday 20 July**  
INSET Day  
**Tuesday 21 July-Monday 31  
August**  
Summer Holidays  
**Tuesday 1 September &  
Wednesday 2 September**  
INSET Days

## YOUTH PARLIAMENT

On 23 April, a group of our students took part in the final debate of the Mock Forest Youth Parliament, joining peers from schools across the Forest of Dean for an evening that truly brought democracy to life. They have had a number of sessions before this to learn about how Parliamentary debates work and to prepare their arguments.

The event, organised and led by local MP Matt Bishop, gave students the opportunity to step into the roles of elected representatives, debating key issues, delivering speeches, and responding to opposing viewpoints in a formal setting.

From the moment proceedings began, the atmosphere was electric. There were confident and well-prepared speeches, passionate arguments from both sides, and a real sense of occasion throughout. Students embraced the experience fully, with moments of cheering, good-natured jeering, and even the occasional dramatic defection adding to the realism of the debate. It genuinely felt like being part of a real parliamentary session, and our students conducted themselves with confidence, maturity, and enthusiasm. This opportunity not only developed their public speaking and critical thinking skills, but also gave them a valuable insight into how democracy works in practice.

We are incredibly proud of their commitment and the way they represented the school, and we look forward to seeing them continue to build on this experience in the future.

A huge thank you to Matt Bishop and everyone involved in organising and supporting such a valuable experience for our students.





## Overall Academies and Societies List for Term 3

Day	Lunch Time	After School 3-4pm
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redgra/Field Football Y7</li> <li>Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y8 1pm</li> <li>Platinum Character Education project (Y9/10/11 in Rm 27)</li> </ul>	
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redgra/Field Football Y8</li> <li>Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y7 1pm</li> <li>Design &amp; Technology Society 1:10pm in RM 7 (Y10 only) (Week A only)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photography Academy (Y10, Room 1)</li> <li>Dance Academy (Production Dance) (All years in Hall)</li> <li>Musical Rehearsal</li> <li>Design &amp; Technology Society in Rm 7 (Y10 only) (Week B only)</li> <li>Cricket Nets (all years)</li> <li>Senior Rock Band (week B)</li> </ul>
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redgra/Field Football Y9</li> <li>Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y10 1pm</li> <li>Y11 GCSE PE Table Tennis 1pm 10 block</li> <li>Book Club in Library 1:15pm (Y7 &amp; Y8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottery Society- (week A All years Room 5)</li> <li>Musical Rehearsal</li> <li>Rounders (all years)</li> <li>Softball (all years)</li> </ul>
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redgra/Field Football Y10</li> <li>Dodgeball Academy in Blue Gym Y9</li> <li>Book Club in Library 1:15pm (Y9 &amp; Y10)</li> <li>Choir (Music Room all years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athletics (all years)- 1 selected event each week.</li> </ul>
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redgra/Field Football Y11</li> <li>Bible Study Club Society (All years. Rm 20, 1:10pm)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board games/card games Society (All years, room 21)</li> <li>Lego Society and Craft Society- (All years, room 21).</li> <li>Musical Rehearsal</li> </ul>

# UPDATES FROM HEADS OF YEAR

## MR JONES - HEAD OF YEAR 7

Once more, unto the breach dear Year 7s, once more!

We go again for one last BIG term. We kicked off the Year 7 competition in our Celebrations Assembly on the first week back. We will be taking 12 lucky students bowling. To be in the draw for the competition students need to be in category 1 or be in category 2 and be chosen as a friend to join a category 1 winner from a random draw. To qualify for category 1, students need to have the following: 96%+ attendance for the whole of this 6 week term, 40+ positive points, 0 negatives (no detentions, no APs), no standard card strikes. To qualify for this category and be eligible to be a friend to go along, you need to have the following: 90%+ attendance, 10+ positives, no APs, still be on the first white standards card (no full standards card).

Attendance wise, we are still clinging on to top spot but Mr Robbins' Year 9s have claimed the crown for our first 2 weeks back since Easter! 7SWS with 96.5% are still out in front in terms of tutor groups but 7EUO have overtaken 7LTM and are closing in on top spot with now an impressive 95.4% and claiming the tutor group sash for 2 weeks on the bounce!

Mr Euroko's tutor are leading the way with house points - a staggeringly impressive 8724 house points to date have been amassed by students in 7EUO.  
Have a great term everyone!



