

Court Fields School



Parent Weekly 'What's Happening' Bulletin

Message from Mrs Matthews

No space for me this week. Just some lovely photos of our fantastic students back in face to face lessons. We're thrilled to have them back.

Thank you for your support throughout this week as they returned and undertook testing and their Tutor Support Days.

Mrs Matthews



Book of the Week—The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak



HERE IS A SMALL FACT - YOU ARE GOING TO DIE. 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier. Liesel, a nine-year-old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her street when the bombs begin to fall. **SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION - THIS NOVEL IS NARRATED BY DEATH.** It's a small story, about: a girl, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist fighter, and quite a lot of thievery.



Book of the Week Girl, Boy, Sea, by Chris Vick

A British boy narrowly survives the sinking of his yacht in a huge storm off the coast of Morocco. After days alone at sea in a tiny rowing boat Bill rescues a girl clinging for her life to a barrel. Aya, from the nomadic Berber tribe, was escaping to Europe when her migrant ship was destroyed in the same storm. Through endless days and star-spangled nights, they drift - mere specks on the vast, empty ocean - weakened by fear, hunger, and burned by the unforgiving sun. Aya tells Bill about The Arabian Nights, and Shahrazad, who told 1001 stories to save her life. As hope of rescue begins to fade, they find strength in these tales of magic, brave heroes, wily thieves, greedy sultans, and courageous girls. When they land on a desert island, they're surprised to be confronted by a stranger who is not what he seems... and back out on the waves once more in the dark deep, a shadow follows...

Year 9 Opportunity – Higher Project Qualification

We are delighted to be able to offer year 9 students an opportunity to undertake the Higher Project Qualification starting after Easter this year.

The Higher Project Qualification is a nationally recognised content-free qualification that gives students the chance to study a topic of their choice in depth as they work towards producing a report, an artefact, a design or a performance.

HPQ student's develop key skills in academic research and project management. Colleges and universities look favourably upon students who have completed the qualification, with many of our partner colleges offering the Level 3 version of the course, the Extended Project Qualification.

Over the last 12 months our year 9 students have developed exceptional independence towards their work and this is an opportunity to further develop and be rewarded for these skills.

We will be holding a virtual assembly on Thursday the 18th of March. If you are interested in finding out more please fill in your details in the form here (your child will need to sign into their Court Fields account for you to access the form)

<https://forms.gle/Uv2YMERHBB2fg7p2A>



Careers Week

As the final activity for careers week, we hosted an inspirational talk from Sacha Sadan, Director of Corporate Governance at Legal and General, and our students were able to ask him anything they liked about work and future pathways. We ended up covering everything from climate change, living wage vs minimum wage, equality, diversity, ethical working conditions and what the finance sector can and should be doing to improve this, law in football and why its important to find what makes you happy. I am sure that the students involved were all able to take something away from this session.

Forward Diary Dates

Parent Forum 17th March is being postponed until next term, when we hope to be able to meet in person. The date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Comic Relief 19th March – Non-uniform day in return for a donation to the charity (suggested donation £1)

COMIC RELIEF

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5 Ways Parents Can Help Their Children After Lockdown

1. Regular communication

This has been an unsettling year for all students and as schools open up today, many are going to feel apprehensive about going back. It's important that you maintain regular communication with your child about their school life. This will allow you to address potential problems as they come up before they become something bigger and heighten your child's already elevated stress and anxiety levels. One strategy to improve communication and help your child feel better in uncertain situations is to ask them questions about their day, how they're finding school, what their short-term and long-term goals are and, if they're struggling, what can they do to fix it. By adopting a more positive, solution-focused thinking style in your conversations, your child will be better equipped to develop a growth mindset and handle the upcoming months better. When having these types of conversations with your child, remember to actively listen and let them do the talking, be approachable and don't dismiss their concerns.

2. Get them writing

Students know the impact Covid-19 has had on their learning and, just like with reading, student's writing proficiency and stamina have also taken a hit. Not only do good writing skills allow students to effectively communicate their ideas and opinions, but they also enable students to develop their critical thinking skills, improving their overall understanding of syllabus content.

Many students have been learning through a device most of the year, decreasing the need to practice writing by hand. However, a lack of effective writing skills now will only negatively impact students in the long run. One way for parents to help is to encourage their child to complete homework writing tasks by hand instead of typing them up. Alternatively, you can create games that teach your child to write as they play or encourage them to journal so they can jot down their thoughts and feelings if they're feeling overwhelmed. Since students are feeling particularly stressed at the moment, keeping a diary or journal is a great way to improve overall well-being.