## MR ROBBINS - HEAD OF YEAR 9

Year 9 has made a cracking start to the term, and it has been brilliant to see such a positive attitude across the year group. Positive points are building quickly, homework completion has been exceptionally high, and attendance has also been superb, which is exactly the foundation we want for a successful term ahead. I was also very proud to see our Year 9 boys represent the school in a football tournament, where they played extremely well and showed great effort, teamwork and commitment throughout. There is also a big reward to aim for at the end of this term, with 12 lucky students being taken bowling. This reward will be awarded to those with the highest attendance, the most positive points, and zero negative points, so there is plenty for everyone to work towards. I have no doubt that Year 9 will continue this excellent momentum in the weeks ahead.



## MR BURKE - HEAD OF YEAR 10

Our mantra in Year 10 is: "Some people want it to happen, some wish it could happen and others make it happen." At this time in Year 10 we are really getting down to the business end of the year. From May we only have 10 weeks left for this academic year. This time next year Year 10 students will have submitted their sixth-form/apprenticeship/college applications and we will be filling out reference requests.

The time moves quickly as we are only in school approximately 39 weeks in a year so our 10s are on a short countdown. I am always reminding students that they are now nearly half way through a two-year course and are already building their references. Now more than ever it is essential that they take every opportunity to grow. This growth, in line with the help on offer in school, will surely lead to success. These opportunities occur everyday, there is always an opportunity to work towards success - whatever success looks like for them. Even the basic principles of attending all lessons every day and completing all homework are opportunities that can't be missed. In 10 weeks when we become Year 11, Period 6 will begin, as well as Champions Hour and working lunches - these are further opportunities which need to be grabbed and will lead to growth and success.



# UPDATES FROM HEADS OF YEAR

## MR HAYWARD - HEAD OF YEAR 11

To the Class of 2026: the final sprint starts now! The moment you've been working towards for five years has finally arrived. As you step into this final exam season, take a deep breath and remember: you are ready. This is the time to turn all that preparation into results. To give yourself the best possible chance of success, consistency is your greatest superpower.



### The Essentials for Success

The message you've heard throughout the year is now more important than ever. Success in these next few weeks relies on three pillars:

**Perfect Attendance:** Every day in school is a chance to pick up that one extra mark that moves you up a grade.

**Exam Boosters:** These sessions are designed to sharpen your skills right when it matters most.

**Warm-up Sessions:** Think of these as your "mental stretch" before the main event. Being there ensures you enter the hall focused and ready.

From this point forward, all homework is officially revision. Every task set is a direct investment in your final grade.

### Your Bespoke Exit Timetable

To help you navigate the coming weeks, you have each been issued a bespoke exit timetable. This is your personal roadmap to the finish line. Look after it, this paper is your most important document right now. Follow it strictly: It tells you exactly where you need to be and when to ensure you don't miss a single vital session.

### Key Dates to Remember - mark these milestones in your calendar

8 May: The first written exam begins. This is where the hard work starts to pay off.

15 June: The last exam for the whole year group. You're almost there!

After 15 June: Please note that some students will still have exams scheduled — stay focused until your personal final paper is complete.

17 June: Leavers' Day - a day to celebrate your journey and look toward the future. Keep an eye out for more information regarding this as we get closer to the date.

You have the talent, you have the support, and now you have the plan. Stay disciplined, stay positive, and finish strong. We are all incredibly proud of you. Good luck!

## YEAR 11 CELEBRATIONS

During a recent assembly we were able to celebrate the successes of Year 11 students following their last round of PPEs, and present them with their Position 1 and Progress awards. As the start of the GCSE summer exam series begins, we want to wish them all the very best and we are proud of the determination they are showing to do well.



AMBITION - CONFIDENCE - CREATIVITY - DETERMINATION - RESPECT

# READING RECOMMENDATIONS

English Teacher, Miss Langton shares her picks for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

## KEY STAGE 3



### **Wolf Siren by Beth O'Brien**

The woods are hiding a secret... but then so is Red... Red is not allowed to go into the woods. Everyone knows that they are dangerous – because of their strange magic and the wolves that lurk there... But Red finds herself increasingly drawn to the woods and the place where her grandmother disappeared without a trace three years ago.

When the woodcutter fails to return home one night and wolves are spotted close to the village boundary, fear drives a deep and dangerous divide between the villagers and the nature they live alongside. Only Red seems to hold the key – but she has a secret, and exposing it could ruin her family forever.