3. Get them reading

Reading is an essential skill that contributes to the development of students' communication skills, comprehension skills, and overall academic attainment. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, students are slipping behind in this skill. Research shows that reading for pleasure is essential for personal development and academic success to it is important that parents find ways to get their child into the habit of reading. One way parents can encourage good reading habits is to let their child choose the book they want to read. 73% of children say they would read more if they could find a book they enjoyed rather than being forced to read a book they don't want to read. Getting older and younger siblings to read to each other is another great way of boosting your child's reading confidence, language fluency, and knowledge of vocabulary. However, you also need your child that reading is an important lifelong skill, and the best way to do that is to read regularly yourself.

4. Go on 'awe walks'

The benefits of exercise on students' performance are numerous:

It boosts brain power. It enhances sleep quality. It helps reduce stress. It improves overall mood.

Therefore, it is important that parents make physical activity an integral part of their child's daily routine, even if schools have resumed face-to-face teaching. As you now know, physical activity doesn't need to be anything extraneous: a simple short walk increases confidence, happiness, and attentiveness levels. However, one way parents can really help their child is to go on 'awe walks'. These encourage viewing a walk as more than exercise or an excuse to go outside, but as a way to focus and appreciate the natural world around you. Research shows that people who paid attention to and appreciated their surroundings on a 15-minute 'awe walk' reported an improved mood. 'Awe walks' can be viewed as a mindfulness strategy, the ability to be fully present and connect with their emotions and sensations. Helping your child develop their mindfulness skills will not only help them identify helpful and unhelpful beliefs but will also allow them to gain a more positive perspective about going back to school.

5. Develop Intrinsic motivation

Prolonged isolation isn't good for anyone. As a result, many students' mental well-being has been pushed to breaking point. And with exams cancelled for many, their motivation has taken a hit as well. As a parent, it can be hard to motivate your child to work hard – especially when they no longer see the point. Therefore, it's important that you target your child's intrinsic motivation so they motivate themselves. Encourage your child to set realistic but challenging goals that they can strive for before helping them make a plan to reach said goals. By getting them to think both short and long-term about why the actions they take now are important and can have a domino effect on future success, you motivate them into action. Having high expectations is another great way to boost your child's intrinsic motivation as it inspires them to push themselves rather than settling for where they're at now.

Final Thoughts

These next few months are going to be full of change. Many students are going to struggle as a sense of normalcy begins to return, and will need help navigating this return. Parents' role in this will be crucial. If you regularly communicate with them, listen to them, motivate them and encourage them to develop important skills they may have lost, your child will be able to approach the uncertain times ahead with an optimistic outlook.

Wellbeing tip

Engaging with nature encourages you to notice the world around you (one of the 5 pillars of wellbeing according to the New Economic Foundations). It's a great time of year to try and grow something. It could be as simple as cress on a windowsill or radish outside in a pot or areas of loose soil, or something that requires a little more patience, like chitting (letting them sprout) some potatoes in an egg box on a windowsill, before planting outside later this month.

Preparing Your Child For the First Day Back in School

As schools begin to open to more children, parents and children may well be feeling anxious. Here's some ideas of how best to prepare.

Be Calm.

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact.



Be Curious.

These are strange times and their imagination may run away with them. Listen, and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling – "It's completely fine to feel like this at the moment" or "I can really understand why you would feel like that".



Be Positive.

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe, washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space.



Be Thankful.

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to: being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities but be mindful some of those may not be available for them.



Be Supportive

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety and may become fearful, clingy or act out. Reassure them that you will help them to get through the day. It might be helpful to draw a little heart on their wrist and one on yours too. You can call in the hug button and when they find they are missing you they can press the heart and know that you will be doing the same at home. Sometimes having a little object to remind them of you through the day helps but please check this out with your school first.

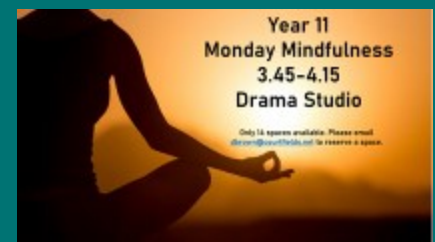


Be Prepared.

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment since they were there last and rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practise your 'goodbye' routine and create a 'hello' greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.

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