The story draws on the different tropes of Red Riding Hood as we know it and masterfully subverts them. Readers are offered a window into her world and lived experience, and are offered insightful comments on the impact of psychological power. There's a boldness to this reimagined tale that is fresh and exciting.

## KEY STAGE 4



### **Twenty-four Seconds From Now by Jason Reynolds**

Told in reverse, there's an emotional honesty in this story about first loves and first times. Twenty-four months ago, Neon Benton first laid eyes on Aria Wright, looking fine in her sweatpants, T-shirt, and ponytail, after being chased away from his grandpa's funeral by her dog.

Fast forward two years and Neon finds himself locked in Aria's bathroom, stressing about how, in 24 seconds from now, they are going to, you know. In between, their relationship unfolds in a series of moments and important conversations.

Boys' emotions are uncovered with candid honesty and warmth. The importance of being thoughtful and true to yourself, as well as considering how one's own actions impact on others are key themes in this innovatively told and intimate story which invites readers to consider what masculinity is rather than dictating this.

## TESTIMONY 360

On 16 April Year 9 students participated in Testimony 360, a revolutionary programme from the Holocaust Educational Trust. By combining Virtual Reality with interactive digital testimony, students were able to virtually explore historical sites and "interact" with survivors.

"During this experience, we used advanced VR and programme technology to virtually observe several important landmarks surrounding the Holocaust, including Auschwitz-Birkenau and memorial pieces. Inquisitive and informative, this experience has allowed us to broaden our knowledge surrounding the Holocaust, as well as answer all of our questions in interactive survivor testimonies. Overall, it was an incredibly eye-opening opportunity!" Isla, Year 9.

"It was a fantastic experience. It improved my knowledge of the Holocaust. I loved the VR - it was a great experience that I'd love to do again." Charlie, Year 9.



## CADET RECOGNITION

Well done to Year 7 student Charlie R, who has been recently promoted to Lance Corporal in her Army cadets following her passing her rifle training. Charlie has also been recognised for her literary talent. Her cadet leaders shared via their social media: "Our cadets develop a huge range of skills – from leadership and teamwork to confidence and resilience... but also a real creative flair.

"Recently, Cdt R from Coleford Platoon submitted an inspiring poem to the Winds of Change competition for the Month of the Military Child, run by the Never Such Innocence charity.

"Her poem beautifully reflects how joining the cadets has helped her feel a true sense of belonging – a powerful message and a fantastic example of self-expression.

"We are incredibly proud to celebrate her emerging talent as a writer and the confidence she has shown in sharing her voice. Well done, Cdt R – we can't wait to see what you do next!"



### What it means to belong, by Cadet R

My cadet family makes me feel like  
I belong

No matter who or where we  
come from,  
we are accepted and supported  
by this family

we all the 'Coleford Platoon'.

We find courage, discipline,  
respect, loyalty  
and selfless commitment to our fellow  
cadets and family.

We build deep bonds through  
training exercises  
and parades where we build resilience  
so we can excel in life.

We learn key life skills like teamwork and  
leadership to make us more resilient at what life puts on us.

Thank you for making me feel like I belong!

We wear the uniform with pride and respect as a family where we all look  
out for each other, we are always there for each other.

We aim to help others to be part of our family, to want core values of  
respect and loyalty, we want everyone to feel like they belong.

Thank you for making me feel like I belong!

The adventurous training and physical skills help us to improve all our  
mental and physical wellbeing, making the family platoon an amazing  
place to belong.

My family has taught me to believe in myself and those around me, so we  
can make this world a better place.

You have made me a very happy, sociable, caring resilient young lady.

Thank you for making me feel like I belong!

My memories and lessons will follow me through life and will be with me  
and by my side always.

Coleford Platoon, I thank you for making me feel like I belong!

## MEET THE TEAM

Each month we will shine a spotlight on the great staff we have across our school. To start things off, please meet our Senior Leadership Team



**Mr Phelps  
Headteacher**

"I used to attend Lakers/ Five Acres High School as a student. Before going into teaching I had careers in insurance and youth work."

**Mr Ogden  
Deputy Head**

"I am one of the longest serving members of staff at the school: I have now reached the point where I have taught many of the current children's parents!"



**Mrs Jones  
Assistant  
Headteacher**

"When I'm not in school, you will often find me singing with my local choir. I have

even performed on stage in Cardiff, Birmingham and Bristol."



**Mrs  
McKenzie  
Assistant  
Headteacher**

"I spent my formative years living abroad before moving to Chepstow for secondary school. As part of my degree, I spent a year teaching English in France and completed a MSc at Oxford University in Learning and Teaching."



## MEET THE TEAM



**Miss Harris**  
Assistant  
Headteacher  
"Away from  
teaching, I am  
a classically  
trained  
pianist."

**Miss Turvey**  
Assistant  
Headteacher

"I used to come all the time to the Forest of Dean as a child and now live in Bristol. I love travelling in my time off have gone to many different counties including Tanzania, Jordan and Thailand."

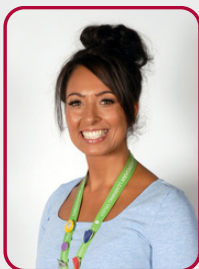


**Mr Robbins**  
Associate  
Assistant  
Headteacher  
"A local  
Forester  
myself, I went  
to school at  
Dene Magna.  
I went into

teaching after completing my BSc at Loughborough University. I have spent a few months travelling in South East Asia."

**Miss Exton  
Greenshaw**  
Learning Trust  
Senior Leader

"I studied sport education at the University of Gloucestershire and I am a four times national champion and European champion cheerleader."



## CHARACTER EDUCATION SHIELDS

Congratulations to the students who recently received their Character Education shields and certificates.



## TENTORS 2026

The TenTors team completed their last practice hike (35 miles) over the weekend of 25 and 26 April, earning their Confidence Adventure Gold Character Education badges. We wish them all the very best of luck for the big event on Friday 8 May - Sunday 10 May across Dartmoor.



## UNIFORM DONATIONS

If you are updating your child's uniform we would be grateful of any donations to help support more families through our Nearly New Uniform shop. Donations can be left at Reception, Monday - Friday, from 8am - 4pm.



## UKMT MATHS CHALLENGE

On Wednesday this week 40 Key Stage 3 students took part in the UKMT Maths Challenge. Well done to everyone who was involved!



# COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD



**TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!**

**AMAZING LEGO DISPLAYS**

**NEW & RETIRED LEGO SETS**

**BUILD CHALLENGES**

**ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES**

**CHARITY TOMBOLA**

**MILLIONS OF LOOSE BRICKS**

**PLUS SO MUCH MORE!!**

**10<sup>TH</sup> MAY**  
GL1 LEISURE CENTRE

**GLoucester BRICK FESTIVAL**

**MORE LEGO<sup>®</sup> THAN YOU CAN DREAM OF**

Supporting a teenager can feel overwhelming ...

**You don't have to do it alone!**



**Our NEW & FREE live Zoom webinars are here to support you!**

Our NEW live webinars give parents and carers practical tools, expert guidance, and a safe space to support young people's emotional wellbeing.

**By taking part, parents and carers can:**

- Understand their young person's challenges
- Learn practical strategies for resilience and wellbeing
- Gain tools to manage difficult conversations, set boundaries, and resolve conflict
- Feel more confident, supported, and less alone
- Access live Zoom Webinar sessions easily from home

**Join us online and take the next step in supporting your child's wellbeing.**

To find out more, or to book onto a session, visit [www.letstalkwell.org.uk/parents-carers/webinars](http://www.letstalkwell.org.uk/parents-carers/webinars)

**Limited spaces**

**Who:** Tailored for Gloucestershire parents and carers of children ages 11-18.

**When:** A range of topics delivered across the year.

**Where:** Online Zoom Webinar

## SPRING FOOD FESTIVAL

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

The Speech House Hotel Grounds  
Forest of Dean Gloucestershire  
GL16 7EL



**Spring FOOD FESTIVAL**  
Bream Community

**KIDS COOKERY SESSIONS**  
Learn some simple cookery skills which can be replicated at home. You will be taught how to make the dishes by Harts Barn Cookery School & take home your food at the end of the workshop.  
More info...  
[www.forestshowcase.org](http://www.forestshowcase.org)

Making Dips, chopping veggie sticks & making either nettle veggie burgers or vietnamese spring rolls

**HARTS BARN COOKERY SCHOOL**

The Forest of Dean Health Forum wants to hear from you. By completing the Big Health Questionnaire, you can help highlight what's working well and where our local health services could be improved.

Take a few minutes to share your experience and help shape the future of health in our Forest.

Please take part here: <https://tinyurl.com/2424896k>

The conversation doesn't stop with the survey. Your responses to the Big Health Questionnaire will help shape a Big Health Debate this summer, bringing communities and decision makers together to agree real actions for change.



**FOREST OF DEAN BIG HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE**